

**Conditioning Community:  
Power and Decision-Making in Transitioning an Industry-based Community**

by

Lisa E. Sailor

A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Recreation and Leisure Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2010

© Lisa E. Sailor 2010

## Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## ABSTRACT

While it is well understood that many resource-based communities are transitioning to tourism to provide a new economic foundation, few studies have probed in-depth the rationale and mechanisms influencing decision-making processes. This case study does that, providing the rationale behind Nanaimo's City Council's decision to build a conference centre and in so doing exposes the processes, actors and events that helped framed its decision.

A coastal community in British Columbia, Canada, Nanaimo's downtown suffered continual decline for nearly two decades. In an attempt to reverse the decline, City Council voted 8 to 1 in favour of a conference centre proposal based on its conviction that a centre would serve as a calling card for the community and function to attract both lifestyle residents and tourists. Moreover, Council's vote signalled its commitment as an active partner in re-establishing the downtown and repositioning Nanaimo as a post-industrial city with high-level infrastructure and amenities. Although there was initial widespread community support, as the conference centre evolved through a series of iterations, one community group surfaced to challenge its merit and the lack of public engagement in the process. In response, another group surfaced to defend the decision. Through a community referendum, the decision was upheld and the community moved forward with the plan. Nonetheless, the viability of the project was threatened a second time with the civic election as several community residents who resisted the project ran for City Council on a platform that would have halted the project. The community, once again, affirmed the decision to proceed.

This case has two steps. First, I present a descriptive analysis to illuminate how the community's social networks played a role in moving a specific agenda forward. There were two phases of data collection from which data were compiled and analysed. The first phase of data collection examined a variety of written documents in the community and principally included minutes of the various City Committees, independent studies commissioned by the City, newspaper accounts, and sources of information provided by the participants. The information collected in this first phase of study helped to inform the 37 in-depth interviews collected in the second phase of the study. Critical discourse analysis was used to demonstrate how and why different groups in the community justified and rationalized an ideological stance supporting a political and economic framework underwritten by tourism. Overall, the strength of the case is in its details. In demonstrating how the social networks and the local coalitions' capacity-building efforts shaped civic decision-making and public policy, one gains, in a Foucauldian sense, how governmentality played out as different groups engaged in resistant and counter-resistance mechanisms. Tracing these movements reveals how this community was *conditioned* towards an economic framework underwritten by a political economy of tourism. Moreover, this case demonstrates that although consideration should be given to the broader economic and political climate, it supports claims in the literature that a high degree of autonomy exists within community decision-making processes. Complementing this consideration is the need to theorize more carefully the role of democracy and governance in determining the satisfaction of outcomes. Finally, more consideration should be given by tourism scholars to be more reflexive about their research, its contested and emotive moments.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Blessed: to bestow good of any kind upon . . .*

My journey was not one of isolation and without question my village is vast. Several faces come to mind in reflecting upon my Ph.D. process. The influence of mentors, family and friends will remain with me long after the results of this study grow dim. My gratitude goes out to:

*Drs. Mair and Smale:* I want to acknowledge the unwavering commitment of Heather Mair and Bryan Smale. As co-supervisors and mentors, you continued to challenge and encourage. In particular, Bryan your commitment to my personal development and well-being will undoubtedly remain at the forefront of my appreciation when I reflect on this academic journey. I would not have come through this programme without it, and to you I offer only a humble “thank you” that comes with a wellspring of gratitude. This gift is priceless. Heather, I am honoured to have had you as my Ph.D. supervisor. Not enough students will know this privilege and endowment! You embody the spirit of Thoreau and inspired me to the same: “To him whose elastic and vigorous thoughts keep pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning” (1854). What excitement comes with learning and some measure of understanding! Thank you for expanding my intellectual horizons. I was stretched from dawn to dusk, but I have experienced the joy of learning in those moments. I’d like to think I am a richer thinker and person as a result.

*The RLS Department:* Quite apart from the dedication of the gifted scholars and committed staff found therein, I have always maintained the strength of this department is the open door policy of all faculty and staff. Who would have thought so much learning and support could take place in the door-frame? Thank you especially, Sue, Alison, Troy, Diana, Tracy, and Sandy.

*My Friends and Family:* What a treasure chest! I smile and thank God when I think of you! Thank you for your practical helps and demonstrations of love, especially in the final push. I’m sure you contributed to at least one extension, but the memories garnered have well been worth it! These memories will take me on journeys when my body is no longer able to do so, and I will smile then as well. I treasure each and every one of you for the gestures of support.

*Gerry:* We have grown through this process and we are better together for it. Your unwavering support and belief in the moments when it counted most have been etched upon my heart. Thank you for who you showed yourself to be during the realization of this dream. This has been the greatest learning and reward through this process.

*Tim and Graeme:* Your present and future is full of potential. In your observation of “mom doing a Ph.D.,” I hope you take the good and bad and use it to your advantage. Thank you for cheering me on, for hugging me, and chipping in to make my load lighter. You have been my greatest source of joy and inspiration and for continually reminding me through your actions that the greatest gift I have received is your unconditional love. I am proud of the young men you are.

I am indeed blessed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF PLATES .....	xi

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

#### *CONDITIONING SOCIETY: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING*

OPENING COMMENTS.....	1
Study Purpose .....	2
THE BROADER POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT .....	7
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION? .....	12
THE ISSUE: WHO OR WHAT DETERMINES COMMUNITY AUTONOMY? .....	15
The Case Setting .....	17
Study Objectives and Research Questions.....	21

### CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *ESTABLISHING THE LENS*

CHAPTER FOCUS .....	23
LOCATING THE PRESENT .....	24
HEGEMONY AND IDEOLOGY .....	29
FOUCAULT'S INFLUENCE .....	33
Governmentality .....	33
Political Rationalities .....	38
NEO-LIBERALISM: THE CURRENT RATIONALE AND IDEOLOGY .....	40
Neo-Liberal Influence at the Local Level.....	42
NORMATIVE THEORIES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OR	
COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNANCE .....	47
Community-Based Participatory Processes in Tourism Development.....	49
Questioning Success: Empirical Assessments of Participatory	
Process Effectiveness.....	51
FOCUSSING THE LENS .....	55

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *CAPTURING HOLISTIC MEANINGS AND PERSPECTIVES*

CHAPTER FOCUS .....	57
EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	58
The Genesis of Critical Approaches:	
Defining Critical Theory and Constructionism .....	60

<i>Critical Theory</i> .....	60
<i>Constructionism</i> .....	61
Tourism Research and a Critical Constructionist Approach.....	62
SITUATING SELF.....	66
My Beliefs.....	69
CASE STUDY RESEARCH.....	72
Case Study Research in Tourism Studies.....	73
Validity in Case Study Research.....	74
THE CASE: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF THE PORT OF NANAIMO CENTRE.....	80
COLLECTING AND MANAGING THE DATA.....	81
Phase 1: Data Sources.....	81
<i>Data Collection Process</i> .....	82
Phase 2: In-Depth Interviewing and Informal Encounters.....	87
<i>Considerations in Interviewing</i> .....	87
<i>Selecting Participants</i> .....	88
<i>Situating Participants</i> .....	89
<i>The Role of Key Contacts to the Interview Process</i> .....	90
<i>Interviewing Participants</i> .....	91
Researcher Journal:	
Capturing Post-Interview Echoes and Accidental Encounters.....	92
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA.....	93
Critical Discourse Analysis.....	94
Strategies for Data Analysis.....	96
<i>Gaining Perspective Through Memo Writing</i> .....	96
<i>Building Knowledge Through Coding</i> .....	97

CHAPTER FOUR: CHRONOLOGY AND CONTEXT  
**NANAIMO THROUGH TIME**

CHAPTER FOCUS.....	99
THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: CANADA’S POLITICAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT.....	100
POLICY REFORM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.....	106
Municipal Reform in British Columbia: The Community Charter.....	109
OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT.....	111
NANAIMO THEN: INDUSTRIALIZATION, URBANIZATION AND IMMIGRATION.....	117
NANAIMO: THE POST WAR YEARS.....	121
NANAIMO: 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TRANSITION.....	123
The Genesis of Community Visioning.....	129
<i>Imagine Nanaimo (1991)</i> .....	129
<i>Plan Nanaimo (1994)</i> .....	131
<i>Main Street Report</i> .....	136
The Revitalizing Mandate: Why a Conference Centre?.....	139
Local Level Community Organizing and Committee Activity.....	141
<i>Community Opportunity Fund</i> .....	141
<i>Economic Development Group and the City’s Economic         Development Office</i> .....	142

<i>Downtown Strategy Team</i> .....	144
<i>Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Society</i> .....	146
<i>Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Development, Tourism and Conferencing</i> .....	148
<i>Conference Centre Advisory Committee</i> .....	149
Conference Centre Initiatives .....	149
The Partnering Agreement (Public Private Partnership) .....	157
The Port of Nanaimo Centre.....	160
The Public Response.....	165
Mounting Opposition from the FPN.....	167
Countering the FPN: The Yes Committee’s <i>Invest in Yes</i> Campaign .....	172
The Role of the Media in the Case of the Port of Nanaimo Centre.....	175

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NARRATIVE OF NANAIMO  
***RESISTING PROGRESS OR RESISTING PROCESS?***

CHAPTER FOCUS .....	182
THEME I: REPOSITIONING NANAIMO.....	185
Overcoming Barriers: Transcending Meanings of Coal Town.....	186
Creating a Destination: Securing a Future Through Work and Play .....	196
Shifting Roles for Local Government .....	200
<i>Accommodating the Private Sector</i> .....	201
<i>Providing Amenities: “Build It and They Will Come”</i> .....	205
<i>Taking [un]Calculated Risks: [un]Necessary Exposure?</i> .....	207
<i>Harnessing Political Will:         Creating and Maintaining a United Front</i> .....	212
THEME II: PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.....	219
Prioritizing Projects above Principles: Setting the Tone of Civic Interactions .....	221
A Matter of Interpretation: Adhering to OCP Values.....	226
Debating and Defining the Limits of Community Participation.....	228
Shoring up the Mandate: Managing the Message.....	239
THEME III: PROVOKING THE DIVIDE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE LOCAL PRESS .....	245
REFLECTING ON THEIR STORIES .....	249
LOOKING AHEAD .....	251

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION  
***STEPPING BACK FROM THIS PICTURE***

CHAPTER FOCUS .....	252
SUMMARY OF EVENTS .....	253
1993 TO 2003: A DECADE OF CONDITIONING .....	253
Conditioning via Broader Influences .....	253
Local Conditioning .....	255
CEMENTING A TOURISM MANDATE .....	257

Techniques of the State? The Role of Participatory Processes in Validating a Tourism Mandate .....	258
Agent of the State? Individual Actions Validating Tourism .....	260
Apparatuses of Transmission? Nanaimo’s Business Coalition and the Media in Promoting Tourism .....	263
<i>Nanaimo’s Business Coalition</i> .....	263
<i>The Media</i> .....	265
2004 TO 2005: A YEAR OF RESISTING AND REINFORCING .....	271
SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS .....	275
LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	283
SNAPSHOTS FOR ANOTHER TIME: FUTURE DIRECTIONS.....	284

CHAPTER SEVEN: PROVIDING PERSPECTIVE:

***LIVING THE PROJECT: FIGHTING CITY HALL OR WORKING FOR CITY HALL?***

CHAPTER FOCUS .....	287
THE FIRST OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION	
Reflection in Anticipation of the Next Research Journey .....	288
<i>Privileging Aspects of the Research Process</i> .....	288
THE SECOND OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION	
Moments of Noticing and Intervening while	
Collecting and Analysing Data .....	290
<i>Recruiting and Privileging Participants</i> .....	290
<i>My Baggage: Privileging “Truth” over Understanding</i> .....	292
<i>Positioned by Others: How to Address Assumptions</i> .....	296
<i>Complementary Practices: Data Collection and Analysis</i> .....	298
<i>Exposing “Behind the Scenes”</i> .....	298
THE THIRD OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION	
Picturing My Journey as a Way of Returning and	
Re-Evaluating the Experience.....	299
<i>Picturing My Journey</i> .....	299
<i>To Whom am I Responsible? Maintaining Dialogue</i> .....	299
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.....	301

<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	302
-------------------------	-----

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Contact Follow-up Letter .....	338
Appendix B: Telephone Follow-Up Letter/Information Sheet .....	339
Appendix C: Consent Form.....	341
Appendix D: Interview Guide .....	342
Appendix E: Follow-up Thank you Letter .....	343



## List of Tables

Table 4.1	Media Coverage during the Referendum Campaign .....	177
-----------	---	-----

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Map of Vancouver Island, City of Nanaimo.....	18
Figure 1.2 Downtown Map .....	19
Figure 4.1 Historical Map of Nanaimo .....	119
Figure 4.2 Sequencing of Community Visioning and Organizing.....	129

## List of Plates

Plate 1.1	Port of Nanaimo Centre .....	20
Plate 4.1	Harbour View Looking towards Downtown .....	116
Plate 4.2	Existing Buildings on Conference Centre Site, Corner of Terminal and Commercial Street.....	124
Plate 4.3	Collage of Pre-Existing Buildings on Commercial Street .....	124
Plate 4.4	Swy-a-lana Lagoon .....	126
Plate 4.5	Nanaimo Harbourfront Walkway .....	127
Plate 4.6	Cameron Island, Bosa Residential Development .....	128
Plate 4.7	Initial Conference Centre Proposal with Hotel and Condo Units.....	158
Plate 4.8	Development Activity on Waterfront .....	159



*“A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside of it.”  
(Wittgenstein, 1984)*

### **OPENING COMMENTS**

An image captured in a photograph is the result of focusing the camera’s lens, which interacts with a sympathetic or light sensitive surface. It records the present, the “here and now.” Likewise, stepping back and examining our here and now demonstrates where we as a society have focused our lens. It seems to me that the light sensitive surface our social world has focused on is economic stability through growth and development strategies. As a result, growth and development within communities in particular, has garnered significant political prominence. Moreover, as part of the picture, tourism is increasingly playing a role in these growth strategies.

With regard to tourism, the broader picture capturing the philosophical, political and societal implications of tourism have largely been omitted (Hall, 1994). Instead, merit is found in promoting tourism as *the* framework for community economic development. The intrigue for me is how and why this particular image came to be. How is it that we came to have a penchant for the perceived economic stability by means of tourism? In other words, how did this image become the focus of the picture; and in turn, seemingly become the only picture? What images captured our attention and how are these images presented? As importantly, are we capable of seeing something different?

Rose (1999) upholds the spirit and challenge of Nietzsche who esteemed “acting counter to our time, and thereby on our time, [and let us hope], for the benefit of our time to come” (Nietzsche, 1983, p. 60, cited in Rose, 1999, p. 13). In a similar vein, Cameron (2006), when reflecting on Husserl’s insights of over more than a decade, suggests when we fail to engage in perpetual analysis and critique, we lose sight of the “theoretical attitude” (p. 11) required for movement towards an infinite ideal. In other words, intellectual curiosity becomes complacent and static. Instead, we are acclimatized to a world determined by tradition and practical activity, as opposed to striving to understand “the ideal world of theoretical insight” (Cameron, 2006, p. 12). With regard to tourism, how can we understand it more fully, or gain

theoretical insights and avoid the pitfalls of privileging its economic “tradition” and subsequent naturalization, however recent?

The *challenge* lies in stepping back, in order to *get outside the picture*, so that we may examine in more detail what shapes and dominates our vision. The *value* is two fold. First, it brings into focus the perpetuating structures that have dominated the way tourism is studied; and second, it moves scholars forward in our understanding of what will, hopefully, remain an infinite ideal. To be clear, this is not to suggest that an infinite ideal exists or that there awaits the discovery of a single truth, or a solitary “right” picture. Rather, the infinite ideal is found in the pursuit of perpetual analysis of our work. Relatively new scholarly contributions have revealed the muted layers and complexity of issues in tourism research. The richness this body of literature reminds us of, and draws our attention to, the importance of incorporating alternative epistemic and methodological considerations to the study of tourism.

### **Study Purpose**

This study has two purposes. The first purpose is to examine how discussions of the political economy of tourism are positioned and for what purpose. Next, examining Nanaimo’s decision-making process around the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC) illuminates how power played out in the social networks and relations. In other words, how and who executes power with regard to the decision-making process within communities pondering or implementing tourism strategies? Goldsworthy (1988) suggests Lipton’s (1970) argument to integrate some understanding of “the current values of social and political variables” (p. 506) into the work of development continues to be timely. Within the context of community-based tourism development, this argument remains relevant. My curiosity is piqued by *how* decisions supporting tourism as an economic development tool within communities occur. As importantly, I wonder *why* those particular decisions are made, and whether or not *what* those decisions reflect are inferences of a broader contextual influence.

Not surprisingly, decisions are context-bound. Scholars are increasingly coming to understand and demonstrate that a locality’s historicity and its networks play a role in how a community adapts and responds to the wider socio-economic impulses, in turn influencing the products produced or direction taken. Scholars bringing to light the layered, nuanced, and overlapping linkages that contribute to the complexity of communal relations have increased over the past decade and some excellent works demonstrate how political, economic and social

linkages are produced and given meaning (see, for example, Bianchi, 2003; Frenkel & Walton, 2000; Silk, 2007).

However, equally compelling are the implications arising from the decisions made. Studies considering both the local and broader contexts provide inklings into the implications for the community. One such example is Short, Benton, Luce and Walton's (1993) insights in the reconstructing Syracuse's industrial image to a post-industrial city. They determined that the changes occurring in Syracuse were not unique, but reflected a broader theme in which local governments are creating entrepreneurial cities. They suggest that on the one hand is an aggressive, market-oriented city government; and on the other, corporations are enticed because their costs are underwritten by the public sector. This is disconcerting not only because attracting investment is at the expense of other communal spending, but also because communities are transformed to places of consumption and fun. This process has the potential to divest them of their uniqueness and historicity. Moreover, while the generic strategies employed are intended to increase their economic value, the result is broad-based homogenization and structural conformity across cities. Still others note (see for example, Jamal & Kim, 2005; Silk, 2007) in communities where heritage is produced for consumptive purposes, the possibility of decontextualizing, sensationalizing, mediating and controlling tourism occurs in order to present a vibrant present and an improved future (Silk, 2007).

Similar themes where private sector discourse and actions representing more entrepreneurial forms of urban governance surface elsewhere as well. Molotch (1976) and Logan and Molotch (1987) were among the first to note the synergies occurring in communities where culture, retail, tourism, land development and restoration came together to secure a competitive edge. Others have since followed this thread of research. For example, the considerations put forward by Mitchell (1998) and others (see for example, Frenkel & Walton, 2000; Gotham, 2005; Mordue, 2007; Shaw, Bagwell & Karmowska, 2004; Silk, 2007) suggest the discussion is ongoing. The upshot of their reflections is that by and large, intensified competition between and within cities has occurred due to the broader political economic context. Importantly, and in the same vein, the most influential relations have the potential to subsume other notions and visions of community. Silk (2007) writes: "... as public space becomes privatized, and power disconnected from social obligations, there appears to be what

Henry Giroux (2005) calls an attack on the value of public memory, public goods and indeed democracy itself” (p. 268).

Similarly, Mordue (2007) observes an integral component of this synergy is the crossing of boundaries between the public, private and volunteer sectors in which a new management mandate surfaces concerned primarily with efficiency and effectiveness. He concludes: “Thus new urban governance does not only represent structural shift in the way cities are managed in the name of a previously ‘failed’ public, but are about new ways of addressing, thinking, knowing, interpreting, and disseminating what ‘the public’ is, what is in its interest and how it should be ‘served’” (p. 449). Instead, policy reflects an ideological commitment to the value of the private sector.

Other research worthy of mention include case studies by Pinder and Smith (1999) and Jacobs (2004) on waterfront redevelopment. The former stresses that even with oppositional discourses present, opponents are often assuaged by private sector enterprises who stress short-term profitability at the expense of long-term social objectives. In the case of the latter, oppositional discourse was noticeably absent. Jacobs concludes that development projects, particularly those attached to broader state processes, make autonomy commensurate with local interests difficult to envisage. These examples also suggest a narrowing of democratic capacity at the local level.

Not surprisingly, thoughtful critical tourism scholars are drawing the same conclusions. For a long period, the political nature of tourism at either the macro or micro political level was often overlooked in assessments of decision and policy-making processes (Bianchi, 2002, 2003; Church, 2004; Hall, 1994, 2000a,b). Hall and Jenkins (1995) first identified this issue more than a decade ago. Hall (1994, 2000; Hall & Jenkins, 2004) in particular, repeatedly highlighted the political nature of tourism planning and development:

Tourism is not the result of a rational decision-making process ... Decisions affecting tourism policy, the nature of government involvement in tourism, the structure of tourist organizations, and the nature of tourism development emerge from a political process. This process involves the values of actors (individuals, interest groups and public and private organisations) in a struggle for power (1994, p. 3).

However, a number of tourism researchers have put forward critical and contextualized pieces (Bianchi, 2003; Gotham, 2005; Jamal & Getz, 2000; Mair, 2006; Morgan, 2004). Their



works mark a shift in scholarly activity, moving from the prescriptive, how we *should* engage community planning, to a more descriptive investigation of how and if community-based tourism planning transpires. Collectively, they have challenged current and aspiring scholars of the inherent value in understanding more thoroughly the nature of tourism politics and policy. Importantly, they also bring to the surface the inherent weakness of prescriptive studies that disregard the role of power. Instead, their analyses bring to the forefront the critical issues of values and interests represented in the decision-making process, who controls these processes, and if they extend across a number of social relations. Their works stand in contrast to prescriptive models that suggest a clear and linear process occurs in both tourism development decision-making processes, and in tourism policy making.

As a result, a consensus emerging among scholars is that how tourism unfolds within a given community is a reflection of the bias favouring the dominant polity, group, or organization in the planning process. The outcomes reflect both gain and loss depending upon one's perspective. It is inherently a political exercise where the values of the broader political environment are reflected in the policy arena (Hall & Jenkins, 1995). Goldsworthy (1988) writes: "Either way, to confront the facts of gain and loss is to move quite directly to considerations of values, of interests and power. These considerations make development an intrinsically and intensely political subject" (p. 508). Therefore, it is important, especially in light of promoting the developmental role of tourism, to understand how decision-making unfolds in a community.

Examining a community's tourism development project provides an opportunity to reflect at a more theoretical level the impact of political ideology on decision-making. Lowes (2002) makes a compelling case that a city's vision is more than just how land is designated or how the landscape is shaped. Instead, it is often an important manifestation of power and ideology, often legitimized by those in positions of influence, which results in a particular narrative of urban growth and civic identity. Indeed, participatory and collaborative approaches to community tourism development may constitute little more than manufacturing consent among residents in the interest of industry growth, oriented towards reducing resistance, rather than fostering genuine empowerment and voice. Huntington (1981) made the observation that "effective power is unnoticed power; power observed is power devalued" (p. 75). His statement implies there is merit in examining how power around a particular circumstance or

group reveals what power looks like. Power dissected illuminates how a decision is framed and if necessary, challenges its legitimacy.

The stage chosen for empirical investigation and critical analysis revolves around the building of the Vancouver Island Convention Centre (VICC), housed within the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC), a multi-purpose facility in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Although a single case study, this research project serves as a springboard to reflect more broadly the way decisions and process outcomes in communities using tourism as an economic development tool are shaped by both ideology and the political economy of tourism. For example, how do we account for embedded political structures that define policy and management decisions? As importantly, does ideology influence who is deemed relevant in the collaborative process, or if collaboration is necessarily a part of the development process? Moreover, how, where and why do stakeholders gain legitimacy of voice? The challenge remaining “on the ground” or at the level of community is to understand how, why, and by whom the community is conditioned. In this case specifically, I explored whether this community’s economic restructuring – in which tourism served as the primary conduit – reflected the influence of a broader ideological and political rationality.

Shifting from a prescriptive point of reference to an explanatory approach provides a way forward in accounting for the more complex nature of power relations, values, and interests. It also accounts for the political nature of planning relationships between the different stakeholders. While there is evidence in the literature recognizing the complexity surrounding decision-making processes (see for example, Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Day, 1997; Din, 1996; Jamal & Getz, 1995, 2000; Sharpley & Telfer, 2002), there have been fewer attempts to lay a theoretical foundation that may explicate its political nature. However, if one agrees with Hall (1994) when he invokes Weber (1968, p. 1404) that “the essence of politics is struggle”, then analysis of the political nature of tourism requires elevation. Commentaries surrounding tourism’s worldwide impact warrants that the political nature of tourism be a focal point of contemporary tourism research. Increasingly, tourism has become an important sector to study because it seemingly appears to be one of the most feasible means to establish a post-industrial economic base that complements a global and service-oriented economy.

An excellent place to start is with the simple, but refreshing, and fundamental question Mair (2006) raises: “why tourism?” Is it a practical, reasonable, and feasible form of economic development for the community in question? As importantly for the community, should tourism come at any cost, especially for a community that may not want the “ongoing event of tourism” that may profoundly influence the lives of community members? Examining the political nature of tourism and probing for an established ideology among the different interest groups may reveal how an existing discourse legitimizes particular social relations and courses of action.

It is therefore my intention to reflect on the political economy of tourism in a local context, in order to “elucidate upon the [antagonistic] forces and social relations which give rise to and are encompassed within specific modes of tourism development” (Bianchi, 2002, p. 267, square parentheses in the original). Examining the contemporary politics surrounding a local economic development project, set against a backdrop of historical structures, may serve to expand the epistemological framework that largely structures the traditional technical approaches to tourism policy and planning. Further, adopting an explanatory approach may guide our understanding of the political dimensions of tourism and partially assist in the call for more “fruitful theoretical development” in tourism studies (Williams, 2004, p. 62).

### **THE BROADER POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT**

One of the ongoing challenges within North American urban politics is representing sector interests fairly (Cox & Mair, 1988; Schneider, 1992). Further complicating this challenge is the rise of neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism, as a political economic theory proposes human well-being can be best advanced by maximizing entrepreneurial and individual freedoms through the unrestricted flow of capital. Neo-liberalism functions best under a framework characterized by free markets, free trade, and individual liberty (Benington & Geddes, 1992; Giddens, 1998; Harvey, 2006a; Pierson, 2005; Scholte, 2000). It de-emphasizes the role of the government by rejecting certain forms of government intervention in the economy. Furthermore, neo-liberalism endorses corporate control believing this directive produces the greatest social, political, and economic good (Harvey, 2006a).

Proponents of this perspective often argue the merit of either the trickle-down- effect or a “rising tide lifts all boats” logic. These metaphors imply the intentions of business are geared towards reducing poverty and marginalization (Reid, 2003; Schilcher, 2007). This thinking

gained further prominence through International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank discourse, both international organizations responsible for overseeing global financial systems. Although the idea that economic growth reduces poverty and marginalization is contested, within local settings it still holds a high degree of veracity.

If anything, the tourism industry fits well within a growth-oriented neo-liberal framework. Schilcher (2007) suggests that on the one hand, despite high volatility, tourism has accelerated economic growth, particularly in areas where alternative forms of economic development are limited. On the other hand, she argues tourism is a direct beneficiary of neo-liberalism because it flourishes in an open economic environment that facilitates free movement of capital, labour and consumers. Under either of these conditions, especially where tourism is not examined critically, it is a powerful enticement.

Indeed, several empirical studies have illustrated the powerful influence of both government and private industry in shaping and transforming urban space. Over the past two decades, empirical evidence suggests that local development projects decidedly favour business interests and developers' agendas (Feagan & Parker, 1990; Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Community initiatives, according to Schneider (1992), have resulted in a "potent coalition of government officials and local business elites united in the pursuit of economic development" (p. 214).

Schneider's (1992) analysis is not new, nor without allies. Over thirty years ago, Molotch (1976) identified growth as the economic and political essence of "virtually any given locality in the present American context" (p. 310). He and others (Benington & Geddes, 1992; Cox & Mair, 1988, 1991; Crowley, 2001) further suggested that individuals or business coalitions participating in local levels of government primarily do so because growth aligns either directly or indirectly with their personal and collective interests. The discursive strategies employed have not only shaped public consensus, but also have shaped public policy. In turn, growth is considered normative, and is the benchmark of a well-functioning community.

Yet, Molotch (1976) argued, growth is also the most important constraint upon available options for local initiatives with regard to social and economic reform. Growth becomes the mandate, and the "key operative toward consensus for members of politically mobilized local elites" (p. 311). With other discourse stifled, most other functions of

government are superseded. It is hardly surprising then, that more than a decade later Harvey (1989) observed a trend occurring in the attitudes of local government officials. “‘The managerial approach’ had increasingly given way to initiatory and ‘entrepreneurial’ forms of action” (p. 4) such that urban policies in general were focussed on the positive benefits associated with an entrepreneurial stance to economic development. Understandably, the changing attitudes coincided with the decreases in public funding that accompanied the devolution of certain government functions.

These changes spawned an environment in which many local governments engaged in private-public sector partnerships. More often than not, reasons for this courtship are founded in economic goals. However, a concern raised by Hall (2000, in Bramwell & Lane, 2000) is that they are “shrouded in political rationalities” (p. 143), related to the broader philosophical perspectives of a pervasive neo-liberal agenda across Western nations. The symbiotic relationship or the joining of two dissimilar entities has become the model dominating tourism (Gill, 2004). The concern is that they have not evolved evenly to produce a new form of mutualism. Instead, scholars are concerned that government policy, established for the purpose of the public good, is compromised by the principles of the corporate model. In turn, these evolving models fail to consider how public-private partnerships thwart inclusiveness and democracy in the development process (Dinham, 2005; Katz, 2006). As Ingamells (2006) writes,

Within such discursive terrain, one might expect community development workers to be asking whether the trajectory towards ‘corporatisation, commercialisation and privatisation’ of the public world (Gleeson and Low, 2000) and commodification of private worlds can be intercepted locally and transformed, or whether the new community policies simply localize the processes of shaping subjects who have aspirations for such a world? (p. 238).

Britton’s (1991) seminal article, premised on the work of Harvey’s *Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), was one of the first to shed light on the broader forces that were contributing to communities’ focus on tourism. Harvey proposed that image and discourse are vital components not to be overlooked in the reproduction and transformation of any social order. Britton used this foundation to expose the manner in which tourism is rationalised and justified based on its potential contribution to economic development. Belsky (2004) echoed these sentiments in reference to most tourism research, noting a “market oriented view of

development policies and structural adjustments to the changing global economy” (p. 274) have been accentuated. Similarly, Bianchi (2002, 2003) questioned the weight placed on the monetary value of tourism, suggesting this current ideology is not questioned. It has, in essence, become normative both in the vernacular and in prose.

Studies in tourism have evolved and are continuing to evolve to challenge the current ideological discourse that promotes tourism as an economic development tool. However, Bianchi (2002) suggests there is room for improvement. Critical analysis of historically relevant social relations of power and the “mechanisms of appropriation which condition and structure” (p. 267) contemporary modes of tourism development have not yet been a priority within tourism studies. Yet, Cox (1981) posits historical structures (i.e., material capabilities, ideas, and institutions) first reproduce certain social relations, and second, limit the range of actions taken. To overlook structure and relations inherent in planning is to overlook how decisions are made.

As co-operative relationships between the private and the public sectors are built, the potential exists to further narrow democracy within the development process. The priority placed on economic development and growth results in the tendency to overlook or forego the need for public scrutiny (Molotch, 1976). Molotch further suggests Laswell’s (1936) observations of public service delivery are equally relevant observations for today when scrutinizing the political economy of place. As Laswell penned, “This is the kind of politics which determines who, *in material terms*, gets what, where and how. This is the kind of politics we must talk about at the local level: it is the politics of distribution . . .” (p. 313).

Within a tourism context, Reid (2003) suggests people become involved in tourism projects in pursuit of a specific agenda. In order to mitigate privileging a specific discourse or agenda, decisions must be bound within the larger community interest. Ultimately, community members carry the weight of the change and impact. “Community members should not only be participants in the planning stage but should control the process and outcome of tourism development” (Reid, 2003, p. 138). When the relationship of the local population to place is divorced from tourism planning, contentious relationships often result.

Reid’s (2003) comments to some degree echo the sentiments put forward by Hudson (2001) with respect to reconciling the tensions that exist between meaningful place and profitable space. The community members’ sense of place, their feelings and attachment to

place, inscribe socially produced meanings. Place is steeped in history, which makes locations “home” and strongly relational. What both authors are putting forward is recognition of the role of the local citizenry in finding a balance between one’s community as a socially produced *place* in which people attach special significance, and the fact that this location can also exist as a socially produced *space* for the purpose of generating a profit. While we are on the cusp of grasping more fully the interplay between space, history and local identity, the point to consider is that in both the material and the social construction of place, the significance of the local socio-cultural dimension has to be more carefully considered.

Given the political nature of tourism planning, a logical step in examining how tourism shapes communities is to subject tourism development to, and not exempt it from, public scrutiny. Questions such as “the why, how, and who” require thoughtful answers by decision-makers. In order to avoid generating both current and latent tensions, decision-makers must account for the multi-dimensional meaning of community. At a minimum, they must attempt to address the explicit manifestations of difference. Silk (1999) argues the community, as an encompassing social entity, is still fraught with issues. It does not cease being unproblematic simply because it has been subjected to public process. Rather, it is the medium for social relations as well as a built environment impacting community dynamics. As Gotham, Shefner and Brumley (2001) suggest, “Social relations exist to the extent that they possess a spatial component and project themselves into space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process, producing that space itself” (p. 316). Community space then, represents multiple social as well as material interests. They are multi-faceted expressions of local actions, relations and networks influenced by subtle and not-so-subtle macro and micro structural processes. Where states have exhibited strong neo-liberal programmes and policies, it stands to reason that neo-liberal influences will make its way into the everyday language and action at the local level. In turn, this influences what is included or excluded as acts of community expression.

Nevertheless, decision-makers need to take seriously all the competing stakeholder positions if they desire some form of community consensus when redeveloping and regenerating their communities. The concern is principally with the influential role of the community’s economic and political elites on process, whose goals are often oriented towards perpetuating profit and capitalist social relations (Gotham, Shefner & Brumley, 2001). How do decision-makers balance the increased needs of their residents with the wants and demands of

tourists for the arts, entertainment, and spaces generally geared towards pleasure and consumption? In other words, decision-makers must weigh “use value” – the non-capitalist social relationships – against “exchange value” or the capitalist relationships of place (Hudson, 2001).

Over the past several years engaging community members as stakeholders in the decision-making process has been recognized as one approach to offset privileging one stakeholder over another to produce an outcome more acceptable across the spectrum of community stakeholders. The intent is directed at bringing together a range of interests in order to build mutually accepted tourism proposals. Yet the process is fraught with ambiguity, inconsistency and often times, contradiction. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at what occurs in the process as opposed to merely the outcome produced.

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION?**

Owens (1990, cited in Roseland, 2000) suggests the “politics of inclusion” has gained a permanent place within the rubric of community development. In part, community participation’s fixed permanence serves as a safeguard, ensuring outcomes are not shaped merely by the most powerful and influential interests. The principle underlying public or community participation lies in the democratic truism that those affected by the decision should participate directly in any decision-making process (Roseland, 2000). Moreover, one could argue that those most impacted should have the most say.

One of the most powerful conceptual frameworks for exploring community participation lies in the notion of stakeholder. Its genesis is influenced, if not birthed, from business ethics. The concept of shareholder in business has been modified, rejecting the idea that any one entity, party, person, or corporation should be the sole beneficiary of the benefits or rewards gained. Tweaked for relevance to participatory processes, stakeholders are “any person, groups, or organization that is affected by the causes or consequences of an issue” (Bryson & Crosby, 1992, p. 65).

With this in mind, a more holistic approach to community-based tourism development, one that engages local stakeholders in identifying communal meaning and identity, has become increasingly important. Furthermore, researchers are demonstrating that linkages to the local community are best expressed through community stakeholders (Telfer, 2002). However, the conceptual shift to provide a more “socially inclusive agenda” (Maile & Braddon, 2003, p.



148) within tourism has met with mixed results. For example, Murphy (1985) emphasized the need to involve the community in decision-making processes. For the most part, his directive resulted more in the public working with the tourism industry and failed to reflect the wider, more equitable mechanisms of public participation that were intended (Hall, 2000). The equity between various stakeholders can be considerably enhanced when stakeholders work in partnership with one another. These “obligatory connections” become vital components of the concept of community development and must be considered in concert.

The merit of exploring the synergy between differing community partners and stakeholders has been a recurrent theme within the development literature over the past decade (see for example, Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Day, 1997; Innes & Booher, 1999; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Taylor, 1995; Webler & Tuhler, 2000). The focus of these relationships has revolved primarily around concepts of sustainability, environmental protection, and social justice. Each of these concepts has contributed to a renewed interest in exploring how communities are impacted (Ioannides, 2001). The notion of sustainability in particular, recognizes the role human ecology plays in contributing to a community’s sense of uniqueness and identity. In theory, the direction charted is determined by the community, anchored by holistic planning strategies which include input from a spectrum of stakeholders.

A seemingly straight-forward task, researchers over the past two decades have attempted to both identify and develop tourism strategies that reflect the desires of the wider citizenry (Hall, 2000; Jamal & Getz, 2000; Murphy, 1985; Reid, 2003; Telfer, 2002). As a result, there has been a great deal of emphasis in the tourism literature directed at the nature of community participation, collaborative arrangements, and partnerships in tourism development (see for example, Bramwell & Sharma, 1999; Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Din, 1996; Fallon & Kriwoken, 2003; Reed, 1997, 2000; Tosun, 2006).

Two significant principles run through this body of literature. First, local people often carry the costs of tourism development without sufficient compensation. Second, tourism cannot be separated out or partitioned off from other aspects of life for those living in a destination where tourism dominates (Reid, 2003). As a result, the general consensus within the literature coalesces around the notion that decisions reflect the community’s best interests. Equally important, if not more so, is the perspective of the community residents. Those having a stake in the community are in the best position to make decisions concerning tourism

development within their locale (Timothy & Ioannides, 2002). The inherent assumption of collaborative planning processes is that the negative impacts of tourism will be ameliorated, while maximising the positive benefits accruing from tourism development.

Wood and Gray (1991) suggest that the value of collaboration “occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (p. 146). Where community-based tourism is defined as the domain, collaborative initiatives attempt to gather and involve a broad range of stakeholders. Representatives often bring diverse and conflicting, if not hostile, interests. However, each is considered necessary in order to develop and implement tourism decisions or policies intended to protect or enhance community life without necessarily inhibiting growth to the tourism industry.

The concept of collaboration dovetails with one of the earliest works of citizen empowerment by Arnstein (1969) whose model, *Ladder of Citizen Participation*, has been influential within community development literature. She argues community-planning models lie on a spectrum. Effective and meaningful citizen participation at one end of the spectrum occurs when citizens have a real say or real power in affecting an outcome. Where citizen participation is an empty ritual - the other end of the spectrum - one can anticipate that it amounts to little more than public tokenism or what Reid (2003) refers to as “professional manipulation of the public” (p. 59). Between these two poles are varying degrees of both empowerment and tokenism, suggesting power is held by some and withheld from others throughout the process.

For a number of researchers advocating collaboration and participative frameworks, the processes and patterns of collaboration they model are similar to Arnstein’s (1969) *Ladder of Citizen Participation*. And too, similar to the conclusions drawn by Arnstein, they have found that challenges remain to overcoming the degree of participation observed. These include the ability of stakeholders to maintain equal influence throughout the process, as well as identifying all interested, and therefore relevant stakeholders. Establishing limits to reflect the degree of ownership/legitimacy/impact of the various interests represented is still grappled with in collaborative processes. It raises questions about impact on process or outcome, depending on the stakeholder legitimacy. In other words, how might the process change or an outcome altered depending upon whose voice was identified (or not) and/or included (or not)

as a relevant stakeholder? What is increasingly clear is that planning is beset by both obvious and muted layers of power and conflict. For all the attention to collaboration and partnerships, the functional dimensions of holistic planning have proved elusive and less than satisfactory to many of the stakeholders involved. While the legitimacy of community involvement in tourism development has gained acceptance within academic discourse, only a handful of researchers have grappled with examining in detail citizen/communal involvement and the role of power in tourism development strategies (see Bianchi, 2003; Hall, 2004; Jamal & Getz, 2000; Mair, 2006; Reid, 2003; Williams, 2004). For example, Mowforth and Munt (1998) found communities in developing countries wanting to resist or curb major tourism projects were unable to do so, and thus were caught up in planned, but unwanted development. Concern was noted by Blackstock (2005) in her assessment of community-based tourism in North Queensland, Australia where she found the community was superficially involved in decisions without addressing issues of power and competing values. This was the principal issue Jamal and Getz (1995) identified a decade earlier. The ability of participants to influence the actual outcome depends a great deal on power relations. These examples reverberate back to de Kadt (1979) who wrote: “it is rare that people in the local community, whether through existing structure of local government or through specially-created organizations, are given a *genuine* chance to influence the course of events – even though these events will profoundly affect their lives” (p. 10, italics added).

#### **THE ISSUE: WHO OR WHAT DETERMINES COMMUNITY AUTONOMY**

The question that surfaces is whether community collaboration and neo-liberal politics can come together to chart communal direction without privileging entrepreneurially-led growth. To date, the relationship appears somewhat tenuous and unsettling. At first glance, there seems a natural fit between community collaboration and neo-liberal politics because both processes invoke principles of sustainability, but their emphasis is decidedly different. On the one hand, proponents of community collaboration suggest the process is more important than the outcome. Ultimately, if it is a community-based decision, it reflects and protects communal values; those things the community decides it can or cannot live with or cannot live without. Once these values are determined and upheld, sustainability, as well as community buy in, is more likely.

On the other hand, the neo-liberal project suggests the end and not the means, in other words, the outcome and not the process determines the better product. An excellent example of this is found in the work of Ashworth and Tunbridge (2004) who link the trajectory of development with place marketing in historic cities. The most salient implication readily apparent was that the city needed to be “sold” to the community. They write, “local pride or ‘civic consciousness’ was seen not only as desirable in itself, but also as a precondition for successful external marketing” (p. 211). Citizen participation from this perspective is a sound and astute business practice that may not result in overall representation or well-being. Hidden within the notion of community sustainability is enlisting residents for the purpose of maximizing benefits and minimizing the impacts for the purpose of profit. It may not be, as the community believes, about their ability to determine communal direction through shared power and democracy. Instead, consideration needs to be given to the discursive strategies employed by the local stakeholders to draw the public onside in order to generate consensus for production purposes.

Increasingly, a well functioning community has been linked to fostering tourism as an economic development tool. However, Mair (2006) argues in her analysis of two rural tourism development initiatives that communities are caught up in a trajectory of motivations and mechanisms initiated by the changing economic conditions in society. This path promotes a political economy of tourism which over the past several decades has increasingly gained legitimacy. It has she suggests, the potential to alter community significantly. In addition, it legitimises and naturalizes a tourism development discourse. Under these conditions, the potential to view the community as a commodity occurs as market relations tend to subsume and dominate social life (Gotham, 2002). In turn, the potential exists to stifle other development options or simply to maintain the status quo, either of which may, in the long-term, be better suited to the community.

At the heart of this issue is the degree of autonomy community stakeholders possess in charting their community’s future. It is one of the central issues sociologists examining urban redevelopment and more recently, scholars examining tourism development continue to probe. What is clear is that scholars continue to wrestle with issues of community autonomy, especially when framed within an economic development framework dominated by special interest groups. If issues of representation and equity are defined through the political

mechanisms favouring neo-liberal ideology, how does this manifest in process and in outcomes? Further, does this influence who is defined as a stakeholder? Are there stakeholders who may not have had equitable opportunities to express their perspectives? Are certain voices privileged, and if that is the case, has process then truncated the range of possible community outcomes?

The challenges and questions raised by researchers of community-based tourism frame the motivation for this study. The case study described below is an opportunity to contribute to the discussion, to unravel the complexities and conundrums of evolving community-based tourism development. To explore questions of process in more detail, the City of Nanaimo is presented as an empirical case that contributes to our understanding of how, why and by whom decisions are made.

### **The Case Setting**

Nanaimo is the second largest city on Vancouver Island and the fifth largest in the Province of British Columbia, Canada's most western province (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Nanaimo is centrally located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, and is located 111 km north of Victoria, the province's picturesque and well-known capital. According to City officials, Nanaimo is considered the regional service centre for mid and North Vancouver Island (City of Nanaimo, 2007). Nanaimo was initially settled and colonized by the Hudson's Bay Company of London in the mid-1800s, intent on developing the coal industry. For this reason, it is an historically significant community within Canada.

According to the City's economic development office, Nanaimo no longer is a resource-based community, as it has transitioned over the past two decades to a service-based economy (City of Nanaimo, Economic Development Office, 2006) in which tourism is expected to play an elevated role. Given the natural beauty of the area, Nanaimo's lifestyle is appealing for its recreational opportunities. Civic decision-makers hope to capitalize on its natural environment by concentrating on redeveloping the City's built environment, and in particular on the downtown. The most recent emphasis has been the role of the conference centre as the primary means through which to discover Nanaimo's aesthetic properties and lifestyle opportunities.

Figure 1.1  
Vancouver Island, British Columbia

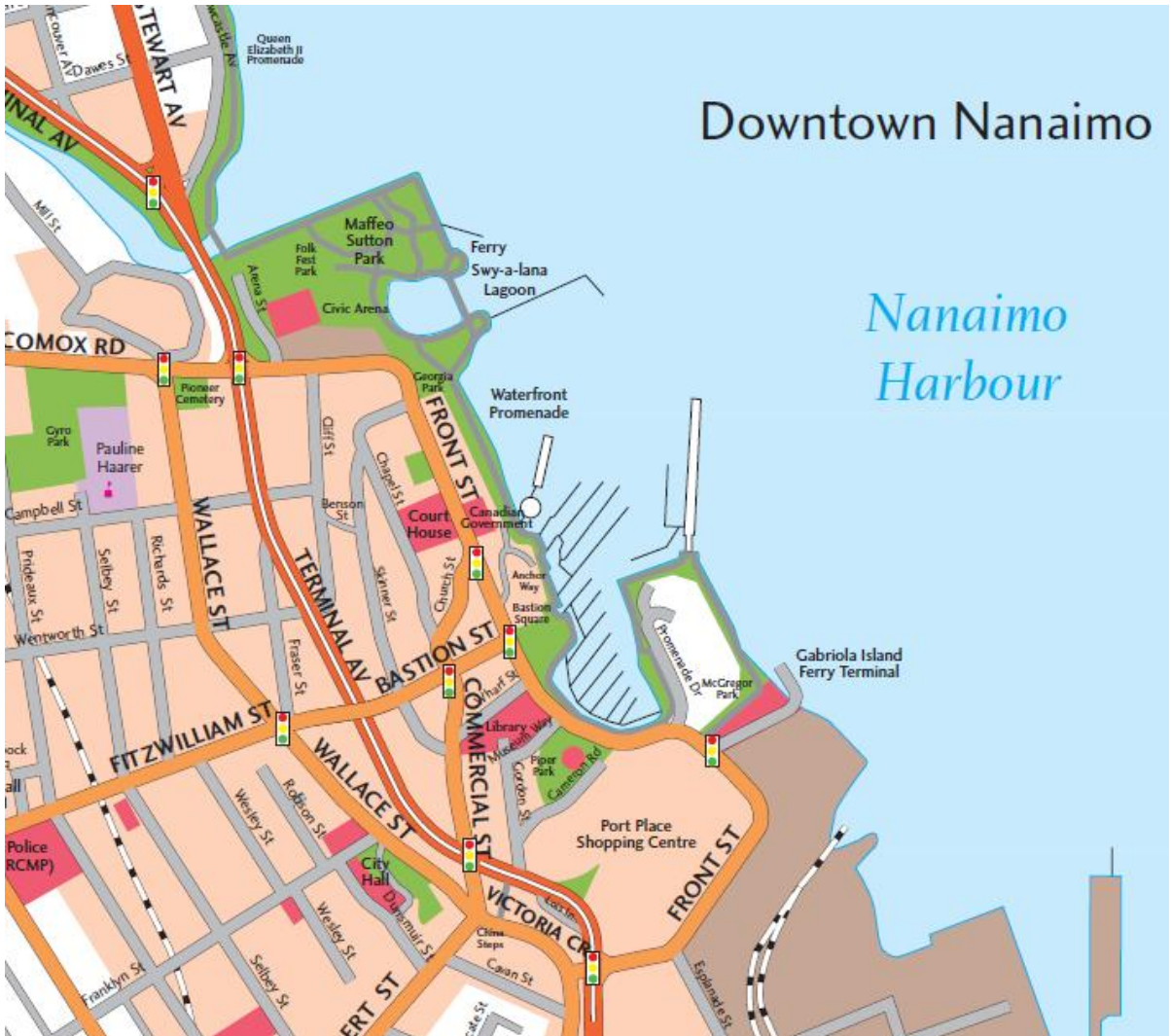


Source: [www.town.lakecowichan.bc.ca/maps.shtml](http://www.town.lakecowichan.bc.ca/maps.shtml)

The City's elected Council has embarked on the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC<sup>1</sup>), a public-private partnership (3P) between the City, the Province of British Columbia, and Private developer Triarc International, a Connecticut-based corporation. Its development however, has been one of the most costly and controversial issues in the City's history. Council believes Nanaimo is becoming a desirable destination, and that the conference centre will add a new dimension to the downtown core. It will, Council believes, "provide not only economic wealth and downtown revitalization, but will also be an important landmark enhancing Nanaimo's identity, charm and attractiveness" (VICC Pre-Opening Sales & Marketing Plan, 2006, p. 9).

<sup>1</sup> The Port of Nanaimo Centre has gone through a series of name changes. The Nanaimo Port Authority contributed \$1 million towards its renaming to the Port of Nanaimo Centre. In order to avoid confusion, I use PNC.

Figure 1.2  
Downtown Nanaimo



Source: Weller Cartographic Services Ltd., (cartographer@mapmatrix.com)

The Port of Nanaimo Centre opened in June 2008 (see Plate 1.1), but its development was highly contested from the time of its announcement until well into the building process. In particular, the proposal was opposed by the *Friends of Plan Nanaimo Society* (FPN), a locally-organized group whose purpose largely centred on challenging Council's decision to proceed with the project, despite a very close referendum outcome supporting the project. In the time leading up to the referendum, FPN engaged the community through letters to the Editor, public meetings, and public education forums. Its members were very vocal in expressing their

discontent regarding the process and the group's ability to access either information or the decision-makers. The FPN believed the wider public was manipulated by the City and the private partner used the City for its own purposes. In sum, FPN supporters believed the community was denied the opportunity to inform the process. Instead, they believed the decision was largely determined by a small, but elite group of business leaders in the community who, as a result, were unwilling to critically assess the merit of the project and the subsequent costs to the community as a whole.

Plate 1.1  
Port of Nanaimo Centre



*Source: City of Nanaimo*

In contrast, City officials and more than a few involved supporters believed the referendum was but one opportunity for the community to express their support. They believed several opportunities were provided through which residents could have engaged in the processes leading up to the conference centre. Moreover, the voting turnout for the referendum was one of the highest ever in the community, topping even civic elections. On November 20, 2004, a slim majority vote of 52% gave City officials the mandate required to proceed with the conference centre.

This case study examines the events leading up to the development of this community project, the actors involved as well as the rationale put forward. As descriptive analysis, this study illuminates how power issues and social networks played a role in moving a specific agenda-oriented project forward. The insights garnered by examining the broader socio-political context of an urban tourism redevelopment project, presented alongside the



reconstruction of some community members' accounts of the process surrounding the development, provides some understanding into how tourism and neo-liberal discourses are normalized. Moreover, the strength of the case is in demonstrating how community groups and the local coalitions' capacity-building efforts shaped civic decision-making and public policy, ultimately reinforcing the validity of tourism as the primary post-industrial economic development tool.

The goal of this project is two-fold. First, use of this case is intended as a spring-board through which to examine theoretical issues of power and decision-making in communities where decision-makers are elevating the role of tourism as part of the community's economic foundation. Second, this case is also intended to draw our attention to the way in which discursive actions at the local level may be influenced by macro-structural considerations. To this end, there are a number of study objectives and research questions attached to this project. Those most relevant to scholars wanting to raise the level of critical discussion around the role of tourism include the following objectives and questions.

### **Study Objectives**

1. To assess the broader forces influencing the decision-making processes, and their impact on redevelopment in communities where tourism discourse is employed;
2. To understand power relations at work in a community where tourism was used as an economic development strategy; and
3. To analyse how relationships were influential in shaping the trajectory of the decision-making process, and ultimately the outcome.

### **Primary Research Questions**

1. What is the overarching role of ideology, first, in framing decision-making processes, and second, in shaping the kinds of decisions made?
2. How do historical forces and social relations serve to reinforce the organization of tourism production and to shape decision-making?

A second set of questions related to the process the City of Nanaimo undertook in its decision to build a conference centre in the City's downtown core also were included:

### **Secondary Research Questions**

1. What factors/events precipitated the building of a conference centre in Nanaimo?
2. Why were the previous two attempts to build a conference centre unsuccessful, and what differed in this process that made the third attempt successful?

3. Who supported the Port of Nanaimo Centre within the community and why; and conversely, who did not support it and what were the reasons behind their stance?
4. Who was involved in the overall trajectory of the decision-making process that led to the acceptance of the conference centre and who was left out? Why?
5. How were community relationships and/or networks influential in shaping the trajectory of the decision-making process and ultimately the outcome?

A recurring concern of Hall's (2000) at the turn of the century has been that despite all the discussions, papers, articles, courses, and consultants that have emerged, we appear to be no closer to finding solutions to the problems associated with tourism development. However, there is evidence suggesting this tide is turning. Where once methodological emphasis on the technical quantification of the derived economic benefits were the primary focus in the tourism literature, thoughtful and critical analyses are shaping and expanding our understanding of tourism (see Bianchi 2002, 2003; Lew, Hall & Williams, 2004; Mair, 2006; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). As a result, both epistemological and methodological shortcomings that have previously hindered theory development are being addressed.

This case study follows in this spirit. By looking through a critical constructionist lens at the actual process of decision-making and power relations within a specific community as well as assessing the varying perspectives regarding how the decision-making process unfolded, this project first builds theory and second, serves as a sign-post from which to map further inquiry.

Moreover, in 1996, the Nanaimo Historical Society wrote the following in the introduction to the second printing of *Nanaimo Retrospective: The First Century*:

Nanaimo has always played an important role as a meeting place: a true Hub City – a central part of Vancouver Island. As it grows in the years to come its story will continue to be documented and new voices will record its history. We look forward to being a part of that process (p. viii).

This research project serves to tell part of the story.

As noted in the first of the research questions, there is a strong theoretical base to this study. The theories grounding this study are the focal point of the subsequent chapter.

**CHAPTER FOCUS**

This chapter examines more thoroughly the key concepts used for framing of my analysis. Primarily they center on providing greater insight into the broader structural forces that can shape the direction of community decision-making, and in turn, the nature and character of the community. Highlighting concepts of hegemony, rationality and ideology directs our attention to the way these concepts collectively cement ways of thinking and ways of acting. In turn, they expose what is potentially involved in making a decision or in the setting of policy. As well, these concepts highlight what may be considered naïve on our part if we assume we can write an account of decision-making, collaboration and citizen participation in a particular setting without reference to the underlying political rationality or ideological influence. Together, these concepts work to provide us with a way forward to examine “concerns of the present” (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996, p. 5) in the context of community.

These concepts are complemented in highly interesting ways by Foucault’s treatment on government. In this regard, this chapter loosely exemplifies a “Foucauldian effect”, meaning I take as my starting point one particular style of analysis. Foucault sketched an outline of governmentality that served as a conduit for analysing power that transcends both a particular government and time-frame. Foucault’s work, both praised and criticized for favouring neutrality, does not chart direction or action, yet it is invaluable. He is well-known for critically engaging present situations in order to diagnose their practical potential and constraints (Dean, 1996). Barry, Osborne and Rose (1996) call this *perspectivist*. The intent of which is to examine the foundations of the present by bringing into view “the historically sedimented underpinnings of particular ‘problematizations’ that have salience in our contemporary experience” (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996, p. 5). As such, Foucault’s influence invites scholars to think more critically about our present and render more visible our history. Within this context, I analyse how Nanaimo’s current history is being written through the activities of government at the local level. Consideration is also given to the role of both the federal and provincial government as well as other powerful actors and stakeholders in this process.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the concrete conditions that shape our present political situation, followed by a more abstract discussion of the interwoven concepts of hegemony, political rationality and ideology. Notions of governmentality and political rationalities, as introduced by Foucault, follow this discussion. It then narrows to focus on the attributes of neo-liberalism as the current ideology and dominant political rationale governing our contemporary political realm. Foucault's work on governmentality sets the stage for why citizen participation as a form of governance is important. What follows is a discussion of key aspects undergirding citizen participation with an emphasis on empowerment. To demonstrate their merit for this case study of Nanaimo, a discussion outlining participation and collaboration as it has unfolded in community-based tourism development ensues, citing scholarly work focused on successful or effective citizen participation. This chapter concludes with a brief section reminding the reader of the linkages between these concepts and their relevance in examining Nanaimo's decision to build the PNC.

One final note as you make your way through this chapter. Participatory processes, when viewed through the lenses of governmentality and political rationalities, illuminate the challenges to community autonomy. Yet they also provide a way to understand how and why community participation and desire for collaboration have been kindled. These processes in a sense can be understood as a *response* to neo-liberalism; a ballast to offset *any* polity that seeks to inscribe a particular "truth".

### **LOCATING THE PRESENT**

In the post World War II period, there was a massive expansion in the role of government within many democratic nations. For the most part, all mainstream political parties in the westernized world supported policies falling under a social democratic framework in which government played an active role in directing the economy. In addition, government's role extended to the establishment and maintenance of social welfare programs (Hamann & Wilson, 2001). Even when the more conservative governments held office, the principles associated with social democracy remained relatively intact.

Brown and Lauder (2001) contend that both World Wars and the Great Depression of the 1930s propelled government expansion into the social realm, justified in order to achieve sustained economic growth, political stability and social cohesion. It was, they suggest, a doctrine of economic nationalism where prosperity post-World War II was shared between the

government, trade unions and the employers. Social progress was advanced through the pursuit of economic growth with government maintaining a vital role in managing the economy.

The liberal case for active government was primarily advanced by economist John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946). Keynesianism's distinguishing feature was in linking ethical goodness and socially concerned conduct by government. Intentional government involvement was necessary in order to alleviate angst that either human or environmental well-being would be subject to market forces. Keynes, having witnessed the Great Depression of the 1930s believed the instability created by capitalism necessitated government intervention (Michelman, 1994). Keynes' principles included a mandate for social justice through progressive taxation, wage controls, and improved public services that redirected surplus to the less socially advantaged (Scholte, 2000). In addition, government also influenced pricing. When prices were increasing, government raised taxes to reduce consumer spending and stave inflation. Government also exercised the option of either lowering taxes and/or increasing social spending to stimulate the economy and encourage high levels of employment during cycles of low or non-existent inflation (Ball & Dagger, 2004).

As noted, there was in Keynesian economic theory, an effort to link the economic functions of capitalism with moral conduct. Doing so was thought to guarantee more informed and ethical decisions. Brown and Lauder (2001) note: "For Keynes, injustice was created by uncertainty and the root of uncertainty was the endemic fluctuations in the business cycles of capitalist economies" (p. 78). Keynes recognized that both the market and individual circumstance were more complex and intricately connected than previously acknowledged. At minimum, government's role was to offset the adverse effects of the business cycle by providing social safety nets. The primary principle of Keynesian thought is collective human action dictates the nature of the relations to the individual parts of the economic system, and as a result accepts a degree of responsibility for the negative impacts incurred (King, 2002).

At the risk of considerable oversimplification, there has been a significant shift, particularly within the western context, from the intervening policy tools that marked the Keynesian era to a range of supply side and monetarist approaches to economic management (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Brown, 2003, 2006; Cox, 1987; Reid, 2003). Monetarism is an economic principle founded in Classic Liberalism, largely propelled by the work of economist Milton Friedman (1912-2006). Friedman believed in the merit of a free market economy of

*laissez-faire* capitalism rooted in the work of Adam Smith (1723-1790) and his well understood principle of the invisible hand. This concept is often touted as traditional neo-classic economics or Classic Liberalism.

Classic Liberalism had as its starting point, the economic, social and political ideals found in the post-Enlightenment themes of rationality, democracy, and individual freedom (Hartwick & Peet, 2003). Principles were developed on behalf of the more progressive liberal bourgeoisie (Ball & Dagger, 2004) who encouraged political conditions that fostered entrepreneurialism, self-regulated markets and economic growth. As a doctrine, liberalism maintained that private initiatives were best left to their own accord with minimal government intervention. Government intervened only to create conditions for economic growth. Capitalist economies were self-correcting and after a period of economic downturn, the economy would surge upward (Brown & Lauder, 2001).

It would be misleading to suggest that this was an about-face in politics, that the right turn in political history was sharp and demarcated. The shift was quite subtle. For three decades the economic nationalism of Keynes aligned well with industrial democracies. Marchak suggests the conditions of war created mass corporations, which prospered under government protection in the post-war era. As a result, they were well poised to meet international demands. Securing foreign markets, opening borders to investment and trade were necessary and “the American state made that demand in the language of free markets and free enterprise” (Marchak, 1991, p. 5).

The mid-60s through the mid-70s was tumultuous as a number of factors converged to alter this political foundation. The decline of industrialism and the rise of technology were not incremental as anticipated by either government or business. Where industry adapted, emerging technology proved invaluable. Labour intensive operations re-routed offshore took advantage of cheap labour, favourable tax benefits and nonexistent safety and environment regulations. By comparison to other less developed countries, the local state’s bureaucracy and financial constraints seemed oppressive, and as a result, many evolving technology companies followed suit. The rapid pace of change proved too demanding for the existing infrastructure and companies continued to move offshore or were forced to close their doors (Marchak, 1991). However, Marchak also notes, the biggest losers were not the companies. Those who

lost the most were “the unemployed, the unions, the unskilled workers, and the dependent communities in industrial countries” (p. 7).

The irony is not to be lost. In what was as much a pragmatic as technological revolution, Keynesian principles, which created the conditions for its emergence were deemed stifling. In the final analysis, proponents of the well-established global market determined the inefficiencies associated with Keynes’ economic doctrine of government were the primary targets requiring change. For a significant portion of the twentieth century, history told a story of a growing and nurturing “cradle to the grave” public sector. This form of social security evolved because programmes of progressive taxation were designed to effect a substantial redistribution of wealth within the country (Scholte, 2000). However, the shift from Keynesian principles resulted in more than stagnation of state assistance. Instead, a reversal occurred that ran counter to the established moral understanding of the social contract, and what is often inferred when we speak of a retreat of State welfare.

Marchak (1991) writes that this did not happen haphazardly. The underlying rationale to break the post-war welfare state was the consensus of a well-funded global political organization, now understood as the New Right. They shared common objectives with global corporations who also believed the existing political social safety net needed dismantling in order to replace it with a more libertarian ideology. Marchak (1991) accounts for it this way:

... governments were to be shorn of many social service functions, and of nationalized industries where they existed, but they were to be authoritarian instruments for the protection of private property (p. 10).

The justification for a new political rationale lay in the perception that the state had become a “monster froid” (Foucault, 1991, p. 103), in essence overextending its reach. The New Right of the mid-70s had organized into political parties that sought to unfetter the restrictions preventing a fully competitive free market (Marchak, 1991). This meant the divestiture of traditionally held government portfolios across the Western World.

More broadly, the message of most Westernized governments was that their intervention must be limited to supporting corporate growth and development, and this laid the foundation for the next decade of economic and political reform. To some small degree, corporate headquarters returned to their native soil, however they were no longer single monopolies. They were giant multi-corporations, part of an international network. In turn, they

created demands for a new service sector that catered to the demands for financial, management and communication services (Perkin, 1992). The emerging service sector was partially defined by the reorganization of industry and the advances made in technology to support it.

Yet another paradox occurred. The potency of business' influence came to bear on the state. The state could not afford to discount their requests. Business used the new political rationale to their advantage, and pressed for minimal intervention. Corporations had what Perkins (1992) explains as an ambivalent attitude towards the state. They did not desire governmental withdrawal from the market, but rather government's role was to create an environment in which business could operate and thrive. Moreover, the state was "an insurer of last resort: when all else fails, they can always appeal to the state for subsidies to bail them out" (Perkins, 1992, p. 57).

Society subscribed to this political mindset in large part because as Harvey (1989) states, "The outer limits of this process, [the subjugation of labour to capital] lies at the point where every person in every nook and cranny of the world is caught within the orbit of capital" (p. 415). For the New Right favouring liberal entrepreneurialism, the inability of Keynesianism to counter the economic crises, coupled with the rise of corporate power spawned this new political ideology. The result was a blending of liberal and conservative rationale, now commonly known as neo-liberalism.

During the 1980s, the powerful governments of the United States and Britain embraced neo-liberal policy. Together these powerful states ensured neo-liberal political discourse crystallized. In sum, it transformed the way policy-makers at all levels of government managed political activity. Neo-liberalism continued to be promoted despite evidence of the growing inequalities between those possessing wealth and income, and those who increasingly relied on social programmes.

This ideological shift was significant in Canada. Since World War II, Canada had put in place an extensive social policy and the distributive impact was significant. Eberle, Schultze and Sturm (2003) observed Canada's commitment to assist the less fortunate went beyond acquiescence of a welfare state consensus. Instead, the Canadian government embraced active advocacy in the creation and extension of social welfare programs.



This trajectory changed most noticeably in 1984 with Brian Mulroney's Conservative government (Jenson, 2003; Eberle et al., 2003). His leadership marked the ascendancy of a neo-liberal agenda for Canada. Not surprisingly, the defining features mirrored the broader trends of leaner government and a reduction of state intervention in the market. According to Jenson (2003), these partisan conditions coupled with federalism, dramatically altered Canada's political landscape. The Reform Party's emergence in Western Canada (thereafter the Canadian Alliance) and later the Conservative Party of Canada) at the turn of the millennium, solidified a more consistent New Right partisan position. These political conditions brought Canada's ideology closer to the US' New Right traditions (Eberle, Schultze & Sturm, 2003). Moreover, the Alliance/Progressive Conservative merger made it possible for neo-liberalism to enter the political mainstream. The political ideology embraced by the Alliance/Progressive Conservative merger continues under the leadership of Canada's current Prime Minister Steven Harper (see Chapter Four for a more detailed Canadian account). Despite the disparities surfacing (the most recent economic crisis notwithstanding), neo-liberal political discourse has stayed the course with policies largely undisputed. Understanding how this political discourse came to dominate, requires examining theories of power, hegemony and ideology.

### **HEGEMONY AND IDEOLOGY**

The concepts of ideology and hegemony have played a pivotal role in helping understand the nature of social power and dominance in the political arena. Works most influential in this respect are Michel Foucault's (1979, 1982) discussions on "orders of discourse" and his power/knowledge dyad; Gramsci's (1971) work on hegemony and Althusser's (1971) concept of ideological state apparatuses. In addition, the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and more recently Critchley (2004) assist in making the connections between power processes and the discourse in which they are situated.

The concept of hegemony acquired a new centrality through the work of Antonio Gramsci (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Increasingly, scholars from a number of disciplines have probed hegemony to provide a perspective on the conduct of political life. Gramsci's own definition of hegemony is relatively complex. "Domination" and "intellectual and moral leadership" are two of the hallmarks of his work (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 57-58). They represent multifaceted interconnections between political, cultural and ideological forms of leadership seen as legitimate, but not necessarily coercive forms of domination. Kurtz (1996) suggests the

meaning of hegemony implies a complementary and necessary relationship between the noun “leadership” and the infinitive “to lead” (p. 105). This understanding matches Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) interpretation. They suggest Gramsci implies latitude to move from the domain of the political, to the moral and intellectual sphere, in turn constituting a “higher synthesis, a “collective will” which, through ideology, becomes the organic cement unifying a historical bloc’ (p. 66, 67). Gramsci himself implies power is more than simply “ruling over” when he makes this observation,

...the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual or moral leadership.’ A social group dominates antagonist forces which it tends to ‘liquidate’ or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force: it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principle conditions for the winning of such power): it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to ‘lead’ as well (pp. 57-58).

In this Gramsci suggests leadership, regardless of ideological persuasion, employs two complementary practices. The first is domination using coercion and force against those who resist the ruling authority and their power. The second, hegemonic leadership, appeals to the intellect to impart specific notions of morality to either gain or retain support of those consenting to its rule, thereby establishing an *ethical-political* relationship (Kurtz, 1986).

Importantly, because hegemony is the process of articulating the meaning and synthesis of several discursive components, it can be rendered unstable as much as it can be reinforced. Counter-hegemony is the process of contesting, overturning and re-articulating (Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006). Critchley (2004) argues hegemonic notions are made tenuous and vulnerable through discourses introducing new ways of thinking. This cycle of articulation and re-articulation, based in a particular set of beliefs and values of the dominant ideology, serves to either stabilize or alter the dominant discourse. Because of this, hegemony is always aimed at obtaining consent and establishing its legitimacy (Kurtz, 1996). Robinson (2004) succinctly describes it as either “coercive domination” or “consensual domination” (p.161).

Fundamental to Gramsci’s precepts are political and cultural agents in the creation and charting of hegemonic processes. At the risk of oversimplification, they represent and direct the interests of those in power. In the current political context, the concept of hegemony provides a way forward in understanding how neo-liberalism, despite its limitations and

critique, promotes and embeds ideas. Moreover its rhetoric – expressions such as “freedom,” “individualism,” “initiative,” and “opportunity” – find broad appeal in the most elementary aspects of our humanity. As Sasson (1982) suggests, hegemony emphasizes the centrality of living one way, which not only informs political practices, but gives way to our norms, values and relations.

In light of this understanding of hegemony, ideology becomes fundamental in the struggle over the formation of hegemonic relationships. Ideology is the defender of the hegemonic, securing the channels through which a dominant value system, state, or social order is normalized. It serves as both the access point and gateway: the interests and values of a number of interested parties *must* converge or meld in order to move forward and present an “organic and relational whole” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 67). This “whole”, personified through institutions, and the techniques or apparatuses that once fused, creates a particular historicity. Green, Hebron and Woodward (1990) suggest ideology is more than just a system of ideas; it is “the complex system of perceptions and representations through which we experience ourselves and make sense of the world” (p. 30).

The interconnection between ideology, hegemony and politics cannot be over-emphasized. Critchley (2004) suggests politics is best conceived as a category that reflects a particular hegemonic perspective. After all, he questions ““what is politics?’ if not the realm of the decision, of action in the social world”; and as much as “politics tries to deny or render invisible its contingency and operations of power and force” it is, when conceived in the category of hegemony, “an act of power, force, and will that is contingent through and through” (p. 113). In addition, he writes:

Hegemony reveals politics to be the realm of contingent decisions by virtue of which subjects (whether persons, parties, or social movements) attempt to articulate and propagate meanings of the social. At its deepest level, the category of hegemony discloses the political logic of the social: that is civil society is politically constituted through contingent decisions (Critchley, 2004, pp. 113, 114).

In Gramscian terms, it is where the hegemonic social order is dialectically maintained and preserved. The State, was and still is, Rose (1996) argues, one of the most powerful means of coding, managing and articulating the production of authoritarian practices and rule: all the more reason, he argues, that the term “politics” can no longer be utilized as if its meaning is

self-evident, but must subject itself as the object of analysis. Because the ideology underlying discourse is rarely explicit, we have for the most part failed to recognize over time the subtle but significant implications that have occurred to redefine and shape political direction.

Harvey (2006a) argues hegemonic modes of discourse have insidious effects on political-economic practices. They tend to subsume our thinking patterns. So much so that we incorporate them into the common-sense way we interpret, live in and understand the world. These ideas, when naturalized, are often not offensive to us. Moreover, they often appeal to our common senses. This he argues, is the hegemonic. It inscribes. It results in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values and practices. In turn, we submerge and intuitively reject other discourses, and importantly legitimize, albeit unknowingly, consent to domination.

In a similar vein, Freire (1970) categorizes the hegemonic - whatever has become privileged, then engrained or embedded - as a form of naïve thinking. Naïve thinking denies the transformative capability of critical thinking. The present is normalized and “well behaved” in which the thinker accommodates to their surroundings and accepts the “static entity” (p. 92). Rose and Miller (1992) suggest constraints, conferred and monitored by authoritarian rule, are no longer necessary because the broader populace operates willingly within the boundaries established. “Power is no longer sovereignty imposed from above and on the citizen, no longer a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of “making up” citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom of which they are unaware” (p. 174).

Hegemonic dominance is exercised in both personal power and social power. Van Dijk (1993) suggests personal power is reflected when an individual asserts him/herself. Social power on the other hand, is found in privileged access to what van Dijk refers to as socially-valued resources. These include factors such as wealth, income, position status, force, group membership, education or knowledge. Letner (2005) argues hegemony cannot be separated from consent, and consent requires some form of autonomy. Ideology, in turn, serves as a guide or justification to whatever dominant system prevails, and does so because some measure of autonomy is exercised in the giving over of one’s consent. Control, either at the individual or group level is at the heart of power. In the case of social power, control is exercised by members of one group over another.

Increasingly within the contemporary political sphere, we have become accustomed to a polity that combines the actions of political and non-political authorities and actors with

communities and individuals (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996). Each exercises varying degrees of influence, power and control, yet as Barry et al. continue, we have been less likely to examine the “relations of force, of power, of subordination, of liberation and “responsibilization”, of collective allegiance and individual choice that are brought into being in these new configurations” (Barry et al., 1996, p. 2). Thus, the more inclusive agenda of those in political control to incorporate non-political entities and citizens may reflect an attempt at a more democratic administration (Hansen, 1998) without either party fully understanding the particular configuration of forces that serve as a framework for action. In this regard, Cox (1981) makes the observation that actions are not determined in any direct, mechanical way but through pressures and constraints: “Individuals and groups may move with the pressures or resist and oppose them, but they cannot ignore them” (p. 135).

In as much as ideology is a concept stabilizing the hegemonic value system, it is also a cogent assessment tool for the political environment because it articulates the connection between communication and power (Deetz & Mumby, 1990). A useful foundation for this assessment lies in Foucault’s work on governmentality and political rationality.

### **FOUCAULT’S INFLUENCE**

Michel Foucault (1929-1984) put forward one of the more penetrating accounts of the history of government. Foucault is not generally known for his work in political economy. However, during the 1970s, he investigated political power and many contemporary scholars (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996; Brown 2003; Burchell, 1991, 1996; Burchell, Gordon & Miller, 1991; Gordon, 1991; Simons, 1995; Valverde, 2007) suggest Foucault’s (1991) concept of governmentality is a relevant approach when analyzing personal and societal conduct – “omnes et singulatum” or “all and each” (Foucault, 1979). His work is pivotal for scholars preoccupied with the question of “how to govern?” and the nature of change within government.

### **Governmentality**

Foucault coined governmentality as a guide to the historical reconstruction of the complex relations between knowledge about people and systems of government (Simons, 1995). Governmentality is the “ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculation and the tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power” (Foucault, 1979, p. 20). He was referring to a certain way of thinking

that had become the common link for political thought and action (Rose, O'Malley & Verde, 2006). More broadly and simply stated, it was the techniques and procedures for directing human behaviour, appropriate for governing children, souls and consciences, households, the state or for oneself (Foucault, 1997).

By definition, governmentality is different from state theory. The latter refers to a group of unified actors possessing significant autonomy that determines sovereignty. The former realizes power is no longer an exclusive attribute of only sovereignty (Singer & Weir, 2006). Rather, it is a willing of one's own power, different from the will to dominate. Furthermore, it can be claimed by the individual as a practice of freedom and as a critical ethos of self. "It is an ethic of permanent resistance in which constant activism is required in order to prevent enabling limits from congealing into constraining limitations and to generate new limits that constitute selves and politics" (Simons, 1995, p. 22).

Foucault (1991a) drew his conclusions of political power by way of genealogical analysis, referring to the political treatises emerging between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were particularly insightful works that helped to structure his understanding on the processes that gave rise to modern state knowledge and power (Valverde, 2007). Three writings working in tandem, Nicolas Machiavelli's *The Prince*; Guillaume de La Perrière's anti-Machiavellian *Miroir Politique*, both of the 16<sup>th</sup> century; and the educational writings for the French Dauphine by Francois de La-Mothe-Le-Vayer of the 17th century, were instrumental in shaping Foucault's thesis on governmentality.

These writings profiled for Foucault the variations on government. As a first observation, Machiavelli's "political art" (Gordon, 1991, p. 9) reflected an informed sovereignty (advice to the prince) which the prince used to control both his subjects and protect his territory. As a doctrine it was constrained: "a doctrine whose focus is merely to 'hold out', to retain one's sovereignty" (Gordon, 1991, p. 9), resulting in political implications that locate this type of government as occupying a position that is situated as above the kingdom or what Foucault (1991a) referred to as external, singularity and transcendent.

The latter texts Foucault employed did not interpret government as a polemic sovereignty. Government is characterized as a duality of rule in which no single authority was responsible for managing the conduct of the citizens. Instead a number of authorities (political, philosophical, religious, medical or pedagogical) governed different sites in relation to

different objectives. This second observation reflected a plurality of conduct responsible for government practices. Gordon (1991) and Burchell (1996) suggest that Foucault interpreted government in this capacity to mirror a disciplined self and society or “the conduct of the conduct” (Foucault, 1991a). It was the more or less judicious governing of one’s every day life. Government reflected activities, which aimed to “shape, guide, or affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Gordon, 1991, p. 2). Self-governing provided the possibility for continuity between micro and macro levels of government, “between self and self, private interpersonal relations involving some form of control or guidance within social institutions and communities and finally, relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty” (Gordon, 1991, p. 2,3). At the root of personal governance was the converging of multiple “interventions” that promoted a specific “form of life” or individual conduct (Dean, 1991, in Hindess, 1996, p. 65). This form of governmentality is distinguishable from the sole purpose of the former, which was external and transcendent, to government that is “internal to the state or society” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 91). What takes the personal into the realm of government is the link to the various procedures and techniques legitimizing their action. Burchell (1996) makes this clear: “No doubt, throughout the ages humans have reflected on the conduct of themselves and others, but such thought becomes governmental to the extent that it seeks to render itself technical, to insert itself into the world by “realizing” itself as a *practice*” [italics in original] (p. 41).

Gordon (1991) writes that Foucault’s notion of governmentality not only suspends any immediate polemical implications, but also addresses the immanent conditions and constraints of practice. His practice of questioning what could be classified as conventional wisdom or discursive formations<sup>2</sup>, makes room to highlight if not challenge the presuppositions or epistemes that may masquerade as objective knowledge. For example, Plant (1991) suggests political philosophy is concerned with justifying both the right and wrong way(s) in which political power is to be exercised. The limitation of this approach, according to Foucault is in determining what is “right” because “right” often dictates the limits of power. “He [Foucault] asserts that by continuing to discuss norms as if they are rights, political philosophy masks,

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Simon (1995) a discursive formation can be said to exist when there are regular relations between its objects, style of description, concepts and thematic choices. This is in keeping with Foucault’s observation of discourse is tailored according to the existence of rules of formation for all its objects, operations, concepts and theoretical options (1978, p. 9)

conceals and effaces the dominative operations and effects of modern normalizing power” (Simons, 1995, p. 54).

Foucault (1980) asserts the result deflects attention away from political ideology which frames government. Truth, as objective knowledge is made absolute, instead of being appropriately understood as “a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Truth, he argues reflects an insular relationship between the discursive elements, which when combined, culminate in a dialogic that is perpetuated, embedded and affirmed as normative. Truth from this perspective reflects what Mouffe (2006, in Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006) describes as hegemonic order. It is truth that resists or suppresses complete inclusion. Truth, is not so much the issue, but how truth functions in particular settings, how it is evoked and by whom, and how it is circulated. Moreover, who gains and who loses are determined by nominations of what is true, or what is made real and is presented as significant (Inayatullah, 1998). The result deflects attention from the political ideology that underlies government (Foucault, 1980).

Governmentality then, is intended to assess critically the ways of thinking and acting embodied in the attempts to know and govern society. Rose, O’Mally and Valverde (2006) write:

An analysis of governmentalities then is one that seeks to identify these different styles of thought, their conditions of formation, the principles and knowledges that they borrow from and generate, the practices that they consist of, how they are carried out, their contestations and alliances with other arts of government (p. 84).

Lemke (2002) draws a similar conclusion in dismantling Foucault’s neologism. He suggests Foucault, by semantically linking *gouverner* (governing) with *mentalité*, is cautioning against studying technologies of power independent of the underlying political rationality.

Rose and Miller (1992) expand further on Foucault’s notion of governmentality suggesting there are three differences to consider when examining political power that extends beyond the state. The first eschews sociological realism and attempts to articulate explanation and causality. The focus is not how social life really was and why. Rather, the focal point is to examine how political actors have faced these questions: “what is our power; to what ends should it be exercised; what effects has it produced; how can we know what we need to know, and do what we need to do in order to govern?” (p. 177). A second focal point is in



understanding that language is performative: “An analysis of political discourse helps us elucidate not only *the systems of thought* through which authorities have posed and specified the problems for government, but also the *systems of action* through which they have sought to give effect to government” (p. 177, italics in original). The third distinction is the manner in which knowledge is conceptualized. It does not mean “ideas” but refers to the “know how” or “key machineries” (p. 178) that incorporate theory, experiment, techniques of government, and people.

Foucault (1991a) suggests the connecting point between the personal and the political occurs at that juncture where individual thought - in formulating, analysing, and rectifying ideas - is acted upon; and made possible by a range of procedures and apparatuses that could achieve these ends. This, then, according to Foucault’s thinking, is the relationship between the modern state and the autonomy of the individual. Together they verify the other’s emergence. Lemke (2001) agrees.

“Government is . . . a “contact point” where techniques of domination – or power – and *techniques of the self* “interact”, where “technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself and, conversely . . . where techniques of the self are integrated into structures of coercion” (Foucault, 1980, in Burchell, 1996, p. 20).

This is a critical relationship and the connection between individual response and authoritative decisions cannot be overlooked. The reciprocal and vertical relationship between the state and the individual draws out two key points requiring emphasis. First, it represents a threshold at which particular hegemonic relations or values are either reinforced or resisted. Second, it points to a perpetual relationship. Relations are not static, rather interactions should permit continually questioning and challenging of government by individuals claiming a stake in their society.

The strength in approaching the study of government from this perspective is in the ability to circumvent periods and specific issues. The focus becomes governance as opposed to generating an account of the state (Valverde, 2007). The blending of those ruling over and the ruling from within highlights the co-determinacy of the modern sovereign state with the autonomous individual. In other words, the borders between the public and private are more porous than what has heretofore been believed: “government refers to a continuum, which

extends from political government right through to forms of self-regulation – namely, “technologies of the self” (Lemke, 2002, p. 59). Contemporary government is a reflection of the individuals who have taken initiative to make government “rule” as it does. It is, as much as anything, a reflection of the majority of individual actors, whose thoughts are put into action to reflect a particular political rationale.

Herein lays one of the critiques of governmentality. The practice of governmentality moves beyond the notion that the state as principle actor is designing policies and practices, to one in which the practice of government reflects the outcomes of interactions of multiple actors (de Vries, 2005). Subsequently, the struggle between what is theoretically posited and what empirically occurs remains; and to some degree highlights the unreliability between the self and the social. For example, de Vries’ (2005) research on relationships between Costa Rican peasants and a government programme lead him to conclude “though immensely suggestive and creative at the theoretical level, works on governmentality fall short in describing the tensions and contradictions inherent to social life” (p. 109). Thus an ongoing challenge is determining if the circulation of power holds as Foucault suggests, or whether holding or imposing power still exists in some form. Li (2007) also observes one of the limits of governmentality is still the inability to account for power and because it is a “relation of ‘reciprocal incitation and struggle’ [Foucault, 1982, p. 222]” in which the power dynamic remains influx. The empirical questions she raises suggest an ongoing conundrum: “What actions does it provoke? How? Under what conditions? With what effects?” (p. 276). This brings to the fore the challenge that governmentality may also be prescriptive, and therefore align more with an omniscient viewpoint than that of those who are subjected (Coombe, 2007). Thus its veracity has been contested, nonetheless, although not without challenges, it remains useful for my purposes here.

### **Political Rationalities**

Cox (1987) contends historical structures are a manifestation of the relationship between the subjective and the objective. Politics, he argued is not a real physical object, yet politics has shaped our human situation as expressed through our collective being. “In being so shared, these ideas constitute the social world of these same individuals. They attain objectivity in the structures that circumscribe human action”, and in doing so, do not isolate individual actions and events, but rather examine “evidence of changes in the frameworks that set limits for

thinking and acting” (p. 395). What Cox is describing is the nature of political discourse, which is subjected to changing discursive fields, and which he contends is the basis of political rationality.

Despite the shifts in frameworks, Rose and Miller (1992) suggest there are patterns of regularity that can be observed in political rationality. Brown (2006) has argued political rationality governs the “sayable, the intelligible, and the truth criteria of these domains” (p. 693). She makes an important observation of political rationality. It is not, she suggests, the equivalent of ideology that may stem from, or mask an economic reality, which then is transmitted to political or social realms, but rather it is a specific norm. It reflects a more or less disciplined and logically reflexive organizing of the political sphere, governance practices and citizenship. From this perspective, political rationality functions to construct the domains of possible government action. In addition, it facilitates furthering policy debates and the text normalized in and through the discourse of the polity.

In this way, political rationality operates upon and through history, or as Beeson and Firth (1998) suggest through “particular and historically specific instances” (p. 216). It is what Foucault refers to as the “art of government”. The art of government is associated with a *kind* of government, for example, facism, liberalism, neo-liberalism, or conservatism that proposes alternative solutions for contemporary issues. This perspective views political power as operating in terms of specific rationalizations and has as its purpose “specific objectives that reflect[s] on itself in characteristic ways” (Rose, O’Malley & Valverde, 2006, p. 84).

Rose and Miller (1992) earmark three distinct attributes of political rationality. First, political rationalities outline different forms of authority recognized in society. These are the political, religious, familial domains that have under their sphere certain responsibilities. Attached to these responsibilities are specific goals and principles to which the activities of government should be directed. This is a *moral form* “in so far as they concern such issues as the proper distribution of tasks between different authorities and the ideals or principles to which government should address” (Rose, 1996a, p. 42).

Second, the nature of a political rationality is shaped according to the way in which it is legitimized. It is an *epistemological stance* inferring a relationship between how we think about what should be governed, and who should be governed (Rose & Miller, 1996). It is the scope of that which is governed. The nation, population, economy, society and community as

well as its citizens require governing. The citizen is given particular form; they do not exist outside their social milieu. Rather our existence is in relation to the manner in which the technologies shaped it (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Miller & Rose, 1996; Rose, 1992). Hence, Burchell (1991) quoting Veyne (1987), writes “governors and governed are not simple historical universals” (p. 119), rather they are “individuals obediently perform[ing] their assigned tasks and conduct[ing] themselves in prescribed ways” (p. 119).

Third, political rationalities are articulated in a distinguishing *idiom*. The language constituting political discourse is more than rhetorical. This third attribute of political rationalities “concerns the way in which their distinctive use of language both translates reality into political debate and elaborates programs and policies in a particular idiom” (Beeson & Firth, 1998, p. 217). Rose (1996) explains this by suggesting a certain style of reasoning is deployed and language then becomes a set of “intellectual techniques” (p.42) that frame reality so as to be understood and made feasible by determining which spheres can be subject to intervention.

Brown (2003) has stated that in order to comprehend an ideology’s political and cultural effects, it must first be deconstructed. The political rationale must be exposed in order to fully understand the political choices - the “specific and consequential organization upon the social, the subject and the state” (Brown, 2006, p. 693). Understood from this perspective, political rationalities then become the means through which state level government exacts influence or “structure[s] the field of possible action of others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 221), which allows governing to occur from a distance.

### **NEO-LIBERALISM: THE CURRENT RATIONALE AND IDEOLOGY**

Analysing neo-liberalism as an art of government or political rationality means determining what logic governs the techniques implemented in order to achieve specific outcomes. Brown (2003) observes that in recent years we have been tutored by a range of scholars grappling to understand the trends of the nation state under liberal democracy and post-Fordist capitalism. Moreover, she argues, this grappling continues. Necessary collaborative intellectual efforts continue to diagnose and articulate the present, reflecting on the political rationality of neo-liberalism that has shaped the western polity for the better part of three decades. This analysis suggests the historical bloc of neo-liberalism has yet to come full circle or be fully cemented.

However, as Harvey (2006a) and others before him (Cox, 1997; Rose & Miller, 1992) note, there are trends that can be observed in articulating a neo-liberal history of the present.

It is commonplace to associate neo-liberalism with self-regulating markets, maximized competition, and free trade achieved through deregulated fiscal and social policies that favour free enterprise. More specifically, Harvey (2006a) defines it as a “theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework defined by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade” (p. 145). Brown (2003, 2006) positions neo-liberalism as a marker for the end of liberal democracy as we have traditionally understood it, and as an indicator of liberalism’s economic (as opposed to political) variant. Similar to Harvey, the ordinary language of neo-liberalism makes reference to the free market; the character of which includes maximizing competition, fostering free trade by means of economic de-regulation, the elimination of tariffs, and a range of monetary and social policies that are favourable to business.

When we speak of neo-liberalism, Burchell (1996) suggests we are citing modern forms of liberalism also encompassed in the terms economic liberalism or economic rationalism. He positions “new” liberalism not as a natural extension of “old” liberalism, but a dismantling of the state and the practices of government. Rose (1996) refers to this as the “detachment of substantive authority of expertise from the apparatuses of political rule” (p. 41). Authority is redirected and is founded on a rationality fostering competition, accountability and consumer demand. These criteria serve as the touchstones of optimal market conditions; and thus become the principles dictating the degree of government intervention. Moreover, these actions secure a new role for government. Burchell (1996) writes “. . . the market exists, and can only exist, under certain political, legal and institutional conditions that must be actively constructed through government” (p. 23). In other words, neo-liberalism defines government’s role and in this way, it is not anti-government. Rather, government, having previously failed to achieve its objectives, needs new strategies that will succeed (Rose, 1996a). It is through a neo-liberal framework that the legal, institutional and cultural conditions are created enabling an “artificial competitive game of entrepreneurial conduct to be played to best effect” (Burchell, 1996, p. 27). Government is considered successful when it fulfills its responsibility to intentionally create the conditions within which entrepreneurial and competitive conduct is possible (Barry,

Osborne & Rose, 1996). Lemke (2001) argues, “Neo-liberalism admittedly ties the rationality of the government to the rational action of individuals; however, its point of reference is no longer some pre-given human nature, but an artificially created form of behaviour” (p. 200).

### **Neo-Liberal Influence at the Local Level**

Directly or indirectly, a number of scholars allude to a policy shift favouring neo-liberalism within the local context. In particular, the critics have emphasized that the importance directed towards capitalist enterprise is facilitated through accommodating postures from all levels of government (Cox & Mair, 1981; Hall, 2004; Harvey, 1989; Mair, 2006; Reid, 2003). This accommodating stance by government clears the way for private enterprise to benefit through supply-side actions that further assist them when competing for incoming investment.

The specific and obvious markers of neo-liberalism are manifested at the local level through discourse that emphasizes economic growth and development (Mair, 2006). It is solidified through local development policies reflecting a market-driven approach; and is predominantly shaped by the elite actors in the community (Reed, 1997). Often the emphasis has been to maximize the attractiveness of their locale in order to attract development (Benington & Geddes, 1992; Britton, 1991; Cox & Mair, 1988; Gotham, 2005; Harvey, 1989). Where this has occurred, Molotch (1976) suggests the city and/or its surroundings are perceived as a market commodity.

At first glance, their motivations are both logical and understandable. Traditionally, many communities thrived because of the natural resources available in a particular geographic location. However, as traditional industries in North America decline, collapse, or reorganize, many communities wrestle with the question of how to manage the economic pressures brought about by increased competition and declining services and funding traditionally provided by government. For some communities, the option of further developing natural resources is no longer feasible; and for communities facing this impasse, alternative economic development strategies, often aggressively pursued and competed for, (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993) have become the focus for many community decision-makers.

### *Community-Based Tourism Development within the Context of Neo-liberal Ideology*

Tourism has emerged as a priority in economic development strategies of many communities (Lloyd & Clark, 2001; Paradis, 2004; Richards & Hall, 2000). The perceived value in using

tourism as the economic development strategy is two fold. First, decision-makers believe tourism generates both employment and economic growth. Second, tourism is perceived as a clean or non-contaminating alternative to industry with few residual effects.

However, it is now commonly accepted that tourism's impacts, both positive and negative, are apparent at the level of the destination community (Timothy, 2002). Also increasingly clear, is the reaction of groups and individuals to tourism is dependent in large part, on the degree to which they have benefited, suffered from, or merely endured tourism development (Richards & Hall, 2000). Varied resident reactions suggest the community is not homogeneous (Silk, 1999; Wearing & Wearing, 2001), but is both a more complex and contested entity than previously presented. Increasingly evident across the literature, scholars are recognizing the complexity of community and its layered dimensions. Communities are not merely physical locations but embody a socio-cultural dimension. Harvey (2006b) writes, "It is only when relationality connects to the absolute spaces and times of social and material life that politics comes alive. To neglect that connectivity is to court political irrelevance" (p. 293). Space takes on meaning for the people who reside there and this is increasingly being recognized by tourism scholars. For example, Goodson and Phillimore (2004) note that "tourism spaces are not physically but socially constructed, it is important to consider how the meanings relating to those spaces are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed over time" (p. 39). They are not alone in drawing this conclusion. Other scholars are recognizing the interplay and nuances of community life (see also Crouch, 2000; Eeckhout, 2001; Frenkel & Walton, 2000; Gotham, 2001; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000; Rojek, 1997).

Hollinshead and Jamal (2001) make one of the stronger cases examining how epistemology and moral conduct surrounding tourism aligns with neo-liberalism political rationale. Yet this awareness was juxtaposed against the complexity and contested nature of communities. They argue that the discourses surrounding tourism have traditionally been dominated by an epistemological logic lacking consideration for meaning in place. The failure to acknowledge the multiple and contested nature of space has had a tendency to reproduce the existing neo-liberal ideology, which favours a discourse of productive governance. Productive governance acknowledges a framework for collaboration, but it is a collaboration framed by the private and/or public sector authorities who "govern" the development and management of the destination, attraction, environment or culture. Productive governance is aligned to

complement strategic corporate interests and well-positioned stakeholders within the global tourism industry. Their influences determine which sites and which performances are secured for tourism purposes. When communities are viewed from this perspective, as only possessing properties or attributes for sale, development reflects the emphasis placed on consumptive activities. Unwittingly, it results in a territorial-based definition of community where commodification not only occurs, but is also cemented (Gotham, 2001).

Harvey (1973), nearly four decades ago, was one of the first critics assessing the impact of capitalist relations on communities in which consumptive activities were paramount. He argued it was crucial to reflect on the nature of space if we were to understand urban processes under this ideology. He analysed cities not for their uniqueness, but for their structural conformity in increasing economic value (Zukin, 2006). His work has been critical for scholars of tourism, because tourism plays a significant role in the motivation to re-image communities. Britton (1991) also observed this phenomenon, suggesting commodification through tourism occurs in three principle ways. First, the industry can take advantage of the existing features. Place commodification occurs in part because it possesses desirable physical, social, cultural or commercial attributes. These attributes assume both use and exchange values. Where space enters the realm of exchange values, it becomes the commodity. Second, the tourism industry can create its own attractions, constructing built environments possessing specific attributes or themes serving as pull factors. Finally, tourism itself can be co-opted into commercial ventures to enhance market profile, generate commercial returns, or for social legitimization of a particular venture.

Employing these strategies to create tourist attractions and promote their products has significant implications for a community to consider. Imaging or packaging place opens discussion around how place-based notions of community are defined (Richards & Hall, 2000). However, it is important to recognize that place-based notions of community have and do evolve over time. Nonetheless, valuing communities primarily because attributes are leveraged or produced can subsume other important features such as its social, cultural and ethnic characteristics. Decisions made in this context can alter the existing communal fabric. Moreover, decisions made only with an eye to economic vitality, potentially narrow the complexity and contrast found in communities, altering the representation of that space.



Eeckhout's (2001) critical perspective on the redevelopment associated with Times Square, New York nicely depicts these aforementioned challenges. Times Square's transformation over the past decade reconfigured it from an evolved social space defined by mixed heterogeneous and conflicting uses, to one "Disneyfied," resulting in an environment more predictable and sterile. In essence, the community moved from an evolving entity so to speak, to one that appeared more contrived, imposed and potentially static. This transformation, he argues, dampens the communal pulse.

Public spaces like today's Times Square testify to what Kenin McNamara (1999, p. 201) has called "a fear of conflict that marks the failure of urbanity, the ability to value the diversity and unpredictability that has characterized the life in cities. . . [T]he greater challenge . . . is to reassert the value of the public sphere and a democratic culture in which people are responsible to others whom they do not know and may not like or even understand (p. 423).

Further, the potential exists in which these actions firmly root individuals and communities in a perpetual climate of economic restructuring. Hudson (2001) suggests communities or places may ramble along, adjusting to varying levels of shared meaning. However, re-imagining place is often contingent upon capital's having an interest in continuing to produce them.

This convergence of interests between capital and people in place can thus be ruptured and the "coherence" of places threatened if the economic rationale for production erodes. Thus while development and promotion of cities has become one of the principle mechanisms for regeneration, it is prone to the destructive character of capitalism. In other words, the way in which capitalism reproduces itself is an "ongoing process of creative destruction" (Hudson, 2001, p. 268).

Re-imagining a community and in particular its downtown appears to provide a certain cache. As a result, many communities over the past few decades have focused on intense restructuring (Short et. al, 1993), centred on shopping, cultural development and attracting business travel and tourists. According to Ley (1988, in Lowes, 2002), downtowns garner symbolic worth particularly when it crosses a threshold. He suggests development focuses primarily on cultural venues, and private investment focuses on hotels and office towers. In short, much of the motivation for current development appears tied to consumer preferences. This trend can impact the communal sense of place, leaving it open to possibly inscribing a neo-liberal hegemony wherein discussions around community direction are encased within neo-liberal limits and agendas. Sassens (1991) argues this is how the global manifests locally.

It is at the local level where relations of power and the political rationale reverberate, despite their formulation elsewhere. The community is both a receiver and transmitter of broader structural forces.

However, local communities can also be the seat of resistance. Richards and Hall (2000) suggest linkages between how urban space is defined and how the community responds are critical. If space is perceived as a place of domination and subordination, then it is also a place where these same forces can be resisted. If we recall the work of Foucault on governmentality, power enacted endows its recipients with the capacity to be agents even under oppressive conditions. In other words, the reflexive action of individuals engaged in agency is a way of resisting structure. Space, then can be a place wherein one attempts to regain ground and challenge prevailing ideologies. In the case of community, space becomes the place to confront the many assumptions of the local political and economic elites and to respond to both the perpetual reproduction of profit and capitalist social relations. In other words, resistance can be interpreted as a way to construct a wider range of communal meaning than can be found in the one-dimensional concern with profitable spaces of production (Hudson, 2001).

If as Harvey (2006a) charges, that at the heart of creative destruction is capitalism, and if communities are moving under this umbrella, they may well risk social, cultural and political uncertainty (Richards and Hall, 2000). This is not to suggest that communities remaining static are sheltered from this uncertainty. Rather, the important piece is that the process of change reflects an informed decision on behalf of the community. Discussions about what may be lost or gained in the altering of their community in an effort to improve it are worth embracing. One of the keys to communal unity and sustainability is to emphasize that the process of charting their future is equally important, if not more so, than the outcome. The challenge, as noted earlier, is ensuring alternate means of economic viability reflect more than just pro-growth discourse; and importantly if pro-growth is chosen, that it reflects the support of an informed citizenry. Citizen participation, however difficult and uncertain reflects a more equitable distribution of material resources, shared knowledge and learning, all valuable in the service of the community's development. In light of this, it is worthwhile examining the principle theories used to discuss community participation.

## **NORMATIVE THEORIES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OR COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNANCE**

Participatory and collaborative frameworks, it could be argued, embrace Foucault's concept of governmentality. They are an opportunity for new forms of governance, reflecting both vertical and horizontal representation for responsible governing. In principle and in contemporary times we can understand this to mean that to rule is no longer an exclusive attribute of those in public office. Rather, it is the ability of individuals to insert themselves into the various procedures and techniques of government. Moreover, these processes provide opportunities to establish new thresholds for socially constructing community growth and development paradigms.

Lahiri-Dutt (2004) suggests the goal of citizen participation is to remedy social injustice through the redistribution of political power within society. In communities, it can be interpreted as the direct involvement of people into public affairs occurring at local or grassroots levels. Citizen participation secures "the right of citizens to contribute towards the form, substance and overall dimensions of their respective communities" (Williams, 2006, p. 201). Citizen participation or a community-based approach to community planning serves two primary functions. First, input from a spectrum of stakeholders unveils new knowledge informing the process, thereby improving the quality of outcomes. Second, because participation is presumed to foster increased levels of acceptance amongst the stakeholders, participation is perceived to contribute to more legitimate decisions and processes (Hage, Leroy & Willems, 2005).

The pragmatic outcomes are less important than the process. From this perspective, it aligns well with the concepts of participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. Participatory democracy, founded on the ideals of Aristotle, stresses that citizens reach their full potential by participating in public decisions (Barber, 2004). Deliberative democracy is most notably advanced through Habermas' (1994) notion of democratic discourse. He stresses inter-subjective understanding in the communication process, which results in a greater collective understanding in order to achieve a co-operative outcome for the interest of all involved parties. Authentic discourse, as introduced by Fox and Miller (1995), reflects a similar understanding wherein public policies achieved through bottom-up style negotiation and consensus building are the best way to facilitate resolutions.

An accounting for the degree to which these normative theories are employed can be found in the aforementioned and influential work of Arnstein's (1969) *Ladder of Citizen Participation*. Rungs on a ladder serve as an analogy representing the degree of authentic participation or truly democratic discourse that can be anticipated. Reassigning power in the hands of the citizens enables equitable participation and represents the ideal. To the contrary, various forms of obscured manipulation extended to the public are located at the bottom end of the ladder and contribute to the community's sense of disempowerment. Influences of Arnstein's model can be found in the work of other scholars who focus on the interface between empowerment and disempowerment. One relevant model worth considering here is Roca's (1997). Building on Arnstein's ladder, Rocha's typology shifts the emphasis from different forms of participation to several different dimensions of empowerment. Empowerment happens in several dimensions including personal (both atomistic and embedded) professional and socio-political contexts, subsequently suggesting it is both a means and a goal. Quite apart from providing coherence with a number of empowerment theories, Roca suggests the typology is useful for practitioners for goal clarification and strategies; for community organizations to conceptualize how empowerment is realized; and for local governments to evaluate organizations' strategies and methods.

The goal of employing theory to discuss community participation is to address the redistribution of power, foster collaboration and more recently acknowledged, to build social capital (Okazaki, 2008). As Williams (2006) points out, the theoretical perspectives of community participation reflect origin, need, substance, and outcomes thereby emphasizing its constitutional nature. They can be either spaces for empowerment or disempowerment. As genuine democratic practice, they reflect the positive aspects such as decentralized governance, creating or recognizing other knowledge formations, transformation, knowledge building and solution oriented, living community networks. Where they are perceived as disempowering, they reflect the co-optation of citizens into dominant and existing power relations and regulated spaces lacking participation and trust. If the latter is the case, residents are caught up in spectator politics where "process, vision and missions of a more equitable society operate merely as promissory notes" (Williams, 2006, p. 197).

One of the key messages surfacing in theories of effective participation is that empowerment needs to be at the centre of community-based development. This means

democratic citizen governance should take precedence in order to effectively deal with uncertain, complex and controversial planning and policy tasks. While there are some differences among varying strategies, the common features that arise from community participation coalesce around strategies that promote sustainable, people-centred development, equal opportunities and social justice (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; McKinlay, 2006; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, Morrissey, 2000). For the most part, collaboration and participatory frameworks have challenged the theoretical and philosophical foundations of traditional planning practices that have in the past reflect what Innes and Booher (1999) refer to as the “mechanical Newtonian world” (p. 412).

### **Community-Based Participatory Processes in Tourism Development**

Given the increasing importance of community-based participation and governance, and the increasing role tourism is playing within local contexts, it seems prudent to provide a brief overview of collaboration and partnerships as they have been applied to tourism planning.

Mantysalo (2002) suggests the basis of collaborative planning practices stem from theoretical developments since the late 1980s and are associated with Critical Planning Theory (CPT). Broadly speaking, critical planning theory is an ontological stance in which fundamental theoretical discussions about how to incorporate interdependent issues such as legitimacy, inclusiveness, domination, and the quality of the discourse are addressed through the work of a number of planning theorists (see for example, Forester, 1993). However, it is worth noting that challenges remain in terms of incorporating CPT as a useful empirical tool to evaluate real life planning discourses (Mantysalo, 2002).

Not surprising, the emphasis in the literature reflects these concerns, stressing the importance of collaborative or participatory processes to offset the challenges of ad-hoc development (Reid, Mair, & George, 2004). In response, Tosun (2006) notes that tourism development and planning paradigms have undergone a significant myopic change moving from intolerance and rigidity on behalf of the planners, to a perspective encompassing comprehensive, flexible, systematic or routine participatory approaches. Moreover, they reflect the impact across social, environmental as well economic dimensions.

A number of terms portray collaborative arrangements such as coalitions, forums, alliances, task forces and public-private partnerships (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). In principle they reflect the intent put forward by Wood and Gray (1991), who were among the first to note

the function of collaboration “occur[s] when a group of autonomous stakeholders within a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (p. 146).

Hall (2000) suggests the collaborative approach is midline between top-down and bottom-up approaches to tourism planning. However, the complexity is underscored in a previous work in which he and McArthur (1998) noted that collaboration required participation and interaction between all horizontal and vertical partnerships within the planning process: “between the various levels of an organisation and between the responsible organisation and the stakeholders in the planning process” (Hall, 2000, p. 146). Most simply, Everett and Jamal (2004) define collaboration as a process in which “stakeholders engage in an interactive process to either act on, or decide on issues related to a problem” (Everett & Jamal, 2004, p. 57).

The emphasis in the literature stresses the point that citizen participation through collaborative and participatory frameworks helps increase democratic empowerment and equity for the community. In addition, the rewards of local initiatives not only result in enhanced products, but the benefits are directed more towards the community and its members as opposed to those outside the community. Reed (2000) and others argue in favour of citizen input because of the complexity, uncertainty and potential for conflict that has been a marker of tourism planning in general.

Bramwell and Lane (2000) synthesized the benefits of collaborative approaches, suggesting one of the primary reasons for collaborative planning is to strengthen sustainability within the community. They suggest sustainable development is enhanced in four principle ways. First, representation from stakeholders without economic interests may provide insight into the varied resources needing protection. Second, a more integrative and holistic approach to policy-making may evolve, leading to the third benefit of heightened awareness of the costs and benefits, which reflect more equitable policy outcomes. Fourth, and finally, they argue broad participation has the potential to democratize decision-making, in addition to fostering the intrinsic value associated with individual growth through empowerment, capacity building and skill acquisition.

As noted earlier, the literature reflects the popularity and accuracy of Caffyns and Jobbin’s (2003) assessment of “near universal agreement that community participation in the

development process is essential” (p. 225). However, also evident, even upon cursory glance is that if we shift the discussion from what’s required for participatory processes to a more critical discussion about their success, challenges remain. In particular, the discussion continues to center on the ongoing conundrum of power and the different ways it continues to manifest. The focal point of this next section is to examine more astutely participatory processes and collaboration.

### **Questioning Success: Empirical Assessments of Participatory Process Effectiveness**

The goal of citizen participation in participatory frameworks has been to amplify voices in the community. A seemingly straight-forward task, researchers over the past two decades have attempted to demonstrate how best to plan tourism strategies in the context of overall community-defined development goals that reflect the desires of the wider citizenry (see Hall, 2000; Jamal & Getz, 2000; Murphy, 1985; Reed, 1997; Reid, 2003; Telfer, 2002). There remains, however, an ongoing concern with participatory processes. Conundrums surface around issues of voice and the kinds of solutions included or rejected, both of which reflect the fundamental role of power in the process. Although proponents have proposed how to counter issues of power, (see for example Jamal & Getz, 1995), they do not dispel why, how and under what conditions power is distributed or withheld (Reed, 1997). The problem is especially troubling if juxtaposed against the broader influences coming to bear locally.

Reid (2003) argues that the tourism industry is a globalizing force. From this perspective, communities are subsumed into a more comprehensive global tourism industry that is for the most part, a private, entrepreneurial activity. Molotch’s (1976) early observation is also noteworthy. Across North America, land is increasingly a new market commodity, recognized for its exchange value, and tourism is playing a vital role in connecting land as a commodity for economic development.

This trend is not lost on developers, politicians and the local elite who also recognize the increasing importance of the landscape to tourism in our current economy. When an organization is perceived to possess enough power, it has a compounding effect that gives it an effective capacity for control in a number of markets and locations worldwide (Allen, 2004). When this occurs, Allen suggests the organization, (and I would argue in this context, the tourism industry) is capable of extending across the social landscape, anticipating little resistance in decision-making processes or none that cannot be overcome. He writes, “its very

capacity is transmitted, made up as it were of pre-formed power which is then delegated or distributed according to the organization's specific goals" (2004, p. 21).

In general, the vast literature on citizen participation has dealt with the scope of participation, but until recently, has had very little focus on the quality of participation (Morrissey, 2000). Yet a key criticism of scholars working in community-based tourism is that the community has rarely been at the helm of tourism and planning development (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Reid, 2003). Reed (1997) drawing on the work of Douglas (1989) argues that local development has historically been governed by individual private entrepreneurs whose decisions reflect the primacy of the market. In addition, Reed notes these decisions have had the conventional support of a number of players at the provincial and federal levels where a strong adherence to the ideology of growth prevails. Jamal and Getz (1995) note the challenges of providing equitable opportunities at community round table sessions when their research highlighted that "the *right* to participate does not equal the *capacity* to participate" (p. 172). This is of particular concern in an environment where the stakes are particularly high and are limited by time and financial constraints. In other words, the consensus process does not guarantee that voices will be heard and/or incorporated into the decision-making process. This in turn reinforces Hall's (2000b) observation that "the linguistics niceties of partnership and collaboration need to be challenged by focusing on who is involved in tourism planning and policy processes and who is left out" (p. 154).

Taylor (1995) questioned the community approach, arguing that the ethics of local involvement are rarely considered and that community participation is a highly romanticized perspective that does not take into account the diversity of opinion and interests of the local residents. The role of entrepreneurs, who may not be a part of the local community and yet can directly influence the process, further complicates this idea. The result, Taylor suggests is that the sense of community becomes one-dimensional and type-cast. Any intricacy of the internal process disappears, replaced by a simple, reductionist statement that does not reflect the complex nature of community (Cohen, 1985, in Taylor, 1995).

More recently, Reid, Mair, and George (2004) called for approaches that are more inclusive as well as research that addresses how it may be undertaken. This, for them, is a more compelling initiative. One must investigate *how* to initiate community dialogue without overwhelming either the process or the viability of a potential project. Community tensions



surface when tourism planning is centrally organized and controlled. This results in feelings of apathy, frustration and disempowerment because community residents are not given opportunities to participate and therefore are not able to be heard.

For a number of researchers advocating collaboration and participative frameworks, the processes and patterns of collaboration have proved instructive. Ritchie (2000) found common ground based on Interest Based Negotiation through roundtable discussions composed of representatives of sectoral interests. He argued that a vision for Banff National Park could be developed through a process that would accommodate the tourism industry (in this case the local businesses) and visitors while maintaining the park's ecological integrity.

Others were less conclusive in their analysis and appeared to measure success by the progress made, as opposed to the actual outcome of the process. For example, Parker's (2000) research in which a commercial and environmental tourism policy was drafted, demonstrated how a tourism policy evolved through stakeholder collaboration. Although not thought possible, a consensual outcome was reached. However, he also noted the dominance exerted by one stakeholder over the process. Similarly, despite a negotiated consensus based on a majority rule approach, the World Wide Fund for nature policy of a northern tourism programme found some voices more prevalent than others (Mason, Johnston & Twynam, 2000). Getz and Jamal (1995) drew the conclusion that roundtable discussions of tourism growth strategies increased understanding between each stakeholder's respective positions. Participants for the most part, felt better equipped for future planning and decision-making forums, yet the question which plagued them was whether the stakeholder list was exhaustive.

It is important to recognize that any chosen course of action is not without bias, subjectivity and technical constraints. Rather, it reflects both the values and interests of those who hold substantial stakes and subsequently, relative amounts of power. Those without substantial stakes and little power possess little input into the process. Increasingly, the overall pattern of decision-making in tourism initiatives has reflected a move towards the growth of tourism initiatives despite concerns expressed by individuals or groups desiring more inclusive dialogue. Reed (1997) argues power relations are often attached to collaborative theory with the assumption that power imbalances can be overcome by involving all stakeholders in the process. This is perhaps, the Achilles' heel of participatory process. Researchers, in articulating

a prescriptive approach to issues of power, have not yet been able to put forward a strong theory of how power relations function in communities.

Subsequently, assessments of the effectiveness of community participatory processes appear still to be premature or in infancy at best. This is not intended as harsh criticism, but rather acknowledgement of the difficulty inherent to community participatory processes. It is a colossal effort requiring a shift in the organizational culture, capability, capacity and traditional processes of local councils. McKinlay (2006) highlights a number of observations regarding democratic participation in New Zealand. Although empowering community residents requires local councils to shift from “a council knows best”, to a “community knows best” mode of operation, it is a difficult transition for community councils that are centrally-organized and controlled. Furthermore, he notes that in order to address the challenges of democratic participation, a statutory framework for community outcome must be meaningful and incorporate a number of considerations. First, he stresses the importance of understanding local needs and opportunities along with objectives, strategies and the means required to realize them. Second, he argues each community must tailor its own process. In other words, there must be “a lack of any prescription for how a local authority should be required to ensure that its role is one of facilitation rather than management” (p. 496). A third requirement ensures that other organizations and groups have a genuine opportunity to help shape the nature of the process. The responsibility of council is to secure their active participation.

Everett and Jamal (2004) note the dissatisfaction with multi-stakeholder collaboration frameworks that do not take into account the multidimensionality of power. They argue from a Bourdieuan framework and examine surface and deep-structured power. Surface power, they suggest, is in the objective analysis of the field; the distribution of material resources, determinant relations, and the forms of capital in the field. Analysis of this nature focuses on the “facts that can be observed, measured and mapped” (p. 59). However, they also recommend a second analysis that is more nuanced and subjective in nature. This analysis examines what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic templates. These are the practical activities, mundane knowledge, subjective meaning and practical competency wherein the subjective nature of community balances the more reasoned and logical perspectives. This they believe mirrors Bourdieu interpretation that suggests there is a need “to compensate for the objectivist reading’s tendency to “destroy part of the reality it claims to grasp” (Bourdieu & Wacquant,

1992, in Everett & Jamal, p. 59). In doing so, Everett and Jamal make a case for examining both the facts and the intuitive in order to understand the relationship between the objective and subjective: “how the objective world affects the subjective and vice versa” (p. 60).

In the final analysis, the first wave of enthusiasm for participatory processes to increase the legitimacy of outcomes appears to be waning. This does not negate the validity of this approach, nor does it necessarily mean that demand for inclusion will decrease. On the contrary, it raises the question of how best to strengthen the process. Further, it points to the need to evaluate how a process can be made fair and accessible.

### **FOCUSSING THE LENS**

The intent behind this chapter is to highlight the theoretical constructs serving as a foundation for thinking about analysis of this case. At first glance, hegemony, ideology and rationality appear to have little in common with theories of citizen participation. Indeed, they would represent polar positions on any continuum. Moreover, to an uncritical audience, hegemony, political rationales and neo-liberal ideology may also appear far removed from tourism. However, strong linkages exist between these concepts, tourism and citizen participation.

Despite serious limitations, neo-liberal ideology serves as the filter for current policy decisions across all levels of government. Importantly, tourism largely reflects private entrepreneurial activities, a cornerstone of neo-liberalism. Because the complementary nature of tourism works well under a neo-liberal framework, this particular manifestation of the political economy of tourism is gaining merit at the local level. This has occurred in large part, because increasingly under neo-liberalism, governments have either subscribed to neo-liberal tenets, or are playing a supporting role in their ascendance. These actions have reverberated most significantly at the local level.

Yet, citizen participation and collaboration have emerged as powerful concepts in both policy arenas and theoretical works about state intervention. Initially, uncritical analysis of participation processes made their way into the literature. However, some excellent discussions have surfaced about the limitations and challenges, shedding light on the inner workings of citizen participation and collaborative initiatives. We now understand citizen participation processes have met with varying degrees of success. However, we further understand these processes are vital for negotiating neo-liberal ideology. Simply, they are still one of the only ways we know to provide spaces for both resistance and engagement.

Foucault's concept of governmentality provides a useful conceptual perspective, inviting and commanding citizens into these spaces. In this way, Foucault's notion of governmentality also complements theories of citizen participation. Importantly, however, Foucault's work considers the infusion of structural influences. This is an important consideration as we come to understand how certain ideologies and government actions are granted permission to operate. Second, in highlighting the embeddedness of a neo-liberal rationality, we are reminded that a well-intentioned collaborative process continues to be subjected to the hegemonic ideals that seem to lie outside of a locality's control. The possibility exists that participatory processes may also serve to reinforce the existing hegemonic ideal and that the redistribution of power may not occur.

On the other hand, participatory processes may serve as a form of resistance to counter-balance the activities of the political and local elite who opt not to engage the community at large. Community groups choosing to offset token practices described by Arnstein (1969) can create spaces for usurping the hegemonic values of neo-liberalism. Grass root processes aimed at wide-spread community involvement can inform and educate residents, which may result in change or resistance. In this way, participatory processes may create a space in which aspects of Freire's (1971) ideas on critical consciousness occur.

In the context of Nanaimo, the City's decision-makers understood their community possessed the natural environment rivalling any harbour city. However, decision-makers also recognized the City's decaying downtown, in desperate need of revitalization, was a significant stumbling block. When approached by a private partner to build a conference centre in the downtown, it appeared as an obvious and somewhat fortuitous step towards solving the downtown's decline. Around this project, local decision-makers, using the political economy of tourism and the principles of neo-liberalism, constructed a rationale for re-imagining the City, despite the significant financial commitment this project incurred.

The research design and methods employed allowed for insights into how, why and by whom the decision was made. What follows in Chapter Three is a detailed record of the research design and process undertaken in this case study. Critical discourse analysis, also outlined in the ensuing chapter, allowed me to see how and why participants justified, rationalized, or resisted the decision to build a conference centre in their community.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN  
*CAPTURING HOLISTIC MEANINGS AND PERSPECTIVES*

---

**CHAPTER FOCUS**

In this chapter, I outline the methodological decisions and approaches employed for addressing the questions and meeting the objectives of this thesis. The primary purpose of this case study was to explore in-depth and describe the factors at work in the decision to build a conference centre in Nanaimo's failing downtown core. It was a primarily inductive analysis of secondary data sources along with in-depth qualitative interviews. A critical constructivist lens framed the analysis. Importantly, this lens allowed me to determine how the participants were positioning themselves, and to critically assess how participants justified and rationalized their positions on the decision to build the conference centre.

To meet my research objectives and answer the research questions, I undertook two principal phases of data collection. The first phase included examining and analysing community records including newspapers, City Council minutes, and other records determined relevant to understanding broader aspects of planning in the community or those specific to the conference centre informing the case. This set the stage well for understanding the key issues linked to the conference centre as well as the key actors/committees involved in either supporting or objecting to the conference centre. In addition, this stage was beneficial for understanding the local economic and social context. Contacts with members of two local newspapers resulted in electronic access to their archival records. In addition, the City approved electronic access to their public records. I was able to transfer City minutes and committee minutes electronically. This stage was also crucial for helping to refine the questions for the interview guide used in the second phase of data collection.

The second phase involved pre-scheduled interviews with a number of community residents before arriving in Nanaimo. As noted in detail later, those most actively involved in shaping the decisions pertaining to the conference centre were most easily identified and selected. Both purposive and snowball sampling identified other potential participants while living in the community for seven weeks. Interviews were also conducted with community residents who initiated contact with me via email. Their awareness of this research project was unplanned, but came out of an invitation I extended through an interview with a local paper

who profiled my study. One fortuitous interview took place when I stopped for directions on my bike! This individual was highly involved in one the community's neighbourhood association and this community resident followed the project's unfolding relatively closely.

It is also worth noting that I made an initial, exploratory visit to Nanaimo. This informal visit allowed me to establish some key connections with people that proved invaluable in the ensuing data collection phases. This visit in particular was crucial for securing the cooperation of the City and members of the Friends of Plan Nanaimo Society (FPN). It is my sense that the endorsement of these contacts helped to encourage other's involvement in the project, overcoming any reservations or suspicions they may have had of me.

In setting the stage to discuss both the research design and the methods of data collection and analysis, I first outline my ontological stance as a critical constructionist, and following this, I situate myself in the research. Aspects of the case are described next. I start with the importance of case study research more broadly, and then narrow the discussion to explain its relevance for this project. The discussion then moves to a more in-depth outline of the two stages of data collection. A brief introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) follows, starting first with an overview, followed by the parameters of its use in this case. Grounded theory techniques were undertaken to cull the most salient aspects of the process from the participants and my interpretation and explanation of what techniques were employed finishes this chapter's discussion.

A word of caution as you read through this chapter. The linear presentation of each of these methods does not reflect the research experience. However, it is useful for guiding the reader through the steps undertaken.

## **EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The framing of this project is driven by a critical constructionist orientation. The roots of this epistemic stance are found in both Critical Theory and Constructionism. Both Constructionism and Critical Theory together have spawned new critical approaches to tourism studies that are more broadly-based and move beyond the specifics of Critical Theory "proper", as associated with the Frankfurt School<sup>3</sup>. This quiet revolution (Ateljevic et al., 2007, p. 1) has produced

---

<sup>3</sup> The Frankfurt School included members of the Marxist-oriented Institute for Social Research first founded in Frankfurt, Germany in 1923, which later relocated to Columbia University in 1934 due to Nazi Rule. Frankfurt School scholars defied Marxist orthodoxy and the hallmarks of their work included normative critique and

new work in a number of different arenas, which has had an impact on the nature of tourism enquiry. Moreover, this turn in tourism studies includes moving beyond ontology as a *way of knowing*, and engages scholars a *way of being*. The difference is worth noting as the focus shifts to *making a difference* as opposed to *marking a difference* (Ateljevic et al., 2007, p. 3).

In the spirit of explaining my understanding of the foundations of new critical approaches, both Critical Theory and Constructionism are outlined. Briefly, as an overview to these orientations, Constructionism brings process and meaning to the table, placing the emphasis on ways of knowing as those that are constructed and not discovered. The historical realities of our past shape our contemporary existence or as Crotty (1998) suggests, how we see the world has been bequeathed to us, as part of our socially-inherited milieu. The role of Critical Theory is as a social critique designed to question this inheritance. Crotty and others (Agger, 1991; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Hemingway, 1999; Horkheimer, 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) point out that critical theorists argue particular sets of meanings exist because they are favoured and suit the interests of those purporting a particular hegemonic stance. The thrust of critical theory is to unveil how the meanings to which we subscribe are affected by unequal power relations, domination and oppression, and thereby identify alternative routes to transcend the inscribed power structures. Both meaning and perspective, the fusing of both constructionist and critical theorist epistemologies, has the potential to transform and be transforming. It is through understanding both the explicit and implicit underpinnings of prevailing and dominant structures that constructed and reconstructed realities of the social world are produced.

Complementary to the origins of Critical Theory and Constructionism, and implicit in this stance is the rejection of social scientific orientations favouring universal truths and specific outcomes (namely positivism and post-positivism). Furthermore, there is recognition of the interplay occurring between the investigated and experienced world, and the constructs fashioned to convey the findings. In other words, it is important to acknowledge that the decisions I made in assessing and presenting my findings reflect my interpretation and reading of the data, which in itself is a subjective social construction.

---

philosophical reflection on Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber. See Schwandt (2001) and Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) for a more in-depth understanding of Critical Theory and its origins.

## **The Genesis of Critical Approaches: Defining Critical Theory and Constructionism**

### *Critical Theory*

Schwandt (2000) suggests critical social science represents the dialectical relationship between practical philosophy and explanatory social science. It brings an awareness to the contradictions and distortions found in contemporary belief systems and social practices that are often unquestioned. Kinchloe and McLaren (2000) note that this form of social critique illuminates and makes clear the various and complex ways power operates to direct and contour our being. It is principally concerned with issues of power and justice “and the ways the economy, matters of race, class, and gender, ideologies, discourses, social institutions and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (Kinchloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 281).

The academic impetus behind this approach was in response to the embeddedness of instrumental rationality and its inability to sufficiently account for human behaviour (Schwandt, 2000). Moreover, the original founders of Critical Theory were concerned by the narrow empirical practices dominating academia, which resulted in an uncritical perspective of reality and rationality. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), in particular, make a compelling case in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that positivist scholars were unable to stand outside its paradigmatic influences. Horkheimer (1989), on the crisis of science, writes: “Insofar as science is available as a means of creating social values, that is, insofar as it takes shape in methods of production, it constitutes a means of production” (p. 52). In other words, as Agger (1991) suggests, positivism stunted dialectical imagination promoting instead “positivistic habits of the mind” (p. 109). Critical theorists were those who turned “inward,” against the longstanding epistemological tradition of naïve realism, technique and rationalism that informed their research practices. Those dubbed critical theorists were vigilant about exposing the undisclosed practices of their disciplines’ development and organization.

The Frankfurt School reaction to science brought forth yet a second observation. The social and economic revolution predicted by Marx did not occur as anticipated, nor did it appear imminent. Improvements to the social welfare of many were not occurring, the material conditions required for existence overall were not being transformed. Yet, society in general accepted this reality, and did not question or protest the growing gap between the wealthy and the poor. Frankfurt School scholars tried to understand and explain why society subscribed to the ongoing classing of society.



Marcuse (1989) believed dominant social systems were reified through structures and mechanisms of society, which in turn perpetuated a false consciousness about how society worked. In other words, the constitution of the world existed prior to any actual action of the individual. Society as a whole bought into a rationality with the ideological underpinnings that suggested humankind “can never take his most authentic achievement into his own hands” (Marcuse, 1989, p. 61). An individual’s consciousness conditioned by whatever external social existence into which he or she was born, “overwhelm[ed] him from without” (p. 68). Because there was little motivation by the upper echelon of society to transform the ideology and the masses in society did not recognize they were capable of transformation, the existing social structure remained. As such, inequities along lines of race and gender continued.

From the beginning, the role of critical theory has been to extend contemporary scholarship boundaries by giving voice as both an advocate and an activist to seemingly cemented inequities. As a result, critical theorists believe research is political and are committed to making changes in the political realm. Analysis, then, extends beyond that of an intellectual exercise for social contemplation, to an exercise whereby the researcher is part of the transformation process and a carrier of social transformation (Agger, 1991).

Emancipation for proponents of social critique is a process of rehabilitation in the public sphere through political action, and in the private sphere through self-reflection or what Freire (1970) refers to as *conscientizãcao* or critical consciousness-raising. Both self-reflection and political action are inextricably linked. Confronting the social, political and economic contradictions and distortions marks the beginning of rehabilitation and transformation.

### *Constructionism*

*Verstehen* represents the interpretive turn delineating the ontological stance between the natural sciences that seek to explain and the social science that seek to understand (Crotty, 1998; Patton, 1997; Schwandt, 2000, 2001). The emphasis with regard to the latter is placed on grasping meanings that constitute actions or to understand a particular social activity. All meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices. In other words, we can only know the world as we construct it. Meaningful reality is constructed by the meanings we assign based in part on our own interpretation and also through our interactions with others and their interpretations of the world. Meaning is co-created in an essentially social context. Patton (1997) states meaning is constructing *knowledge about* reality, not the construction of reality

itself. Crotty's (1998) definition complements Patton's perspective. Meaning is not something to be discovered, neither imposed nor imbued, but created or constructed, suggesting instead that multiple, apprehendable, and sometimes conflicting social realities co-exist. Moreover, reality and meaning can change because they are a product of the human intellect. Subsequently, both objective truth – that which is waiting to be discovered – and subjective truth – that which is imposed upon reality – are strongly denied in and of themselves. Rather, inter-subjectivity forms the foundation for constructionism. These characteristics differentiate from the “everyday” construction of knowledge and understanding, to one that informs an episteme of scientific inquiry (Crotty, 1998). As a consequence, the analysis is largely an inductive process, what Schwandt suggests is rather like “mucking around in the data” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 125)

That reality is not awaiting academic discovery is an important distinction from positivism. Constructionism invites examination beyond what is being studied, to explore the researcher's role in the process and raises the question of how researchers have an impact on the construction and dissemination of their research. Thus, both intentionality in the discovery of meaning and locating the researcher are important attributes of interpretive research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the discipline and practice of qualitative research is such that the researcher's interpretive framework is a reflection of their beliefs and feelings about the world, and serves as the foundation for how he or she comes to study and understand the world. This paradigm, they argue, “makes particular demands upon the researcher, including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them” (p. 19).

This, in large part, is what makes research subjective, but also political. Consequently, it is important to situate myself as a researcher and make explicit my interests, biases, and culturally imposed reality. While progress has been made regarding a critical constructionist epistemology within the tourism literature, there is considerable latitude for discussions regarding how knowledge is constructed, studied and transmitted.

### **Tourism Research and a Critical Constructionist Approach**

The relevance and legacy of critical social science seems particularly fitting for the field of tourism studies. There are corresponding criticisms to be drawn between the Frankfurt School theorist's observations nearly a century ago about the way we came to know and the ways we continue to know in contemporary studies of tourism. In large part, this is because traditional

scientific epistemology and ontology continue to shape the nature and direction of tourism research. Hall (2004) and others have criticized our over-dependence on positivistic epistemology and methodology, a point driven home first by Riley and Love (2000) nearly a decade ago, and subsequently reaffirmed in Goodson and Phillimore's (2004) edited book, *Qualitative Research in Tourism*. They argue that while qualitative studies have taken place within tourism studies, tourism research has, for the most part, used qualitative research as a set of methods as opposed to an alternative ontological position.

The criticism is well founded in the social sciences in general. Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies* is a poignant indicator as well as an insightful work illuminating the historical and philosophical foundations of Westernized research. Drawing on the earlier work of Hall (1992), she suggests normative conditions of science have evolved to code knowledge in four principal ways. First, classification systems are used to represent complex images of societies, particularly those of "Othered" societies. Second, models of comparison are established, and third these models serve as benchmarks for evaluation. Fourth, these models provide the concrete criteria for evaluation, the last condition of science. This broader scientific mindset reflects Franklin and Cragg's (2001) concern that the disciplines we have relied on to understand tourism have lacked the appropriate disciplinary tools to analyze complex cultural and social processes.

It is little wonder then, that scientific research in the field of tourism has centred around: the economic benefits/costs of tourism; capital and the natural resources used in production; advancing understandings of desirable geographic and recreational characteristics and the associated carrying capacities; simplifying local cultures and indigenous populations; and tracking industry priorities and perspectives, to name a few. Studies have until only recently largely reflected a bias crystallizing around the business of tourism. Consequently, our academic default is research promoting formulaic dictums and strategies that legitimize and embed the economic merit of tourism. It reflects more broadly an orientation to the powerful structure of capitalism.

The emphasis of scientific procedural protocol and the preoccupation with measurement are especially evident in our limited understanding of the socio-cultural dimension of tourism as it relates to place. Consideration must be given to how space can be "filled with all kinds of social, cultural, epistemic and affective attributes" that become place.

Understanding “people speak from a place” is to understand how they have projected on to that particular space a sense of belonging, property rights and authority (Blommaert, 2005, pp. 222, 223). Morgan (2004) cautions that the study of place will remain “deceptively shallow” (p. 173) if exploration continues to be for promotion as opposed to representation. Hollinshead (2004a) advances Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998) concern that sites and settings studied in tourism are impoverished, lacking both ontological *hereness* and *madeness* of place. That is to say, “how sites and settings are selected and projected” and “how the very special sense of ‘being’ highlighted at such places of attraction are locally mediated by interest groups” (p.66). In fact, Hollinshead (1998) suggested over a decade ago that the field of tourism studies is not particularly rich in its capability to engage the fresh ways in which particular regions and destination-locations are strategically re-imagining themselves. More recently, Hollinshead chides: “tourism studies researchers are not consummately skilful in the capacity to monitor or map the imaginatively conceived realms which particular populations want their precious localities to become” (Hollinshead, 2004a, p. 66). Moreover, the deep and often hidden meaning to resident host populations has not been addressed systematically. Meaning has often been “mythically ‘scrambled’”, upholding different interpretations or invented meaning by local members (Hollinshead, 2004b, p. 88).

Despite where the epistemological emphasis has been and how the interpretation of qualitative research has been treated as equivalent to methods, there is some evidence that the field is beginning to respond to these charges. Humberstone (2004) makes the connection of multiple versions of reality in both tourism theorising and its implications through standpoint research. She advocates for local, contextualized, and situated knowledge, rejecting the idea that only research legitimized through the dominant Western ideology of science is valid. Humberstone’s concerns echo those of several, more recent tourism scholars that a paradigm shift is required to better understand the lived experiences of the host communities. Interpretation only through expert opinion is left wanting. As Humberstone writes, “tourism studies are nothing if they are not about relations between the visitor, the Other (the host) and the locale – cultures and contexts intermingling” (2004, p. 120). To focus on science as right or wrong is not the point, but rather the emphasis should reflect the “value-based decisions ideally left up to all affected individuals” (Moisey & McCool, 2001, p. 349). Blommaert (2005) gets at the heart of the matter, linking space with identity: “[S]pace can be filled with all kinds of

social, cultural, epistemic and affective attributes” (p. 222) that become place, thus binding all aspects of our being (cognitive, moral and emotional) to a particular locality.

Pritchard and Morgan (2000) suggest cultural and feminist geography perspectives have begun to permeate the tourism literature on space and place and as a result, place is being recognized as socio-cultural construction. Pritchard (2004) further adds that interpretive frameworks have begun to reveal the political and contested nature of tourism places as sites. She and others (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Usyal, 2002; Williams & Lawson, 2001) argue that places are symbolic, mutable, cultural constructions representing the blending of both representation and form, and as such, the heterogeneity of community needs to be acknowledged. Ritchie and Inkari (2006) summarize nicely the theoretical frameworks for understanding the variation in community resident’s attitudes towards tourism, concluding that attitudes may differ based on the broader economic, environmental, and social contexts. These examples all demonstrate how opening the theoretical window of critical approaches in research holds potential for understanding even further how space is interpreted differently. For instance, in this study, despite consensus around the need to revitalize the downtown and recognition of the role tourism could play in rejuvenation, contested meanings surfaced over how, where, and the kinds of development taking place. Nanaimo’s waterfront, highly valued in the community for its aesthetic value, became highly valued by some residents for its symbolic and monetary value, which served as currency against which to leverage private sector interests.

While progress has occurred, perhaps the most regrettable omission within tourism studies has been to disregard how values, interests and resources are translated into objectives and policies (Davies, 1993 in Hall, 1994). Pal (2001), speaking more generically, notes policy researchers are beginning to understand the importance of values in public policy: “it is not purely instrumental, it sends signals to citizens about who they are and how they should behave” (p. 168). Moreover, values are not, he suggests, external to public policy. Policies serve as decision-making tools, in turn reflecting a choice, weeding out of what is considered important and equally valid, not important (Jones, 1994). So, too, these observations are similar to Hall and Jenkins’s (1995) stance, suggesting policy and values are inherently linked and therefore cannot be separated out from the facts.

Of consideration in this discussion of values is the dominant values reflected currently. Church (2004) notes the private sector subsumes the relationship with government and therefore influences policy direction by promoting economic competitiveness. In turn, this encourages citizens to see their relationships with each other and with the government as primarily one of exchange. Captured within these thoughts are two considerations. First, the current values at play reflect a market orientation that has not always been present, suggesting that values are not absolute. “Policies depend on people’s preferences, that is their values – leads to thinking about how public policy might change values directly or indirectly and thereby change the response of public policies themselves” (Aaron, Mann, & Taylor, 1994, cited in Pal 2001, p. 169). Second, unless we examine processes, we have no clear understanding of how the outcome was derived. We need to reorient our thinking from “event decision-making” that reflects a policy outcome; and instead, redirect our thinking towards “process decision-making”. Research in this capacity serves an enlightenment function as opposed to an engineering function (Rist, 2000). The ability to illuminate the values underwriting policy requires thoughtful consideration be given to methodology. Because the role of power and the associated values exercised and reflected are often opaque, in other words not often recognized by those inscribing and promoting a particular policy outcome, methodology plays a vital role in unveiling or exposing underlying motivations. The discussion in the chapter to this point has examined the tenets of my epistemological stance, and moved to a discussion of how this position has evolved in the literature. At this juncture, it is appropriate that I situate myself within this research project.

### **SITUATING SELF**

Situating self is a deliberate exposition of my role as an active mediator in the research process. Reflexivity implies a consciousness about the way research has been instrumental in shaping outcomes, not only for academic participation and sanctioning, but also as an accountability mechanism to those involved in the research process. Schwandt (2001) observes that as inquirers, we consider both our own and other’s actions in the research process. As a result, conclusions cannot be drawn without simultaneously thinking about political commitments and responsibilities for the nature and meaning of the human experience. For Schwandt, it is a connecting of the ethical, political and epistemological (ethics-epistemology-politics nexus).

His stance affirms our understanding that within social science research, both meaning and process are political and subjective experiences.

Historically, the social sciences have not been particularly adept at illuminating the relationship between the researcher and the subject. Instead, the tendency has been to bracket, neutralize, standardize or control the researcher's world (Fine, Weis, Wessen, & Wong, 2000). This approach, borrowed from the natural sciences, was largely motivated by the fear of contamination. However, for the social sciences, there is a dawning awareness that this approach is no longer valid, nor adequate. Further, many researchers, especially feminist scholars, have debunked the falsehood of neutral or value-free science, challenging scholars to acknowledge their personal, political and professional interests (Ellis & Berger, 2002). The reflexive challenge is not to be confused with, as Fine et al. (2000) suggest, the researcher's autobiographical information. Rather the reflexive challenge considers how the self is present in the representation of the data. They alert us to how our interpretation of defining reflexivity has evolved wherein we have moved from quantifying our qualifications to a more personal and introspective understanding of the role that we play in the research process.

This challenge has also been issued to the field of tourism. One of the more condensed and recent efforts outlining reflexive research is Phillimore and Goodson's (2004) edited collection, *Qualitative Research in Tourism*. In his contribution, Hollinshead (2004a) encourages tourism researchers to be more "situationally sympathetic and more contextually pertinent, thinking about the issues of being, seeing, exploring, experiencing, knowing and becoming that which they wish to explore" (p. 68). Perhaps the most candid expression is Hall's (2004) contribution to the collection when he reminds us that the personal subjectivities of our experiences are the essence of our chosen research path. This complements and extends his earlier work (1994) wherein he suggests researchers outline both methodological and philosophical considerations, particularly in the area of political analysis. A study of the political inevitably involves power and is often contested suggesting the value position of the author will have a significant impact on the results.

... the question of who I am ... is therefore as much a personal interest as it is a research response to external factors. Such autobiography and reflection is not just a desire to have some kind of cathartic experience ... Instead, it is a part of an admittedly imperfect desire to locate some of those links between self and action that reflexivity brings. To do so is to make oneself vulnerable ... Yet I would argue that if we are to be serious about utilizing reflexivity, this is were

we should start, with ourselves and ask some of those difficult questions as to how we situate our research with ourselves and others before we go and observe and involve ourselves with those others. (Hall, 2004, p. 150)

Undoubtedly, this calls for greater self-awareness. According to Dupuis (1999), this is the first of three considerations when implementing a reflexive methodology. Accounting for the role of self in the research process ultimately shapes the product of our research because we determine how knowledge is shaped. Dupuis challenges the scientific ideology of objectivity reflecting on how her personal experiences of the past and present cast self and voice in one's research. Dupuis is suggesting that her humanity and subjective experiences are inherent within the research process.

Second, an affective dimension exists in one's research, "the very nature of doing qualitative research makes us more vulnerable to intense emotional reactions" (Dupuis, 1999, p. 52). Noy's (2006) self-reflection as the poetic tourist, during his time in Sanai, penning "In-Between Sanctity and Profane" is an example of how one's emotions factor in one's research. The third and final consideration is to understand that building appropriate relationships occurs with others in the process. Dupuis notes that relational reciprocity occurs and cannot nor should not be artificially bound. The collaborative immersion with others holds merit and should be valued for the contribution it makes, not to be unravelled or understood as anything less. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) note the researcher "is bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises" (p.19) that become partially self-validating. There is in this assertion acknowledgement that what we bring to the process is internal and embedded, and not merely consequential. With this understanding, science cannot be value-free.

Consequently, it is fitting that I situate myself within the context and consider not only my interests in this study, but what initially piqued my interest towards this end. The assumptions I bring to this project encompass the core principles of a critical constructionist, as well as my understanding of the overall picture of the field of tourism studies. It is important to note that my beliefs (outlined below) were shaped largely over the course of my doctoral programme. They have captured my imagination through the discussions, debates, and readings of the thoughtful scholarship of those directing my learning. The creative latitude in the headings are intended as a culmination of these exchanges, and the challenge to be succinct and forthcoming about my role in the research.



## **My Beliefs**

*The truths perpetuated serve to both mirror and mask dominate ideologies, and therefore ideology matters.*

I have found my fit in an ontological and epistemological orientation that borders both the historical realism of critical theory and the relativism undergirding constructionism. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest the constructionism reflects local and specifically constructed realities. However, critical theory complements this perspective by suggesting reality is also “shaped by social, political, cultural, economic ethnic and gender values crystallized over time” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 168), providing an account for why many values continue to live in perpetuity. Accepting this stance has meant re-examining both my professional and personal lived experiences.

My training was, prior to the doctoral programme, largely post-positivist (although I could not have articulated a conscious epistemological stance 15 years ago, nor understood it to be both an ontological stance and ideological truth). The time between the completion of my Master’s degree and undertaking this degree was one of the first encounters with how the nature of reality is fluid and transforming over time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I have reframed, throughout the process, my understanding to consider the many ways research can be undertaken. Vidich and Lyman’s (2000) work outlines the evolution of epistemic discourse, noting that over time it too has been re-evaluated. Articulating an epistemic stance has caused me to evaluate its influence at a personal level.

A growing awareness and appreciation for the critical constructionist approach has challenged my values. I now recognize the validity of multiple realities, and in the process, have discarded or re-embraced some of my values – an uncomfortable but worthwhile process. For example, my Judeo-Christian foundation suggests an absolute truth and recognition of multiple realities causes me to reflect on, evaluate and re-interpret some foundational aspects inherent to my value system. I am most comfortable with conclusions derived through both the dialogic and dialectical, while recognizing the role of the hermeneutical in this process. I have come to believe the world is constructed through personal experiences and that all of these experiences are value-mediated (Guba & Lincoln, 2008). Confronting absolutes has reinforced an aspiration to promote forms of cognitive emancipation, or what Freire (2006) refers to as critical consciousness-raising. I believe reframing and reorienting are consolidated and reified

through interactions with others. In other words, it is a process as our state of being, and therefore our state of critical consciousness continues in reciprocal and evolving exchanges with self and others. The commitment to re-examine ourselves constantly is what is transformative.

*Research is value-laden and political. Therefore, those most impacted should have the greatest say.*

Research is both a political and subjective account and does not occur in isolation from the broader community or context in which it takes place. As researchers, we define our work by our own values and hopes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). With the moral tilt of critical theory, our voice should not only be as a participant in the co-creation of meaning, but as an advocate and activist. I believe our position as well-educated and privileged scholars assumes a responsibility to use voice not for our own benefit, but especially for the benefit of others. Implicitly understood in this assertion is that individuals have a voice in the processes in which they participate.

I believe those who most feel the impact of the decisions should have the greatest say. In other words, community development programmes should reflect the cultural and social as well as economic values of the community as a whole. This research seeks to demonstrate how broadly-based citizen participation is critical to guiding the decision-making process in assessing the impact and appropriateness of tourism within the community context. I believe an informed citizenry is more likely to provide some of the checks and balances against the powerful actors with specific interests. Moreover, I am aware that I am not outside the political arena in which I study. My research can, and should, be part of tourism policy and development process. In addition, it is worth remembering that within tourism studies there remains a strong quantitative episteme. Consequently, qualitative research can also serve as a counter-balance in the academy wherein the pursuit and construction of knowledge also reflects a political stance.

*Policy reflects a value orientation in turn determining specific consequences or outcomes.*

Tourism policy reflects choices between differing sets of values. Decisions are, as Forester (1993) suggests, a reflection of the successful lobbying of various interests and their ability to exert influence in shaping policy proposals. There is a power differential at work

undergirding policy outcomes in which critical issues of values, interests and control play a central role.

The state as a local, regional or national governing body is central to this process. It is the mechanism through which “values, interests and resources translate into objectives and policies” (Davis et al., 1993, p.19 in Hall, 1994). In a democratic state, arguments are shaped in a way that captures public attention and support. “The government has taken many steps – institutional, financial, educational, and other – designed to change the ways in which people makes sense of and evaluate themselves and their activities” (Heelas & Morris, 1992, p. 1). These actions are normalized in that they are outside either debate, or not quite possibly are not even a consideration of debate.

State activity is increasingly influenced by a market-driven ideology as a means of solving problems. Government’s role is no longer only one of protecting the interests of the public at large, but also one of fostering private sector interests. With this in mind, it is important to consider the role of the state and how market-driven approaches within government frame discussions and policies that, in turn, influence public discourses. Increasingly, tourism discourse plays a role in the everyday vernacular of policy-makers as both an alternative tool for community growth and development, and as a solution for financial independence from upper levels of government.

### *Social Critique is both timely and necessary within tourism studies*

Social critique is timely as decision-makers embrace and policy outcomes reflect the popularity of tourism an economic development tool for communities. So, too, my initial training in tourism studies reflected a “pro-tourism” orientation. Both my thinking and training were largely prescriptive, generic, and uncritical, reflecting how tourism was studied and analyzed. This formed the basis for professional assessments that privileged tourism-oriented development.

Moreover, traditional approaches to examining tourism have not been conducive to studying local problems and situations. Analysis at the community level, however, can provide insights into the role of powerful actors and structural forces at work within that specific context and thereby provide a richer understanding of the produced and reproduced social actions occurring within a particular context. How actors and the broader mechanisms intersect provides understanding of the social relations at both micro and macro levels and insights into

the rationale guiding decisions. A commitment to research orientations tailored to the context can illuminate the complexity of social life in a community and reveal the bias in the data. Travel, observing displaced community members, environmental damage, and cultural offenses, reinforced my belief that neither the tourism industry nor ourselves as guests necessarily serve the best interests of the local community. Both critical assessment and education can serve a role in bringing awareness to the many facets of community-based tourism.

### **CASE STUDY RESEARCH**

Case study research contributions of late have much to celebrate, gaining status and merit as a method of inquiry. Scholars understand case study research is unique in its ability to overlap descriptive, exploratory and explanatory purposes within single cases, thereby offering depth in and richness in data unparalleled by other research methods. In large part, where it was once considered a weak approach, this too has changed, attributable to the epistemic and ontological shifts in the social sciences. Increasingly, researchers dissatisfied with grand theories and meta-narratives are seeking ways to capture the complexity of human behaviour within a real life context, and the case study assists in this mandate.

Multiple definitions of case study research exist. Most simply, it is a choice of something to be studied (Stake, 2000), a spatially bordered phenomenon observed at a single point in time (Gerring, 2007). Yin (2009) echoes this in his most recent edition of *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, suggesting simply that it is the study of a concrete entity, event, occurrence or action, but not appropriate for the study of the abstract, such as a concept, argument, hypothesis or theory. Likewise, Feagan, Orum and Sjoberg (1991) articulate the role of case study research as a holistic cultural system of action. Stake (2000, 2002) suggests it is both a process of inquiry and a product of that inquiry. He outlines and illustrates three kinds of case study helpful as strategies of inquiry, intrinsic, instrumental, and collective cases (2000).

The principal characteristics between each of these strategies remain closely aligned however, the primary difference lies with the motivation of the researcher. Intrinsic cases study “the particular” (p. 438), wherein designs reflect the case’s own issues, contexts, and interpretations. It is not concerned with generalizability. By contrast, generalizability is the focus of an instrumental case study, whose purpose is to transcend the specifics to facilitate our

understanding of some more abstract construct or generic phenomenon. Multiple instrumental cases determine the collective case study, the third and final category described by Stake, whose purpose is also to investigate a phenomenon, population or more wide-ranging condition.

Yin (2009) remains consistent in his stance, suggesting case studies reveal the complex and multiple interactions of a number of factors that produce the unique character of the entity under study. One of the primary reasons this occurs is because multiple methods of inquiry can be employed. Multiple ways of collecting data allow researchers to “go deep” (Corcoran, Walker, & Walls, 2004), resulting in thick descriptive overviews and rich contextual analyses. Varying methods are often used to accomplish thick descriptions and, as a result, have the potential to overtake the case. However, Stake (2000) reminds us that, at all times, the prime referent in case studies is the case, and not the methods utilized.

This project was particularly well suited to an intrinsic case study approach. Examining reports and minutes, alongside interviewing the participants, provided a detailed understanding of why, how, and who supported or contested the decision to build the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC). Moreover, as discussed in detail below, this approach suits my epistemological framework. I am less concerned with generalizability as it is conventionally understood; that is to say, the charge of the absence of predictive theory to the broader population because of the absence of control (the hypothetico-deductive model of explanation). As Flyvbjerg (2006) argues, social science has not succeeded in producing general context-independent theory. The outcome instead is to offer concrete context-dependent knowledge, to which the case is well suited. Learning as opposed to proving is one of the strengths of the case study approach. This complements Stake’s (2000) point that a commitment to generalizability should not supersede the features important for the case itself. In this case, I was interested in determining if interactions in a socio-political domain reinforced discursive actions and thoughts at the micro level, with some bearing from macro-structures. Prior to delving in to the specifics of this case, I outline case study research in the field of tourism studies.

### **Case Study Research in Tourism Studies**

While case study research has been considered an important method of policy analysis since the 1930s (Lowi, 1964), for the tourism researcher interested in community development, advocating a case study approach is relatively new. Hall and Jenkins (1995) are among the first

to acknowledge the importance of case study research for tourism studies, suggesting few other methodologies reveal both the scale and complexity of policy tasks. They argue both research and analytical techniques are important to advance understanding of government decisions directed by policy. However, with few exceptions (see for example, Frenkel & Walton, 2000; Gill, 2000; Mair, 2006; Verbole, 2000), case study research investigating the forces shaping tourism public policy and observing the consequences for communities and their political systems are rare. Encouragingly, tourism researchers are responding to the call to understand the way public policy shapes the community's fabric and how these decisions fit within the larger structural influences at work, and have done so through a case study approach (see for example Gill, 2000; Mair, 2006).

Much earlier, Hall and Jenkins (1995) suggested methodological priorities should link description, theory and explanation across time and political strata (i.e., macro, meso, and micro) with explicit recognition of how ideology and values influence choices and perceptions. Among the various criticisms that have been levied at case study research, the most severe is the inability to apply the case in a "sufficiently scientific way" (Hall & Jenkins, 1995, p. 98). The challenges of case study research should not be overlooked and in the ensuing discussion, the issue of validity, central to these criticisms, is addressed in detail.

### **Validity in Case Study Research**

One of the main critiques of case study research is that it has provided limited descriptive accounts of the phenomenon under study, but this too is changing. Babbie (2001) notes that it has the potential to move beyond descriptive accounts with the potential to yield explanatory insights. Several authors concerned with case study's ability to draw inferences (see for example, Bennett & Elman, 2006; Brady & Collier, 2004; Gerring, 2007) argue one of the key methodological considerations in case study research is how best to draw inferences. The inferences "depend on an understanding of the causality invoked" (Bennett & Elam, 2006, p. 457). It goes without saying that the methods used to draw these inferences are defined by the goals of the research and the parameters drawn according to the social phenomenon under study (Gerring, 2007). Reflected in this concern is the belief that research should contribute to scientific generalization (Stake, 2000). While there are different opinions in this regard as to the importance of revealing causal mechanisms and relations, most scholars agree case study's strengths lie in its ability to garner rich data in a specific context.

A number of qualitative researchers remain committed to orienting inquiry towards understanding the case's issues, contexts, and interpretation, resisting the notion that formal generalization is the main source of measuring scientific progress. For this reason, Stake (2000) suggests the challenge is to remain in the case, suspending the commitment to favour theoretical advancement, over acquiring the features important for understanding the case. To be clear, however, it must also be noted that the researcher's purpose and goal should also remain at the forefront in order that knowledge-based statements or judgement of the case's typicality can justifiably be made (Giddens, 1984 in Flyvbjerg, 2006). In other words, there is room for understanding the merit of a single case. Flyvbjerg writes:

One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as a supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas "the force of example" is underestimated (p. 228).

Critical constructionism shares this perspective. Thick description can be garnered, while at the same time taking into consideration the broader structural influencing the case's *own* world. Taking a critical approach to case study research is akin to Malinowski's (1984) notion of foreshadowed problems. Focus is oriented to the case, however an effective researcher also comes forearmed knowing what to look for. "Foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer in his theoretical studies (Malinowski, cited in Stake, 2000, p. 449).

What lies behind causality is the issue of generalizability (and therefore explanation and prediction), considered one of the hallmarks of good science inherent to post-positivist research. Generalizability insinuates discussions of the explicit criteria for scientific rigour. While most qualitative researchers do not deny causal explanations, neither do they privilege it. Reflected, however, in the varied discussions of generalizability to qualitative research is the issue of trustworthiness.

Although scholars have refined the attributes of qualitative research to address issues of trustworthiness and validity across process and outcome, principles of qualitative discipline and practice reject stances of absolute authority, and by extension, imposing statements of generalizability. At the heart of the issue, however, is the synthesis between method and

interpretation (Denzin, 2000). Schwandt (1998) directs our attention to the conundrum when he asks,

What is an adequate warrant for a subjectively mediated account of intersubjective meaning? . . . In the absence of some set of criteria, such accounts are subject to the charges of solipsism (they are only my accounts) and relativism (all accounts are equally good or bad, worthy or unworthy, true or false and so on). (p. 246).

The issue is complex and the field's initial response was to justify the veracity of qualitative inquiry by devising criteria for validity to complement the standards used in post-positivist validity approaches. By their own admission, Lincoln and Guba (2000) were among the first to address these criticisms, offering up credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as post-positivist validation criteria. Since that time, the emphasis has been less on paralleling the referents of a foundational epistemology, to one in which criteria establishing the study's validity mirror ontological and epistemic beliefs. The ongoing discussions over more than two decades of defining the practice of interpretation and representation suggest they continue to be emergent, and consequently, unfinished (see for example, Creswell, 2007).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest researchers ascribe to one of three positions pertaining to evaluative criteria: foundational, quasi-foundational, and non-foundational. Foundational researchers continue to apply the criteria of quantitative inquiry to qualitative work, suggesting there is nothing so unique to demand alternative criteria. Quasi-foundationalists argue in favour of criteria fitted to qualitative inquiry, basing it on plausibility, credibility, and relevance, while recognizing these criteria require social judgments. Non-foundationalists do not concern themselves with the epistemic pursuit of knowledge, preferring instead to orient their research based on a moral and political agenda. Subsequently, criteria are also moral, "fitted to the pragmatic, ethical and political contingencies of concrete situations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 872). These positions complement the early work of Guba and Lincoln (1994) who suggest alternative headings of modernist, constructionist, and critical perspectives. Angen (2000) suggests two perspectives have emerged from this debate. Scholars either continue to adhere to or reject positivist benchmarks. Those who do not adhere to positivistic parameters seek alternative means or parameters to govern their inquiry. While not



exhaustive, these examples provide an understanding of how the scholars have grappled with and subsequently positioned themselves in the trustworthiness/validity debate.

There are some very clear examples and excellent discussions for establishing validity (see for example, Angen, 2000; Creswell, 2003; 2007; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln; 2008; Stige, Multerud, & Torjus, 2009; Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001). For example, Creswell and Miller (2000) construct a two-dimensional framework. A number of factors including the researcher's approach, participant feedback, and external readers and critics converge to affirm a study's validity. A number of salient dimensions are considered when assessing the veracity of a project. Triangulation<sup>4</sup>, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, the audit trail and thick, rich descriptions are among the most prevalent.

Similarly, Creswell (2007) refers to Whittemore, Chase and Mandle's (2001) model from which to determine one's own measures of validity. Whittemore et al. also provide a two-dimensional construct consisting of primary and secondary techniques. The primary criteria are: *credibility*, intended to reflect the interpretation of the participants' meaning; *authenticity* wherein one accounts for different voices; *criticality*, which asks, is evaluation applied to all aspects of the research?; and *integrity*, an exercise in self-critique. Guiding principles in the second dimension applied to these criteria include explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity.

Accounts that are more recent continue to reinforce the multiple lenses (i.e., researcher, participant, and reader) and paradigm in evaluating the skill and veracity of the researcher. For example Stige, Multerud, and Midtgarden (2009) posit two constructs of validity. The first builds on the premise that researchers should put forward rich and substantive accounts, citing engagement, processing, interpretation, and self-critique as aspects of the first construct. The second construct addresses challenges in dealing with preconditions and consequences of research, wherein the focus is on social critique, usefulness, relevance, and ethics. Their work parallels Creswell's (2007) most recent perspectives on validation and reliability in qualitative inquiry.

---

<sup>4</sup> Although Creswell and Miller (2000) note triangulation, I adhere to crystallization. My reasoning is outlined in detail further along in this chapter.

The emphasis on issues of validation in all of these discussions suggests three considerations for researchers. First, the paradigmatic stance reflects the importance a researcher attaches to issues of validity, making it necessary to make explicit his or her stance. Moreover, the discussions reflect the importance of a thorough and continuous application of validity criteria to cover both methods and interpretation. These considerations suggest ethical validity, the second consideration and substantive validity, as a third consideration (Angen, 2000) work in concert throughout the research project.

In light of these many perspectives, several strategies of Angen (2000), Creswell and Miller (2000), and Creswell (2007) were adopted to determine how validity, and therefore a measure of trustworthiness, was established in this project. Importantly, the work of Lather, (1993) replaces Creswell and Miller's triangulation with crystallization as a validity construct more in keeping with the spirit of this research.

First, the ensuing chapters convey the multiple lived experiences of the participants. This account is mine and as such reflects my version of the decision-making process in the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC). However, within a critical constructionist framework, I retained a commitment to uncover my hidden assumptions about how the data were constructed, read, and interpreted, which also resonates with a critical constructionist orientation. In this regard, this project worked the borders between both quasi-foundationalist and non-foundationalist paradigms.

Second, this project retains liberating and empowering purposes. Freire's (1971) concept of critical consciousness-raising advocates these functions for both teacher and student, suggesting cross-sectional learning occurs. Moreover, in this process of reciprocal learning, conscientization continues to evolve, suggesting an ongoing maintenance with relationships is in order to foster ongoing transformation. I believe this takes times and extends beyond the specified project. In this context, this extends the goals of this project to continue engagement in Nanaimo, and in particular, with those participants who may be most instrumental in fostering a spirit of conscientization in communal decision-making process.

Throughout the research project, I have maintained email and telephone contact with several study participants, many of whom serve(d) leadership roles in either the FPN and the City. When necessary, they were contacted for clarification throughout this process. The multiple contact points have provided an excellent foundation for trust between several study

participants and myself. I believe this base will serve as an excellent entry point into discussions about this project. Given critical research aims to serve an emancipatory function, it would seem this foundation will foster a process of reciprocal learning that too, fulfills functions of integrity and credibility, both of which are primary criteria in Whitemore et al.'s (2001) model.

Third, in a more formal way, the results of this study will be shared with study participants as I have an opportunity to present the information to the FPN members and City Hall. At the time of setting up the project, I offered to return to the community and in a forum comfortable to the City and the FPN, present the findings of this study. The themes generated will be presented to the participants for their feedback. However, again in the spirit of Freire (2006), I do not see my role as an “expert”; I do not see my role as one conveying “knowledge [as] a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (p. 72). Rather, in returning to the community, I see it as an opportunity to affirm these results by the participants who lived “inside” this project, for their affirmation of my “outside” perspective.

Crystallization follows principles of light theory wherein both refraction and reflection create multiple varied reactions, all of which are simultaneous and multidimensional angles contributing to the material that is a crystal (Richardson, 1997 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Under the same principles, crystallization in qualitative research infers the importance of including multiple perspectives and methods in order to understand the substance of an issue, and the multiple layers of meaning attached to it. In this research, the interviews process, City documents, consultant reports and the media served as the primary data sources. These strategies allowed me to draw on a number of different sources when constructing the events around the decision-making process. This serves as a fourth attribute of validity in this study.

Notwithstanding, however, and not to be overlooked are the written accounts of the research itself, and these serve as the final attributes of my trustworthiness. During the seven weeks spent in the community and throughout the remainder of the research process, I engaged reflexive practices through journaling. My journal provides a written account of the struggle that evolved because of my ethical and moral assumptions. This process of self-disclosure and self-revelation were important to my evolving path of learning and conceptual developments as

a researcher. To this end, an epilogue of the most salient aspects of my experience follows in the concluding chapter of this project

In the written accounts, I strived to provide thick, rich description in the presentation of the data gathered in this project. This serves two purposes. First, this allows you, my reader, to share the experiences of the participants especially because verbatim segments of the transcripts are incorporated to reinforce the themes and interpretations. Second, rich description provides an opportunity to formulate your own conclusions, which if aligned with the conclusions drawn here, also affirm the veracity of this project. With these considerations in mind, I move now to the specifics of this case.

### **THE CASE: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF THE PORT OF NANAIMO CENTRE**

Residents of Nanaimo approved the decision to build a multi-purpose facility housing a conference centre in Nanaimo in a referendum vote on November 20, 2004. The referendum question read:

Are you in favour of adopting “NEW NANAIMO CENTRE LOAN AUTHORIZATION BYLAW NO. 2005 NO. 5750” to permit the City to borrow up to 30 million dollars and carry out the terms of a partnering agreement with Triarc International Inc., for the development of the New Nanaimo Centre project?

Although the question was relatively straightforward, it represented a very complex agreement wherein the City Council would enter into an agreement with private developer, Triarc International,

...for the development and construction of the New Nanaimo Centre which include[d] a conference centre, museum, auditorium, parking facility and retail space [to be] developed on land [to be] owned by the City (the “City Project”) in conjunction with a hotel and residential development within air space parcels and redevelopment lands at the Civic Arena and old foundry (“Foundry lands”) for residential, commercial and public purposes (City Council Minutes, October 19, 2004).

The decision was highly contested by a small, but influential group of citizens. Initially, they did not object to the project *per se*, but were concerned about the location and structure. As details of the agreement came to the fore, members of this group became increasingly concerned over the re-designation of public parkland on the waterfront; logistical aspects of the project such as structural issues, escalating costs; and the lack of accountability to the public,

which spanned from the referendum announcement until well into the building of the project. Although the decision-making culminated with the referendum, in order to understand what occurred in this community, the study period primarily began with the first community re-imaging and planning process in 1991. This process, spawned in part by the economic downturn in the late 1980s, and the building of the City's first high-rise, marked the beginning of discussions concerning downtown revitalization beyond streetscape improvements. The study period ends approximately three years after the referendum and roughly six months prior to the completion of the centre which opened on June 8, 2008.

### **COLLECTING AND MANAGING THE DATA**

There were two data collection phases. These phases were not distinct, but overlapped in the development and refinement of the salient issues. Secondary data sources accounted for the first phase of data collection. Initially, I intended them to inform the in-depth interviews, the second data collection phase. Importantly, as I began to cull information from these supplementary sources, they became an important component in and of themselves.

#### **Phase 1: Data Sources**

The data sources in this phase of collection were varied. They are grouped below to give a sense of what the documents entailed. Importantly, because there were a variety of sources, I established categories to help keep the data organized. The categories are as follows:

1. Newspapers:
  - a. *The Nanaimo Daily News*
  - b. *The Nanaimo News Bulletin*<sup>5</sup>
  - c. *The Harbour City Star*
2. City generated Minutes, Reports and Guides
  - a. City Council Minutes (1993-2007)
  - b. Council Committee Minutes of the Whole (1994-1998)
  - c. Special Open Minutes (1993-2007)
  - d. Planning and Development Standing Committee (2001-2005)
  - e. Economic Development Standing Committee Minutes (2004-2005)
  - f. Finance Policy Committee (2006,2007)

---

<sup>5</sup> The *Nanaimo News Bulletin* was visited primarily onsite. When I refer to the media, my primary referent is the *Nanaimo Daily News*.

- g. City of Nanaimo Official Community Plans (1982, 1996)
  - h. Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document (April, 2002)
  - i. New Nanaimo Centre, Citizen Information Brochure (September, 2004)
  - j. New Nanaimo Centre, Question and Answer Guide (November, 2005)
  - k. Sporadic Press Releases (2004 – 2006)
3. External Reports: Local Committees
- a. Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Annual Reports (2003-2007)
4. External Reports (consultant generated)
- a. Urban Forum Associates: *City of Nanaimo Height and Density Study* (April, 1994)<sup>6</sup>
  - b. Grant Thornton: *Convention Centre Feasibility Study* (July, 1999)
  - c. Main Street National Trust: *Downtown Nanaimo: An Assessment of Nanaimo's Opportunities for Revitalisation* (September, 2000)
  - d. Grant Thornton: *Conference Centre Feasibility Study Supplement* (May, 2001)
  - e. Manecon Business Strategies: *Downtown Nanaimo Business Retention and Attraction Strategy* (March, 2002)
  - f. Ray Spaxman: *Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document* (April, 2002)
  - g. Grant Thornton: *Market Feasibility Study, Proposed Vancouver Island Conference Centre* (September, 2004)
5. Other Sources:
- a. *Nanaimo Retrospective: An overview of the first century of Nanaimo's history by the City's Historical Society*
  - b. *Nanaimo between Past and Future, Critical Perspectives on Growth Planning, Planning and the New Nanaimo Centre: An edited collection by members of the FPN*

### *Data Collection Process*

Although presented as a linear process, the data collection in phase one was iterative. Moreover, as with any case study, some documents were more revealing than others. However,

---

<sup>6</sup> This is the original Ray Spaxman report. A second report (point f), referred to by participants as the "Spaxman Report", is the updated Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document, although there is no reference to Ray Spaxman or Urban Forum Associates, it was based on Spaxman's recommendations.

this was important to the process because it also confirmed on the one hand, which sources were most useful for constructing what occurred, and on the other, caused me to ponder why sources that I thought would be instrumental in shaping my understanding did not discuss the conference centre to the extent that I anticipated. For example, I initially thought the Economic Standing Development Minutes would have provided more information about the details surrounding the conference centre. However, I discovered that a separate set of minutes, the Conference Centre Advisory Committee Minutes, existed and served as the primary minutes surrounding the conference centre. The meetings of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee were held in camera, were not available to the public and do not inform this case. Moreover, the City Council Minutes revealed verbal reports were made, but did not detail the content of those reports.

As information surfaced, I worked back and forth between the documents, For example, the decision to extend my analysis of the City Council minutes back to 1993 was informed through understanding the significance of *Plan Nanaimo* to the project. In turn, this led to the discovery of *Imagine Nanaimo*, the first community re-visioning exercise, and an important factor in this case. The iterative nature of the process and the discovery of other documents lead to repetition and confusion when I realized some reports and discussions referred to the same documents in different ways. For example, the *Height and Density Study*, was the original Spaxman Report. References made to the Spaxman Report were often referring to the *Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document*, so called the Spaxman Report because recommendations were from Ray Spaxman, a consultant with Urban Forum Associates. Consequently, when new terms were introduced, particularly after they were spoken about in the interviews, I went in search of these “titled” documents.

Two document gathering trips to Nanaimo (not including the first exploratory and contact making trip) lasting approximately one week each were taken to collect data. On the first trip, efforts were concentrated between archives at one of the local newspapers and records available from the City. The second trip was similarly oriented to the first. As I uncovered the depth of information available in this project, I realized I would need to shift my focus to retrieving information electronically. To this end, part of the time spent in the City was a bit of a shotgun approach, determining and securing documents I could not retrieve

electronically, and establishing contacts with people who could forward documents electronically. What follows is an in-depth account of the key data sources.

### *Newspaper Accounts*

There are three newspapers in Nanaimo: *The Nanaimo News Bulletin*, *The Nanaimo Daily News*, and *The Harbour City Star*. Both the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* and *The Harbour City Star* are circulated free of charge in the community, while the *Nanaimo Daily News* is distributed according to paid subscription. The *Harbour City Star* is a once weekly supplement to the *Bulletin*. As a result, there was considerable content overlap between them. An in-depth description of each of the newspapers is offered when accounting for the role of the media in the process.

Data collection began with the *Nanaimo News Bulletin*. It served as one of the initial reference points to gauge community interest and support for the conference centre. The choice to begin with this paper was purely arbitrary. I spent one week perusing the archives, beginning in January 1999. The rationale behind this choice was based on the assumption that prior to the City's public announcement of a conference centre in late 2000, there may have been accounts leading up to the announcement and commencement of the development. In addition, civic elections were held in November 1999, with City Council orchestrating the initial conference centre concept. It was important to have a sense of what their campaign messages were. Although the date was established somewhat arbitrarily, I worked forward and backward to establish the time frame and built an account of the events as they were presented to the community at large. This process was also useful for informing my understanding of the language used when speaking about the conference centre, and importantly, to identify the key players in the decision-making process; that is, vocal contenders and other community members who could speak in-depth about the process during the second phase of data collection.

I established the community context, gaining a sense of how the traditional industries supporting the community were faring. Moreover, with a preliminary understanding of the role of tourism in this community, I was particularly attuned to references about how tourism was talked about and positioned in the community. I was also looking for records demonstrating the ways the province was supporting the City.



Through this initial process of sifting through and reviewing documents, there was a growing awareness about of the volume of data related to this project and the labourious method of review. It became readily apparent that I could not cover both papers in this first week. Therefore, I made the decision to focus my efforts where I started, at the *Nanaimo News Bulletin*, and remained on-site to examine their records during the first trip, choosing to forego on-site analysis at the *Nanaimo Daily News*. Time and distance were key considerations in this decision. This initial foray proved invaluable for providing a springboard from which to build a list of keywords through which to access information electronically from the *Bulletin*'s electronic archives.

In an effort to continue this process, arrangements were made with both the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* and the *Nanaimo Daily News* to access their electronic search engines to retrieve archival data. Access to the electronic newsroom meant I could refine the search according to specific parameters such as topic, key words, and dates. Accessing the archives electronically provided flexibility that otherwise would not have been possible and allowed me to expand the time-frame examined from roughly 1990 to 2007. I made the decision to extend analysis beyond the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, community referendum because of the debate that ensued thereafter.

An initial list of 20 keywords<sup>7</sup> was generated based on the information gleaned about the conference centre that began with the onsite archives at the *Bulletin*. I began the electronic search with the electronic archives at the *Nanaimo Daily News*<sup>8</sup> and this search yielded other possible keywords. Each keyword was entered as a separate search and assigned a code number and cross-referenced to avoid duplication of articles. For example, in the earlier dated articles, “convention centre” was initially interchanged with “conference centre”, and both of these could also be seen in the discussions surrounding downtown revitalization. An Excel spreadsheet catalogued information including the publication date, article title, the keyword

---

<sup>7</sup> The list of keywords included: conference centre, convention centre, downtown revitalization, Yes Campaign, NNC, PNC, Friends of Plan Nanaimo, FPN, Tourism, Economic Development, Nanaimo Now, downtown plan, Foundry, Triarc, public input, public participation, public interest, participation process, Invest in Yes. Notably, there were some oversights which may have yielded valuable information that was overlooked. Words like policy and provincial relations may have yielded further articles that may have been central to establishing the local provincial relations.

<sup>8</sup> The *Bulletin*'s electronic newsroom proved inefficient and laborious and therefore I only used their system if I was searching for a particular reference that surfaced elsewhere. I made this decision with the confidence that the *Nanaimo Daily News* provided extensive and exhaustive coverage.

used, the section and type of article (i.e., editorial, letter to the editor, commentary, and news), along with article title, author, and cross reference code. Where recorded elsewhere, that code was also noted. This process was highly informative as it provided a sense of how the conference centre was being presented and what the community's response was. Given my objective to examine the perceptions surrounding the PNC, particular attention was paid to the letters to the Editors and the weekly columns produced. From this list, I culled the letters to the Editors and made notes about key ideas presented by the citizens in the community. Critical discourse analysis discussed later in this chapter was the method chosen to document how ideas about the conference centre, downtown revitalization, growth, and development manifested in Nanaimo.

*City Council Minutes, Committee Minutes, and Community and Community Reports*

City Council Minutes were examined electronically beginning in 1993, the first year the minutes were available in this format. I culled references pertaining to the conference centre, tourism, tourism development, and downtown revitalization from each year of minutes. A separate file for each year of minutes was created. A summary of notes was attached to the bottom of each file so that I could gain a sense of what key discussions took place in the Council. In addition, I paid attention to who was presenting information to City Council and what actions they took to stimulate the local economy, the different committees, and the City Councillor's portfolio.

The beginning date of analysis coincided with the first community visioning exercise under the leadership of the mayor at the time. This programme was the genesis of the highly participatory *Plan Nanaimo*, the City's official community plan. Broader discussions about regional or community economic development, provincial relationships, by way of either programmes or grants, were also noted. Similar to the processes described by Mair (2006) and Gill (2000), the goal of this analysis was to garner a sense of when tourism was first framed as an economic restructuring tool for the community. It should be noted that a separate set of minutes exists for the meetings of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee, the committee largely responsible for the decisions surrounding the PNC. Their minutes would have been particularly relevant to this process, however, the meetings were held in camera, and hence, were not released to the public.

A similar process was undertaken with other committee reports; however, by the time I got to these reports, note taking was reduced substantially as I had a sense of what I was looking for. For the most part, summary notes were attached to the front of paper documents summarizing the contents. No action was taken for reports deemed redundant or unimportant (e.g., Economic Development Standing Committee), apart from the fact that they yielded little information.

## **Phase 2: In-Depth Interviewing and Informal Encounters**

### *Considerations in Interviewing*

According to Johnson (2000), in-depth interviewing is most effective for comprehending the individual's sense of self, "their lived experience, values and decisions, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge or perspective" (p. 104). My immersion in the documentation (i.e., papers and minutes) provided me with some understanding and awareness and knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the development of the PNC, existed. This helped ensure that, as much as possible, the interviews were conversational in nature. I possessed a relatively reciprocal reserve of knowledge (Fontana, 2002), meaning that I was relatively well informed so that I could engage in the conversation with the participants. Warren (2002) notes this is an important consideration in order to reduce uneven quality between the first and last interviews.

In addition, Shuy (2002) suggests there are a number of advantages of in-person interviewing, and I culled from his list those aspects I felt beneficial and natural for me when conducting interviews. Conducting face-to-face interviews fosters mutual interaction via small talk or activity (i.e. cup of tea) and helped to set the stage for a conversation rather than an "interview". This contextual naturalness mirrors conversations of everyday life, in which changes of topic, interruptions and digressions encourage people to express more fully who they are. As Shuh suggests, it reduces the social distance between the interviewer and the participant, and establishes symmetrical distribution of interactive power and more accurate responses. Moreover, Shuh, advocates for open-ended questions in order to avoid brief, underdeveloped answers. Participants, when provided leeway often "self-generate", which is to say they provide more thorough and thoughtful responses.

These considerations were important for setting the tone for the interviews. Throughout the first phase of data collection, I began to understand the degree of acrimony surrounding the

conference centre debate. For the most part, respondents were open to meeting with me. In fact, some welcomed it. However, others were more reticent for various reasons. I was an “academic” and much of the opposition to the conference centre was perceived to come from the “intellectual crowd up at the university,” therefore my presence was met with some suspicion. For others, their reluctant consent was based in fear of professional retribution. Others merely wanted the issue put to rest. In the case of the latter, my presence was a symbolic stirring of the pot over an issue that for them was largely unpleasant. I was aware how each of these different perspectives tempered my being in the interview as I desired first and foremost that the participant was comfortable with me and that a degree of trust could be established. I was careful when asking my questions not to “trespass” in areas that were uncomfortable for them.

Congruent with a constructionist approach, along with gathering detailed accounts from the participants’ perspectives, the interview had the associated goal of working towards verification and saturation. In this regard, the interviews were used to both explore and substantiate. Johnson (2002) notes that one begins to build a stock of knowledge from which to probe in subsequent interviews and that this should be carried through until theoretical saturation is achieved. Interviews were conducted and continued until saturation was achieved. Given that theoretical saturation is somewhat ambiguously defined, I interpreted it as the point at which no new issues and completely original perspectives were yielded from the participants and that there was little discrepancy in terms of the information presented.

One final consideration in the interviewing process was to foster a degree of mutual respect and rapport with my participants. This study was somewhat unique in that even though I possess privilege and power by virtue of my position as an educated white person, many of the respondents themselves occupied similar status in society. Mutual respect and rapport in this case was reflective of my ability to wrestle with the multiple perspectives and interpretations and to recognize as Johnson (2002) does that virtually all complex settings are subject to conflict and dispute.

### *Selecting Participants*

Participants were residents of Nanaimo who lived either in the City or one of the amalgamated outlying areas. Finding participants to interview is best described as purposive sampling using a snowball technique (Warren, 2002). Participants helped identify other community members

who they believed had insights into the decision-making process, or who had a high degree of interest in the project, and who were therefore knowledgeable about the unfolding of events. This resulted in a total of 37 interviews. My goal was to seek out stakeholders to expose a range of perspectives, while at the same time ensuring the residents chosen had a high degree of affinity or connection, regardless of motive, to the events surrounding the development of the conference centre. A number of the participants interviewed held volunteer positions in the community and represented those organizations in the interview process.

### *Situating the Participants*

Based on the data from the documents reviewed in the first phase which provided context, I had a strong sense of the various organizations and/or individuals who could provide valuable insights into the development of the convention centre. Most of the participants were involved in some significant way in the community. Many of them had linkages, either directly or indirectly, to the process leading to the development of the conference centre. The most intimately involved participants included members of City Council, City staff, and the volunteers who served on the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC), as well as members of both the Friends of Plan Nanaimo (FPN) and the *Invest in Yes* Campaigns. The less directly involved sources included volunteers who provided leadership to the neighbourhood associations, one of which was close to the downtown, while another participant had occupied a board position on one of Nanaimo's more affluent neighbourhood associations. Business owners on either side of the debate were also interviewed, many of whom had volunteered on committees involved in this project. Moreover, those with obvious stakes in the project (e.g., a representative of the Museum) also provided perspectives. One perspective absent was that of the print media. This was not an oversight. The interview was cancelled and could not be re-scheduled in a timely manner. Regrettably, several potential participants declined interviews, and some could not be reached despite several attempts.

Of interest, and certainly not anticipated to the degree that it occurred, was how often several of the individuals interviewed served simultaneously or sequentially in a number of volunteer roles. For example, one retired businessperson in the community had volunteered with EDG, the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Conference Centre Advisory Committee, and The Yes Committee. Generally speaking, I grouped participants in the ensuing chapters as either those supporting or objecting to the project. This was intentional

to protect their anonymity. Because of the overlap in volunteer capacities, or because of their occupation, some of these individuals held high profiles in the community. Even a generic description of their role could reveal their identities. Nanaimo is a relatively large community and I had not anticipated this would be an issue; however, it soon became evident that with some participants, if their positions were identified, so too, would be their identities. The next section outlines how a list of interview participants was created.

### *The Role of Key Contacts to the Interview Process*

I made an initial 2-day exploratory trip to Nanaimo in July 2006. I met with one member of the community who provided the names of key informants and organizations that I may want to contact. By way of introduction, I positioned myself as a former student of Malaspina College located in Nanaimo (now Vancouver Island University) working on my Ph.D. at the University of Waterloo. Apart from this community member's recommendations, other logical starting points were the local Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Nanaimo, and City Hall.

The purpose at that point in time was to begin to establish a potential interview list, as well as to put a face to my name. Given that I was not in the community and had no way of gauging the degree of interest, I thought it important to make contact with community leaders. In generating the participant list, I requested the use of their name as reference when making introductory calls to the individuals they recommended. Upon returning to Waterloo, follow-up letters were sent to each contact, in order to maintain a sense of continuity with them, and their connection to this project (Appendix A).

Participants were initially recruited through introductory telephone calls, made in the spring of 2008. The decision about who to interview was dependent on seeking out individuals who could illuminate the salient issues surrounding the conference centre, initially affirmed in my potential contact list, and then through phase one of data collection. Because data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, I had some understanding of the issues and this helped in yielding information-rich participants. Prior to agreeing to participate, I outlined the purpose of the study with participants and gave them some indication of the time commitment by requesting approximately 1.5 hours of their time. For those who agreed to participate, a follow-up letter confirmed the date and place of the interview. In addition, an addendum to the letter, an overview of the study, was included (Appendix B).

### *Interviewing Participants*

Important to this second phase of data collection was relocating to Nanaimo for seven weeks to conduct face-to-face interviews. The one exception was a telephone-recorded interview upon returning to Waterloo. For the most part, the interviews took place in either the participant's home or workspace. In the event that neither of those allowed for quiet and uninterrupted time, we met in a space arranged at the local university<sup>9</sup>, my kitchen table, or a locale of their choice. Creswell (2003) argues setting is an important consideration when conducting interviews. In order to ensure that participants were comfortable, a key consideration was a place they identified as suitable to them. In some cases, the setting was less than ideal (i.e., noisy coffee shop), but a place of the participant's choosing.

I followed well-established protocols when meeting with the participants including permission to record, permission to terminate the interview at any time, ability to decline answering, anonymity in both verbal and written text, and informed, signed consent (Appendix C). With regard to informed consent in particular, I reminded participants of the principles and regulations of the University of Waterloo that governed this research project. An interview guide (Appendix D) was presented to each participant to follow through-out our conversation, however they were encouraged to bring forward any aspects of the process that felt important. During the interviews, I attempted to take notes, but found this to be somewhat stifling and artificial to conversation. As a result, I opted to make only supplementary notes on occasion. Upon concluding on the interviews, I reflected on the interview and my role in it, the degree of comfort I possessed, and other general musings that came to the surface in a separate researcher journal. Morse (2002), in her experience in interviewing the ill, notes this is a useful technique for improving the quality of the data. Logistical information as well as descriptive observations was recorded in this journal. Importantly, it became an intentional conversation with self as I mused about the interviews and pondered evolving themes and concepts, established linkages and networks, as well as noted further participants for the study. Thank you follow-up letters were sent to each participant (Appendix E).

---

<sup>9</sup> During the exploratory trip, I secured office space in Student Services at the local university in order to offer potential participants an alternative interview location if they chose not to meet in their homes. I offered my kitchen table at my discretion. This was a personal decision based on my level of comfort around the conversation with the participant at the time the interview was being arranged.

Thirty-seven interviews were conducted and 36 of them were recorded using a digital voice recorder. One participant requested not to be recorded and in this instance, extensive notes were taken at the time of the interview. The interview was then reconstructed from notes and from memory shortly thereafter and forwarded to the participant via email. The participant clarified aspects of the interview, checked it for accuracy, and returned it within a two-week period. This was the only member check undertaken. I conducted one telephone interview upon returning to Waterloo. This individual no longer lived in the community, but was suggested as a potential participant. This interview was also recorded, with verbal consent given over the phone. With the exception of one interview that failed to record and the interview wherein the participant declined recording, interviews were transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 10, a speech recognition software programme. Once trained for my voice, I listened to the interview through the digital recorder earpiece, and then almost simultaneously spoke the interview into a microphone. The programme provided command prompts (such as ‘new line’, capitalize, period and so forth). Initially, this process was arduous and somewhat frustrating, causing several playbacks. However, accuracy improved significantly with use, resulting in a relatively efficient transcription process.<sup>10</sup>

### **Researcher Journal: Capturing Post-Interview Echoes and Accidental Encounters**

Apart from the role of my journal as noted earlier, it served as a valuable tool for recording my impressions of the community and informal interactions with community members. Making Nanaimo home for two months allowed the opportunity to experience the community in a way that would not have been possible had I not relocated. The daily “rub” added a dimension to the research that would not have occurred otherwise. Accidental encounters, as well as observations in the community, provided colour that either served to reinforce, and in a good number of ways, contradict my personal biases. Hofmeyr, Templer and Beaty (1994) refer to this as “research by wandering around.” Only time spent in the community could reveal this. In this regard, journaling was a recording of these musings and became a reorienting mechanism when I felt distance from the research site upon returning home.

Although not anticipated, biking or walking during my time in Nanaimo added yet another dimension. I believe it heightened my sensitivity to the community and the struggle

---

<sup>10</sup> I would use this process again. An updated version of the programme can now account for multiple voices.



therein that could not have occurred if I was driving. I was able to experience the City and the surroundings differently than if I had been driving. Daily cycling or walking to the interviews or for pleasure, would take me from Brechin Hill, an area close to the ferry terminal, to downtown within 25 minutes. Enroute, I transitioned from the old shipyard areas to the developing downtown and encountered a spectrum of community residents. I encountered moms with strollers, working professionals, panhandlers, labourers, and tourists along the way. These experiences left residual feelings about what was occurring in the community, often causing me to ponder what I later realized were hidden biases.

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA**

Two analytical strategies informed this case study. The overall lens through which the data were interpreted was critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA was useful for determining how tourism had been enacted to become a dominant redevelopment discourse in the community. Given the wealth of data present in this case, the coding processes associated with grounded theory were employed to inform my understanding of the participants' experiences. In light of my epistemic stance, the spirit of grounded theory as described by Charmaz (2000) as flexible heuristic strategies as opposed to formulaic procedures, guided data analysis. Systematic inductive guidelines for data collection and analysis primarily included: simultaneous collection and analysis of data; multiple-step coding; comparative methods; and memo-writing.

Both CDA and strategies borrowed from grounded theory worked in tandem to help me look deeper into the data. CDA served as an intellectual anchor that, while in the throes of analysis, reminded me to seek out the central issues. It is important to note that I see this differently than prior or preconceived categories, which reflected early grounded theory methods imbued with positivistic attributes. However, familiarity with the literature helped in formulating sensitizing concepts, which served as a departure point when reflecting on the data. Strategies such as memo-writing, coding, and the various forms of data collection all assisted in establishing and refining categories and relationships in the data, and as a result, not only set the analytical course, but constructed my narrative of the case. My stance reflects that of Kelle (1997) who suggests our own lenses and conceptual networks serve as guides to investigation, but that the analytical – such as the strategies of grounded theory – move us beyond the culmination of multiple events identified by the participant to make assessments, and observations out of the data.

## **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) emphasizes how meaning must take into consideration context (Wasson, 2004) and is a departure from the purely descriptive function of discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis examines how ideas, beliefs, and relationships that may be hegemonic are enacted and reproduced through language (Aldrich, Zwi, & Short, 2007). It takes into account both textual (content) and contextual properties. Wood and Kroger (2000) argue neither can be detached from the actions implied in communication. In this way, critical discourse analysis provided an account of how information is mediated and moulded, thereby reflecting the value-systems behind text, both written and spoken (Fowler, 1996). It is an analytic way to see “voice at work and relate it to the larger patterns of inequality” (Blommaert, 2005, p.68).

More specifically, Fairclough’s (1989, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) work on critical discourse identifies three dimensions to discourse: text, discourse practice, and socio-cultural practices. Text takes into consideration the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse, such as the choices and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (Blommaert, 2005). Discursive practices take into account the ways texts are produced in specific settings and the ways in which texts are received by audiences and subsequently distributed. Socio-cultural practice specifically refers to the various situational, institutional, and societal levels where discourse occurs. Although all three, text, discourse practice and social practices are interwoven and interdependent, for the purposes of this case, consideration was given primarily to the second and third dimensions. The focus is less an in-depth analysis centered on grammar (questions of transitivity, mood, and modality) or relations between clauses in complex sentences that are functions of text interpretation. Instead the emphasis is on the dialectical relationship between text that is socially-shaped and is socially-shaping (Fairclough, 1993).

As a reflexive practice, Fairclough (1995b) stresses our role is to search beyond how the text reads and to give consideration to both extracting and inserting meaning, which is a discussion about what is present “in” and absent “from” the text. CDA is both an eisegesis and exegesis approach. With regard to the former, what is “in” a text may be either implicit or explicit. Implicit content, he further contends, is the “half way house between presence and absence” (p. 5). It reveals what is taken as a given or as common sense and renders apparent

the socio-cultural assumptions of how reality came into existence and, in turn, how a particular ideology becomes institutionalized. In the case of the latter, what is absent from text may be equally significant. As Fairclough (1989) recounts in his earlier work on language and power, “ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible” (p. 85). Discourse, then, is more than what is contained in a sentence. It is an “integration of sentences that produces global meaning” (Polkinghorne, 1988, cited in Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 261). Thus, it is in examining the “concrete, contextualized manifestations of socially shared ideological representations” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 308) in the minutia of talk, text, and other actions that we determine how language has been socially shaped while being constitutive (Fairclough, 1993).

van Dijk (1996) identifies a number of presuppositions to consider in the practice of CDA, suggesting one think about:

1. social power as properties of relations between social groups, institutions or organizations;
2. social power is control exercised by one group over the actions and/or minds of another group, thus limiting the freedom of their actions and influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies;
3. “distributed” power is that which is restricted to a specific social domain or scope such as the media, law, education, or business, that results in centres of power and the control by those possessing distributed power;
4. social power that is abused is dominance – defined as a legal or moral illegitimate exercise of control over others in their own interests;
5. power is based on privileged access to social resources that are valued, such as jobs, wealth, status or preferential access to public discourse and communication;
6. effective control of social power and dominance are organized and institutionalized to enable routine forms of power reproduction; and
7. dominance as a gradual effect in order to counter or offset resistance or counter-power by dominated groups (van Dijk, 1996, pp. 84, 85, paraphrased).

In much the same way, although more explicit, Mair (2006) challenges us to think about considering ways to neutralize the way tourism discourse privileges a particular perspective by raising questions of:

1. *Rationale*: why should tourism development be promoted?

2. *Responsibility*: who is (should be) responsible for the promotion of tourism development?
3. *Execution*: how should tourism development be promoted?
4. *Content*: What kinds of activities and facilities should be promoted?

These questions necessitate critical analyses. Both the analysis of language in context and the actions produced were complementary ways of revealing how the struggle for control over the meaning of Nanaimo's identity occurred. Overall, in the analysis of the accounts surrounding the Port of Nanaimo Centre, critical discourse served as a "diagnostic tool" (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 90) to assess if social power and political dominance and/or influence contributed to a particular hegemonic mindset amongst community decision-makers and other community stakeholders. In other words, CDA helped to describe and explain if power has been enacted, reproduced, or legitimized through the dominant groups/institutions' talk and text.

### **Strategies of Data Analysis**

In working with the interview data, both memoing and coding served important roles. Memoing was important for gaining perspective on the text, while coding served as a way of building knowledge about the data (Bazeley, 2007). QSR NVivo 8, a qualitative analysis software programme, was employed simply to manage and store the data in an efficient manner. However, several strategies outlined by Bazeley in guiding analysis with NVivo were used as guideposts and fit with the flexibility found within grounded theory methods as endorsed by Charmaz (2000, 2006). Of Bazeley's strategies for building knowledge, coding detail and fracturing/slicing the data were helpful. As for identifying and naming codes the use of indigenous or *in vivo* codes repetition, and theoretically derived codes were at least initially the most helpful when working with the data.

### *Gaining Perspective Through Memo Writing*

Memoing was vital for the analysis of the interview data, serving both pragmatic and reflexive purposes for capturing my thoughts in the process. As described by many qualitative researchers, it is a way to reflect on the evolving themes and concepts coming out of the data (Charmaz, 2000). To a large extent, it was mapping where I had been, how I got there, where I thought I should be going next and why, and what I wanted to remember and consider in the

overall journey. In this regard, memoing forced me to slow down and be intentional about the process of deliberation. It became an exercise in reflection, at the same time an impulsive place to be creative. This is akin to Charmaz's (2006) experience when she writes of unleashing or liberating creativity, and with the freedom associated with freelance writing. My memoing served to challenge the rooting of concepts that I favoured or liked, but which may not have had a basis in the data. It was a way for me to once again question whether I had captured the central issues brought forward by the participants.

Memos were written during and after each interview had been transcribed. This proved invaluable as I set aside the interviews for a period in order to reflect and write about the case overall. Once I returned to the interviews, my first reading was intended to gain an overall impression of the data, and served to confirm or alter my initial impressions about early concepts and themes that might be occurring. Importantly, it allowed me to "switch gears" or reorient towards the subjective stance of the participants. After re-establishing a level of familiarity, I began coding the data.

#### *Building Knowledge Through Coding*

At its simplest, coding is a way to work with and build knowledge about the data by identifying categories that summarize the data (Bazeley, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). Applying a code name is a way of analytically accounting for the purposes of retaining the data as opposed to reducing it (Richards, 2005). Consistent with a grounded theory approach to analysis, codes emerge from the data and I constructed these from emerging ideas and concepts. They therefore represent my understanding and reading of the data.

An important consideration is my regard for social critique, which also had bearing on this process. The reading and analysis of the contextual data generated insights and produced sensitizing concepts, which were reinforced through my literature review. In light of this, it is misleading to suggest that *a priori* or theoretically derived concepts did not play a role in this process, because as Charmaz (2000) notes they are embedded in our disciplinary emphases. As much as possible, they were bracketed in the first reading of the data in order to avoid limiting or restricting the data. However, they also played a role in considering power as a central condition in this case, as well as the role of resistance as demonstrated through the actions of the FPN. There was a blending between the more traditional approach taken in grounded

theory wherein sensitising concepts are derived from the literature and precede data collection and analysis, and constructionism where concepts come from the participants.

Charmaz's (2006) coding strategy is open, focused, and theoretical. However, Bazeley (2007) identifies a series of strategies I found useful for identifying and naming codes that adhered to the principles of Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach. *In vivo* or indigenous codes is an emic approach, and stands in direct contrast to *a priori* derived codes. Contrasting and comparing codes also provided a consideration of the ways in which the data were similar or different. Bazeley recommends bouncing off the text into theoretical comparisons so one can begin the process of exploring more deeply the structure and significance of the words. This was a helpful process in that it helped to validate some of the *a priori* codes established, and to consider more deeply the structure and significance of the words used to identify their properties and dimensions (p. 79). Patterns occurring through repetition served to reinforce what was emerging through the data as well and to begin to help clarify what was in the occurrences. Boyatzis (1998), quoted in both Patton (2002) and Bazeley (2007), wrote,

If sensing a pattern or occurrence can be called seeing, then the encoding of it can be called seeing as. That is, you first make the observation that something important or notable is occurring, and then you classify or describe it ... [T]he seeing as provides us with a link between a new or emergent pattern and any and all patterns that we have observed and considered previously. It also provides a link to any and all patterns that others have observed and considered previously through reading (p. 4).

Although the process of coding is presented as categorical, this was not the experience of coding. All of these strategies worked in concert to determine the codes to abandon, modify, and reword in order for data to lift off the page (Charmaz, 2006). This coding process made way for the narrative in this case study and reflects my construction of the lived experiences of those interviewed. The next chapter first turns our attention to Nanaimo's history and the events that led to this decision. It is here the research questions specific to Nanaimo are answered.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CHRONOLOGY AND CONTEXT

### *NANAIMO THROUGH TIME*

---

*“One thing is certain; we want some change to lift us out of the muddy condition in which we are at present”*

*Nanaimo Free Press, December 18, 1874*

#### **CHAPTER FOCUS**

This chapter moves from the general theoretical threads posited in previous chapters, and provides an overview of what I consider the significant, and in some cases, nuanced events that have shaped this community’s identity. It outlines the events and actions that lead to the decision to build the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC). In doing so, you will see how key actors and agencies coalesced to revitalize and initiate large-scale redevelopment in order to construct a new identity for Nanaimo. Upon completion of this chapter, you should have a sense of a City moving from an industrial to a post-industrial context.

History, in some regards, is repeating itself. Powerful actors shaped the City initially, and most recently influential actors are re-shaping it, resulting in a new kind of urbanization that pushes Nanaimo’s growth in specific ways. As the story unfolds, you will have a sense of this community’s struggle, and how it is being played out against larger urban trends. Most notable is the shift from a resource-oriented, industrial profile, to a post-industrial City ‘courting’ urban growth and consumptive oriented activities. Importantly in this process, tourism is legitimized as a mechanism of urban development. These broad strokes underwriting Nanaimo’s story are not unique. Rather they reflect transitions germane to many communities caught in transition and whose local governments have sought to capitalize on the growing tourism market.

In Nanaimo, decision-makers have made economic development a priority, identifying the arts and culture and Nanaimo’s landscape as two of the economic drivers with the most potential. The conference centre plays a central role as a staging mechanism through which to draw attention and highlight the new economic development priorities, and the natural beauty of one of British Columbia’s coastal communities.

Canada’s altered political and economic context presages the local story. Broader structural considerations frame the retelling of Nanaimo’s story and provide some insights as to

why a conference centre came to play such an important role in Nanaimo's economic reform. A change in provincial government occurred shortly after the conference centre surfaced fundamentally changing institutionalized policies. These changes at the provincial level mirrored federal government policy that had been in place for the better part of two decades. Although this is a slight departure from the telling of Nanaimo's story specifically, it speaks to the networks that work vertically to influence the networks working across the community.

The local dimension to this story begins thereafter. Consideration is first given to the role industrialization, urbanization and immigration played in shaping this community. I outline the transition at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, detailing the context against which a new image for Nanaimo occurred. Following is an in-depth account of the processes undertaken that eventually led to the decision to pursue a conference centre. Outlined next are the organizations and committees that worked almost in tandem, and in a complementary manner, to condition the local context for tourism initiatives and the consumptive lifestyle more broadly. The chapter concludes with the role of the local media in telling this story.

#### **THE GLOBAL ECONOMY: CANADA'S POLITICAL ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

Canada's political economic context has not happened in isolation. Its roots are in the broader policy shifts that were ushered in with neo-liberal mandate that took hold with the Reagan and Thatcher governments in the early 1980s. Their mandates contributed to a newly fashioned relationship between government and business. The impact set in place a series of policy changes that have had both direct and indirect impacts on provincial and local governments. In other words, in much the same way that federal or provincial governments influence policy decisions at the local level, the broader global context exerts similar pressures subjecting the state to specific policy-oriented trends. The state responds to tensions and movements in the external milieu by adapting their foreign and economic policies.

Increasingly, the synchronized momentum of broad policy trends across the state have been facilitated and fuelled by an increasingly globalised world. Globalization, despite its various interpretations, reflects a complex multi-dimensional process operating simultaneously across several institutional domains that result in a stretching and deepening of relations politically, socially, and professionally (Held & McGrew, 2007). Giddens' (1990) well quoted description offers an insightful yet broad definition, suggesting it is "the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are



shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 64). The interdependent relations that have surfaced among the various geographically spaced actors have transformed the political arena at the national level. Canada, along with most of the Westernized world has fundamentally shifted the way in which they have governed as a result (Marchak, 1991).

Globalization in and of itself is not the cause for the radical changes that have occurred in government policy. Rather, the emphasis on economic globalization has prompted important changes in attributes of the state. As Stiglitz (2006) notes, “economics has been driving globalization, especially through the lowering of communication and transportation costs. But politics has shaped it” (p. 6). His observation is that the rules of the game are set by special interests of advanced industrial countries. This is an important consideration and key to the manner in which governments have responded. The state’s historic role is increasingly subordinated and reshaped by the political architecture of international relations (Pasha & Blaney (1998). The politics to which Stiglitz (2006) refers is well accounted for in Marchak’s (1991) analysis. She makes a compelling case outlining how a number of significant world wide events created changes across Canada’s political, social, spatial and enterprising dimensions.

According to Marchak (1991), the new political agenda, which emerged in the mid-1970s in Canada favoured free enterprise and entrepreneurship. In the process, influential political shapers rejected Keynesian practices that dominated the post-war era. In large part, the new political agenda gained momentum through international business leaders wanting to take advantage of the advancements primarily in travel, communication and technology. Capital had also become more mobile and all of these factors contributed to reduce both time and spatial limitations. In turn, they positioned Western business leaders to capitalize on cheaper labour and regulatory practices in developing nations. However, business leaders determined that trade barriers, government resistance, labour legislation, investment rules and welfare systems were impediments to the developing a global economy (Marchak, 1991). They lobbied “to reorganize politics to facilitate a fully competitive free market economy” but in the process maintained a role for government as “the authoritarian instruments for the protection of private property” (Marchak, 1991, p. 10).

The influence and power exerted by business significantly compromised government’s ability to perform some of their most important functions (Betcherman, 1996; Harvey, 1989).

The consequence has been a resurgence of a laissez-faire ideology that marked the industrial era. State management in the Westernized world is increasingly centred on policies which reduce trade barriers, shift production and distribution, create flexible divisions and structures of labour, increase trade in finance and orient production around consumptive practices (Mair, 2006). Collectively, they are markers indicative of a new ideological framework reflecting specific interests and agendas that has led to an emphasis on economic globalization in its current laissez-faire form. The consequence has been an economic and corporate unilateralism with far-reaching roots. To this end, Marchak's (1991) analysis serves as a useful springboard from which to examine more closely the Canadian context.

Canada, over the past three decades, and in keeping with other Western democracies has also embraced reducing government. In much the same way, the Keynesian paradigm was a first wave of restructuring against the laissez-faire capitalism preceding the great depression; so too, a second wave of restructuring occurred during the late 1970s within Canada. This altered socio-political environment began with the introduction of neo-liberal budgetary considerations in the 1980s (Baines, 2006). Downsizing, funding cuts, narrowed service mandates and the introduction of repetitive waves of market-oriented government re-organizing were demonstrative of a new structural reform package within Canada. Expenditure restraint has been a key characteristic, and marked a considerable shift from post-war Keynesian economic national policy designed to prevent similar catastrophic conditions of the 1930s.

Previously, the post-war decades of Keynesian economic policies were oriented towards strengthening and building Canada in three primary areas – industry, infrastructure and society (Edon & Molot, 1993). Successive post-war governments upheld what Edon and Molot (1993) describe as defensive expansionism. Within the social context, policies operated under a mandate of providing service to those who could establish need and subsequently established protectionist-funding mechanisms. In the case of industry within British Columbia, the post-war industry of the 1940s and 1950s encouraged natural resource extraction and exportation. These policies were significant in providing economic stability to a number of communities across the province. In regions where deficits occurred, Canadian governments held a long-standing commitment to ameliorate the disparity. This well-established compensatory function

of government sought to address regional disparity, and create health and welfare infrastructure.

However, the global economic crisis of the 1970s, precipitated by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) oil embargo, destabilized Canada's Keynesian-rooted growth strategy. The Canadian Liberal government attempted a response by way of stronger economic nationalism that was ultimately short-lived (Gabriel & MacDonald, 2004). However, this crisis gave rise to increasing pressure by Canada's business community who pushed for the elimination of tariffs, seeking instead to limit the autonomy and capacity of the federal and provincial governments to pursue interventionist national policies (Gabriel & MacDonald, 2004).

This marked a significant shift in Canadian policy that was supported and as a result was entrenched under the Mulroney era in the early 1980s. The policy shift stood in contrast to the more interventionist and protectionist policies that had defined Canadian national policy since Confederation. Trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation were benchmarks marking the transition to a more market-oriented perspective in national policies.

Importantly, the changes in Canada complemented changes that were taking place in the United States. As Canada's strongest political and trade ally, a comprehensive set of policy options were outlined to which Canada subscribed. The Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA), that eventually became the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), were drafted based on the rationale that closer ties with the United States were essential to Canada's economic well-being (Gabriel & MacDonald, 2004). Both agreements represented a governance project whose aim was limited to supporting the creation of a continental market for goods and capital (Johnson & Mahon, 2005). Continental free trade between Canada and the United States displaced the "mildly nationalistic" (Gabriel & MacDonald, 2004, p. 83) Keynesian policy framework, with a more unified macroeconomic policy framework. At the same time, the relationship necessitated re-positioning Canada's approach with all international relations. Canada was required to be more globally responsive and to foster closer ties at the international level (Johnson & Mahon, 2005).

The technological advancements that spurred globalization also precipitated a decline in the manufacturing and industrial base that had long dominated Canada's working landscape. Replacing Keynesian policy complemented the decline of industrial Fordism, which had been

at the centre of the Western world's economic foundation since World War II. Keynes' ideology was eventually replaced by more service-oriented post-Fordist activities in which consumption moved to the forefront (Grossberg, 1992, in Harp, 1994). The diversity of Canada's landscape, culture and built environments provided a foundation that complemented the drive towards consumptive and consumer-oriented activities.

Within Canada, one new accumulation strategy identified was cultural tourism. The Conservative government released this strategy in February 1985 in an 80-page discussion paper entitled *Tourism Tomorrow: Towards a Canadian Tourism Strategy*. Harp (1994) provided a detailed account of the increased effort by the Prime Minister's office to construct tourism policy marketing Canada's cultural diversity internationally. Harp also outlined the divestiture of funding more broadly that resulted in the gradual devolution of funding to the provinces and regions. Underlying his analyses was the federal government's role in perpetuating a political economy of tourism within Canada.

Through 1984 to 1992, Harp (1994) tracks the importance of tourism to the federal government as an accumulation strategy. State directed discourse on cultural tourism emphasized regional and community distinctiveness. In British Columbia, the federal government's influence is reflected in provincial support strategies. For example, Nanaimo established downtown design guidelines to take advantage of the Province's Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP). HARP was a streetscape improvement project that concentrated on "bricks and mortar" improvements to a city's historic core. Nanaimo's Old City Quarter underwent revitalizing efforts to attract upmarket retailers. Introduced in 1987 under the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture, "Project Pride"<sup>11</sup> called for the conservation, maintenance and restoration of heritage properties in B.C. The initiative was part of the provincial report entitled "Stewardship and Opportunity" (Ministry of Tourism, Recreation & Culture, 1987). As reflected in the title, the discourse directed communities and regions to capitalize on the potential of connecting history and culture to tourism and introduced a new currency within communities.

An adjunct but complementary directive that reinforced the importance of history was business improvement legislation. Following several other provinces, British Columbia, under

---

<sup>11</sup> Then MLA Kim Campbell chaired the Ministerial Task Force on Heritage and Conservation under the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture. Campbell later served briefly as Canada's only female Prime Minister, representing the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

the Ministry of Community Development, adopted the Business Improvement Area (BIA) legislation (1988). Nanaimo City Centre Association launched Nanaimo's first BIA. In principle, the BIA legislation served as a mechanism designed to assist local business people and property owners to effectively market and promote upgrades to an area for the purposes of improving its commercial viability. The concept, originally initiated in 1969 by a group of Toronto merchants, set in motion a precedent allowing commercial districts to self-tax for specified commercial areas (Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia, n.d.)

The key principle behind the legislation was to reverse the economic climate and physical appearance of a specified commercial district and funding was earmarked for the management and promotion of a City's downtown core. In British Columbia, supplementary funding came through a \$10 million revolving lottery fund adopted by the provincial government as a long-term funding strategy (Debate of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 1988). Together these two provincial initiatives, spurred by policy drafts at the federal level, initiated a specific course of action for Nanaimo. In return, they effectively influenced, if not narrowed the future discursive context.

By the mid-1990s, the newly fashioned norms within Ottawa had huge implications for Canada's provinces. The traditional protectionist-funding mechanisms of the Keynesian state were challenged, and subsequently altered under the changing political environment. Federal decisions about the use of its spending power in areas of provincial jurisdiction were re-evaluated, at the same time as they considered a series of offloading strategies (Bradford, 2004). Canada's provinces responded in kind. A number of provinces also adopted a neo-liberal stance, while at the same time limiting funding and increasing municipal responsibilities for programming.

The provincial and federal governments' engagement with privatizing, decentralizing and downloading practices has taken an increased toll on communities. Unlike the provinces, municipalities possessed no formal recognition as an official tier of government, thereby limiting their ability to respond. Local government bodies, no longer able to deliver essential services or to execute policy tailored to their communities, pressed for change by lobbying for recognition and autonomy. Several provinces responded by granting more power to local government. In British Columbia, municipal change was ushered in with the new Liberal government.

## **POLICY REFORM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

In the 2001 provincial election, the British Columbia Liberal Party (BCLP) replaced the New Democratic Provincial Party (NDP) after a decade of rule not only from government, but also from official parliamentary status. Led by former Vancouver mayor Gordon Campbell, the pro-business Liberal Party conclusively defeated the incumbent NDP and gave Campbell the largest majority in BC history. Securing nearly 60% of the popular vote and all but two of the 79 provincial legislative seats, the Liberal Party platform represented a significant shift in policy direction. Almost immediately, the BCLP introduced a comprehensive set of neo-liberal labour and social policy measures. They initiated deficit reduction programmes, lowered taxes, deregulated public services, and created a business climate conducive to economic growth. In large part, their platform aligned more closely with the political sentiments of the Social Credit Party (Socreds) who governed for 15 consecutive years prior to the NDP and were the first provincial party to initiate neo-liberal reform in Canada (Carroll & Ratner, 2005).

The BCLP stood in sharp contrast to the social democratic mandate of the NDP whose central tenets promoted organized labour, social movements, and emancipatory policies. Strong labour legislation, excessive government regulation, redistribution of income, high taxes and continuing deficits were indicative of the NDP's tenure in office (Bond, 2002). For example in their last year in office, British Columbia's NDP government had grown by 1 percent, diverging from the broader trend of shrinking<sup>12</sup> provincial governments occurring elsewhere in Canada. By comparison, Alberta's government under provincial premier Ralph Klein during the same period contracted 31 percent (Frontier Charticle, 2002). These actions consistently reinforced the message to the private sector and capital investors that BC was not a place to do business. The economic downturn in 1999 lessened global demand. British Columbia's debt increased and much of the province's private sector had migrated to more favourable business environments. All of these factors ignited citizen dissatisfaction and the subsequent vote for change. This was the context in which the BCLP's were voted into office.

With the BCLP, the province transitioned from a previous stance of "discernable if reluctant implementation of neo-liberal policies" to "enthusiastic adoption of the neo-liberal model" (McBride & McNutt, 2007, p. 177). The decentralizing and retrenchment policies,

---

<sup>12</sup> As a percentage of the GDP, Alberta government contracted -31%; Saskatchewan government contracted -29%; Manitoba government contracted -9%.

which were a result of the declining federal transfers during the latter half of their tenure, had exerted downward pressure on the NDP. The withdrawal of federal cash contributions left the NDP with difficult policy choices. Ultimately, they conceded to varying degrees of neo-liberal reform.

Change began in earnest in British Columbia in May 2001. Consistent with neo-liberal policy initiatives implemented elsewhere government ministries and agencies produced performance plans for the first term of office. Income tax reduction, privatization of publicly-held portfolios (e.g. health, transportation and natural resources), outsourcing, and new business regulations accompanied mandated budget reductions in government spending and civil services. In addition, the government mandated back-to-work legislation to end strikes by civil service employees (teachers and health care workers). The Liberals reduced layoff and overtime in public sector agreements and new legislation required balanced budgets by the last fiscal budget of the term (Bond, 2002).

Concurrently, the Liberal government actively courted business. Within the first year of holding office, they announced business tax reductions, and by the second year, corporate capital tax had been eliminated. Regulatory standards for business were reviewed with an eye to reduce bureaucratic red tape by one-third within a three-year period. This was, according to Premier Gordon Campbell, a “New Era.” After their first year in office, \$2.1 billion in income and corporate tax cuts had occurred. While all Canadian provinces had experienced declining tax loads, British Columbia’s near 18% decline has been the most dramatic.

They continued radical reform and budget cuts to the province’s social programs, despite campaign promises to withhold budget cuts to health care and education. The more substantive cuts came to services for children and youth, seniors, women, low-income people, disabled and visible minorities (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002). With the exception of health and education whose portfolio budgets were frozen, the Liberal government announced 25% cuts across all ministries, and lifted the NDP freeze on post-secondary tuition fees. These changes were among the largest budget and public sector cuts in Canadian history (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002).

At the same time, the Liberals identified growth in the technology, tourism and secondary manufacturing sectors. A new ministry titled the Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise was created that same year and organizational units responsible for science and

technology, small business, tourism and film were brought into the new ministry (Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise, 2002). This Ministry identified four strategic shifts in policy:

1. From an emphasis on socially focussed economic policy to an emphasis on businesses focussed economic policy;
2. From program distributing financial assistance and subsidies to a process of ending subsidies and reducing regulation across government;
3. From a government role as financier, builder and promoter, to a role marketing British Columbia 'open for business'; and
4. From a role as government's voice to business to a role as a voice for entrepreneurs and business to government (Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise, 2002, p. 4).

With regard to tourism, and part of their New Era Commitment, the BCLP's goal was to further stimulate tourism and position operators to successfully compete on the global stage. An ongoing commitment was made to the tourism sector by the ministry to partner with the Province's marketing body, "Tourism British Columbia" and to develop a multi-year strategic plan for tourism. This was particularly true for communities where resort developments were taking place.

By 2004, Premier Campbell outlined a new tourism strategy to enhance marketing, resort development and community involvement. Marketing funding doubled for Tourism BC and a \$25 million grant was directed toward the Union of B.C. Municipalities for its Community Tourism Programme. The funds were to develop local tourism services, products and marketing initiatives. In addition, the province unveiled "Picture BC", a resource library that included images, words and artwork which could be used to showcase British Columbia in international marketing campaigns, promotions and investment strategies (Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development News Release, 2004). A consistent message positioned British Columbia as the "best place on earth to live, work and play". This announcement came on the heels of winning the 2010 Olympic Winter Bid announced in July 2003.

Although these provincial initiatives represented the latest thrust in neo-liberal changes promoting the value in tourism, other subtle changes were already present conditioning the community for change. The emphasis on tourism was not because it was *discovered* as a new



area of growth, but rather that it had *demonstrated* growth and was a promising alternative to replace the ailing resource-based industries.

The Liberal government affirmed the economic value of tourism in much the same way the Mulroney government had affirmed tourism roughly two decades earlier. Tourism was an accumulation strategy with the potential to replace the declining industrial base as the economic generator for the province. British Columbia's altered Tourism Act implemented in the mid-1990s reflects the growing importance of tourism as an integral part of the province's economic footprint. Implicit in the Act is an increased role of government in promoting tourism, providing support, and developing services such as the motion picture industry. The province was committed to developing plans and policies to this end: "to encourage the enhancement of standards of accommodation, facilities, tourist services and related amenities and support structures necessary to facilitate and support tourists in British Columbia" (Tourism Act, 1995). For municipalities needing access to new sources of funds, building tourism infrastructure was a logical course of action.

At roughly the same time, a second legislative imperative was making its way to the upper levels of both the federal and provincial governments. Long discontented with the shortcomings of the Municipal Act and its variants, municipalities across Canada were looking for more autonomy and control. The upward pressure they exerted had allowed for some provisions however these were not sufficient to meet the political and social context in which local governments operated, and as a result necessitated the move towards municipal reform.

### **Municipal Reform in British Columbia: The Community Charter**

It would have been surprising if the sweeping restructuring under the new Liberal government excluded municipal reform. The shift in provincial policy from a relatively strong Fordist-Keynesian programme to an explicit market orientation implied change. Moreover, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) had been requesting legal and institutional reform for over a decade. Gordon Campbell, who first served as Vancouver's mayor, was also past president of the UBCM prior to becoming Premier. As Premier, he was in a position to ensure municipal autonomy, and not surprisingly, he initiated this through the "Municipal Bill of Rights." This policy document put pressure on the Province to recognize municipalities as a legitimate 'order of government', and an official third tier of Canadian government (Lidstone, 2001). Recognition would overturn the constitutional decision initiated through the 1949

Baldwin Act, and further upheld through the Municipal Act of 1867. New reform took into consideration the political and social context in meeting community and regional nuances, and extended their status beyond serving as the administrative arm of provincial and federal bodies (CivicInfo; 2001;Warnke, 2002). Reflected in the legislation more recently, is the influence by a cross-section of players including provincial and municipal governments, provincial ministries and agencies, business and electors (Lidstone, 2007).

For British Columbia, a new relationship between the province and local government was forged through the *Community Charter*, implemented in January 2004. The *Community Charter* as compared to the *Municipal Act* transferred significant legislative powers held by the province to local governments. It was the first of its kind in Canada to amplify municipal powers and afford greater deference and flexibility in their range of powers (Lidstone, 2007). A full set of standards occurred in three areas: provincial relations, broad powers and accountability. Specifically, the *Community Charter* provides municipalities:

- a. a legal framework for the powers, duties and functions that are necessary to fulfill their purposes;
- b. the authority and discretion to address existing and future community needs, and;
- c. the flexibility to determine the public interest of their communities and to respond to the different needs and changing circumstances of their communities (British Columbia, 2003, Part I: Section 3).

Importantly, it lifted the previous restrictions on local government's ability to generate revenue, instead allowing them freedom to consider compensatory mechanisms to offset provincial and federal off-loading. Furthermore, in the push for financial independence, the *Community Charter* added a proviso that identified additional municipal revenue streams. Tax surcharges for fuel, resort, local entertainment, parking stalls, hotel rooms and road tolls are now potential municipal revenue generators (Smith & Stewart, 2005). When all was said and done, community decision-makers were afforded greater latitude in implementing the policies they believed served the best interests of their communities. This caveat gave a degree of power to local government that had not previously existed. According to Warnke (2002), Bill M-222 transferred significant legislative powers to local governments, thereby empowering local communities and limiting the provincial government's role in local concerns. The upward pressure for change resulted in new levels of autonomy, and the downward influences of

government in promoting tourism, directed many communities, in their new found freedom to examine the tourism alternative more seriously.

This proved an attractive alternative for Nanaimo as well. For the most part, residents affirmed this direction, as implied in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the general acceptance with the first two conference centre proposals. However, the dissonance centres on two lived realities. First, there are some residents who believe that the new found powers of municipal government afforded under the *Community Charter* allowed the local government an opportunity to write a new chapter in the City's growth and development. The alternative story is that newly granted power at the local level limited the power of the provincial government, and favoured powerful local economic and political interests, which left the public at large with little recourse to hold their civic leadership accountable.

This story would be incomplete without the views of those who lived in the community and who actively engaged in either supporting or resisting the PNC unfold. My construction of their lived experiences and perspectives follow in the next chapter. In order to bring you to their stories, it is important to first to provide a context. This is highlighted though the next section which details Nanaimo's unique history and illustrate how it contributes to the richness of this case.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT**

In the spring of 2008 Harmac Pulp Mill, a forestry icon for Vancouver Island began to wind down its operations (*Victoria Times Colonist*, 2008, May 6). Its closure at the time was thought to be permanent. However, after 5 months it re-opened its doors, running only one of the three lines historically operated (*Harbour City Star*, 2008, December 5). Plans to add open another line have continued to be postponed. For over 50 years, Harmac was one of Canada's largest market pulp producers. It remained not only one of the largest employers since the early 1950s for Nanaimo and surrounding area residents, but also stood as one of the few remaining mills operating on Vancouver Island. At the time of their announcement to close, over 500 jobs were provided by Harmac.

Harmac's closure followed closely on the heels of the Madill Equipment, as a month earlier Madill was court-ordered into receivership having failed to meet its debtor liabilities (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2008, April 2). Its closure sent ripples through the community and the broader forestry industry, as its equipment served as the backbone to the logging industry since

1911. With rumours of potential buyers, the mill's closure was on the public's radar and they eagerly awaited its fate. Ultimately, its closure was disappointing, but certainly not a surprise. The closure of Madill Equipment and subsequently the loss of nearly 200 jobs was less impacting in the community than Harmac, although of no less of a blow to an already stressed forestry industry.

Similar stories abound around Nanaimo and throughout the Province of British Columbia. Also at the time of writing, Duke Point Mill continues to remain in a state of flux over its long-term fate (*Nanaimo News Bulletin*, 2008, June 21). Operations have been reduced and for those still working, intermittent shutdowns continue to cast uncertainty on future stability (*Nanaimo News Bulletin*, 2009, January 10). Softening demand for British Columbia's lumber, over-production and government-imposed tariffs are key threats to the industry's future.

What purpose do these closures and shutdowns have in regards to the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC), or more specifically the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC) housed within? What, if anything does the decision, determined through a community referendum nearly four years earlier, reflect? All three, Madill Equipment, Harmac, and Duke Point Mills represent a plagued forest industry; mill shutdowns, reduced workforces, and layoffs have become familiar sign posts in Nanaimo and more broadly along British Columbia's coastline. Cumulative effects have left a once viable forestry industry decimated both locally and provincially. Specifically, Nanaimo's *raison d'être* as an industrial centre has ceased to exist and it has become a locale in search of new urban strategies.

The building of a conference centre was one such strategy. Its justification in local terms was relatively straightforward: representing one vital step in the process to revitalize a decaying downtown. Yet the Vancouver Island Conference Centre serves a broader mandate. It serves to transition Nanaimo's shifting economic landscape. This shift is not unique to Nanaimo or Vancouver Island, but is indicative of a trend occurring in many communities across North America. Madill's closure and both Harmac Pulp Mill and Duke Point Mill's troubled pasts affirmed and underscored to the local leadership the importance of economic divestiture away from traditional industry, most recently from forestry, and its supporting networks, to a more service-oriented economy.

The Island's roots and traditions lie in resource extraction. Nanaimo's ancestry was first in mining, followed by forestry and fishing, and in this respect, it is a community well familiar with transition. These resource-based activities provided the normative framework for economic stability, as well as a foundation for shared identities amongst the local residents of Nanaimo. Nonetheless, the landscape has been changing - and continues to change - borne largely out of both necessity and desire. The eroding resource-oriented economic base represents a lost economy for the City, necessitating the need to pursue alternative ways of generating economic stability for local residents. Unlike the transitions from one resource commodity to another, a new kind of economy is being forged. This transition is challenging and affecting the structural cohesion of communal identity, like nothing else in Nanaimo's 130-year history. Competing discourses and social struggles surfaced among community members imbued with varying interpretations of community, civic pride, citizenship, democratic processes, power, access and revitalization. The tensions reflect multiple dimensions of impact on the physical, economic and social environments.

How the lost economy for Nanaimo is referenced brings into focus how Nanaimoites view their community. The closures are discussed by most of the participants in this study, making it noteworthy; how they speak of these closures is also telling, and of equal, if not greater significance. For some, the remarks suggest a lost era, and reinforce how the trajectory of change – industrialization to deindustrialization - is altering Nanaimo's identity. It is equated with a sense of loss; a past seemingly forgotten as opposed to celebrated. For others, this change in direction represents a long awaited opportunity to forge a new identity for a community earmarked with a rough and seedy reputation, cyclical economic instability, and a suffering self-image. Both opportunity and individuals are catalytic in reshaping Nanaimo's identity. Regardless, the decision made by the local City council to build a conference centre in the heart of what had become a derelict downtown is symbolic. Despite the very clear and unequivocal objective by the majority of the community to revitalize the downtown, competing visions surfaced over how to fulfill this objective.

The Friends of Plan Nanaimo (FPN) and the Yes Committee were two groups that became visible to represent competing ideological visions. The Yes Committee's purpose was to ensure the decision by City Council was passed in the community referendum. The Friends of Plan Nanaimo's (FPN) focus was to resist what they believed was development-led

representation. City council had made a series of recent development decisions that FPN argued were incongruent with the City's Official Community Plan (OCP). The conference centre was the *piece de resistance*. It became the focal point to argue against both the political and economic rationalities that had surfaced in the community. The FPN were passionate about challenging a leadership they believed had evolved to become defined by market and commercial interests at the expense of sound planning and urban design principles found in the OCP. Nanaimo's story of the Conference Centre begins long before these respective groups surfaced. Despite opening on June 7, 2008, its final chapter will not be written until sometime well into the future.

Aspects of Nanaimo's chronology have been variously summarized by historians and local lay citizens (see for example, Norcross, 1996; Peterson, 2002, 2003, 2006). Imbued within their analysis is a raw, but consistent resiliency to meet challenging circumstances. This buoyancy, whether born out under the oppressive conditions implicit of the coal era, or to the more celebratory moments of Nanaimo's history are testaments to the citizens' fortitude. Building the civic arena during the 1930s, or most recently, preserving Linley Valley from development through fundraising, are but two examples.

"Nanaimo" is an anglicized derivative of the Snuneymuxw First Nations language meaning, "gathering place" (City of Nanaimo, n.d.) Unlike many communities in British Columbia, its title does not infer its Victorian influence. Nanaimo was first a mining camp prior to becoming a pioneer establishment that was settled by an influx of immigrants from Europe and Asia. For long-standing residents there remains a strong connection in the community to the original settlers and their pioneering lineage.

Like many communities across North America, Nanaimo has not been immune from the broader cycles of economic prosperity or paucity within North American communities. Forestry and fishing eventually underwrote a troubled coal industry, and more recently landscape is playing an expanded role. The natural attributes of the area, once crucial in the production of resource extraction for trade, service, and distribution, are no less important, but for different purposes.

However, the better part of the past two or more decades have been challenging for the City. It has only been recently that the City showed signs of being buoyed once again by the unprecedented growth and development not recorded since the boom of the 1970-80s. In large

part, the economic upturn in Nanaimo reflected the robust economic cycle that resulted overall in a healthier state for Canadian cities and provinces. Nonetheless, civic leadership and individuals with varying community associations worked hard in positioning and branding Nanaimo as “one of the most desirable, liveable small cities in North America” (City of Nanaimo, n.d.). This slogan, found in both print and electronic media traversed business, tourism, and civic leadership circles. As much as anything, this slogan represents the collective efforts among many community leaders and organizations to retool Nanaimo. Efforts and resources have been directed accordingly.

For outsiders to the community and “blow ins”, despite the long and rich local history, and unless one looks closely, Nanaimo exhibits few telltale signs of these past eras. It bears little resemblance to its genesis as a coal mining boomtown built on indentured labour under the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) ownership (Bowen, 2002) The Bastion Fort remains as a trademark heritage structure and unquestionably stands as the City’s most iconic landmark. Little remains of the coalmines that laid the community’s economic foundation. Once dominating Nanaimo’s landscape and waterfront, the mines are long gone; yet reminders in the form of coal shafts and tunnels extending under the City to Protection Island, Newcastle Island and Nanaimo River remain. Cameron Island is no longer an Island, nor is it any longer an indigenous fishing village. Industrial waste and mine tailings were used to expand the waterfront and connect Cameron Island to the main shore. Commercial Street is also in-filled and only the rock embankments hint that it was once a tidal ravine inlet. Commercial Inlet, now named Commercial Street, continues as the City’s business core and the roadbed for Terminal Avenue, a primary artery running through the City.

More recently, the changes taking place in the City are indicative of a community forging inroads in the service-related sector and consumptive practices. A new waterfront walkway allows for leisurely foot traffic and cyclists to enjoy the natural beauty of the area and Dragon boats are a regular site on the water most evenings. Waterfront developments cater to a menagerie of wants and needs and have long replaced most 20<sup>th</sup> century coal miners’ cabins. These were functional buildings belonging to the coal companies, which according to some members of the community, were built with little regard for aesthetic qualities.

Nanaimo’s harbour remains a working one (see Plate 4.1). The Nanaimo Port Authority, a representative of the federal government, provides four deep-sea docks that make

it the major commercial load centre port for the Island; and plans are in place to modify an existing cargo berth for the burgeoning cruise industry. Fishing boats selling fresh catch are scattered amongst leisure watercraft, adding to the unique appeal of the area. Floatplanes carrying commuters throughout the day have replaced the miner's scow and the logger's bus, and ships no longer carry coal and its workers, but tourists.

Plate 4.1  
Harbour View towards Downtown



*Source:* City of Nanaimo

Restorative efforts are visible throughout the City. In particular, heritage-oriented refurbishing has imbued the present with the inklings of the City's past. If one looks closely, commemorative and interpretive plaques scattered throughout the City's five recently designated heritage areas. They are evidence of the collaborative initiatives between the private sector, municipal, provincial and federal governments. Finally, and most recently, Harmac's temporary stillness, against the backdrop of building activity associated with the conference center, was emblematic of the cross currents of impending change taking place at the local level.

Studying Nanaimo's history provides rich insights into how the current landscapes of communities are contoured. Situating Nanaimo's present complexities necessitates historical contextualization. Similar to 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial genealogy across Canada, this case demonstrates how industrialization, urbanization and immigration underwrote economic and political decisions in community development. While Nanaimo is a significantly different city now than when it was established under industrial capitalism, similarities abound between Nanaimo as an industrial city at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to Nanaimo now as a city increasingly attuned to post-industrial urban strategies at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Both



could be described as fluid, dynamic and growing communities with key catalysts shaping the City's direction and vision.

### **NANAIMO THEN: INDUSTRIALIZATION, URBANIZATION AND IMMIGRATION**

Like many North American communities, the British colonized Nanaimo in the mid-19th century for pragmatic reasons. Its location served as an axis point for transportation first via water, and eventually by train and automobile and the promise of jobs was reason enough for British and Europeans to immigrate (Norcross, 1996). British officials fashioned the community's overall design to complement the natural topography. The amphitheatre design complemented the developing downtown and provided unparallel views of the ocean and Coastal Mountains of the Mainland.

Initially mandated by the government to colonize under-developed areas under their jurisdiction, the HBC began actively recruiting miners and their families to immigrate to the area. Under this directive, Nanaimo transitioned from a coal camp to a community with permanence. Roots were established with the arrival of settlers from England in 1854. Others followed from various other European countries and British Columbia's third oldest City was incorporated in 1874, nearly 20 years after the HBC was first mandated to settle the area.

Deemed to have some of the richest coal beds known, the economy of the community during the first few decades rested on the coal mined and exported. Despite Nanaimo's initial coal success, it was exacted at a high price. Working conditions were harsh, and management practices in Nanaimo's coal industry reflected the broader inequities of labour/management conflicts innate to the industrial era. Unfair labour practices set the tone for development and labour relations in an industry notorious for mining disasters, labour disputes, and fledgling union initiatives (Barman, 1996). In Nanaimo alone, over 2000 deaths were attributable to the coal industry during its history; and one particularly dark day - May 3, 1887 - 148 men died as a result of an explosion in Nanaimo's largest mine, Shaft No. 1 (Peterson, 2002).

Bowen's (2002) *Boss Whistle* accounts for much of the history of coal miners on Vancouver Island. Her work provides insights into the miners' repeated efforts for parity, both in wages and working conditions, which were squelched for the better part of half a century. The consequences meant near-limitless power and control over the community by local mining companies, as they successfully deterred any unionizing efforts (Bowen, 2002).

This is never more evident than by tracing Nanaimo's prominent Dunsmuir family. At the height of the Fordist/Industrial era, their influence eclipsed British Columbia's economic and political profile. Two successive generations of accumulated wealth in both coal and transportation made second-generation James Dunsmuir, the primary, if not key catalyst opposing organized labour. Occupying government offices, first as Premier, and later as Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, Dunsmuir was in a position to direct decisions to his advantage as documented in both railway policy and in anti-Oriental legislation (Barman, 1996; Bowen, 2002). Arguably one of the most powerful names in Canadian coal history and by far the most influential political and financial figure in British Columbia, Dunsmuir promoted the province's system of non-party government. Because of his status and influence, British Columbia's long tenure of non-partisanship government rendered company unionism largely ineffective in addressing fundamental change until well into the 1930s.

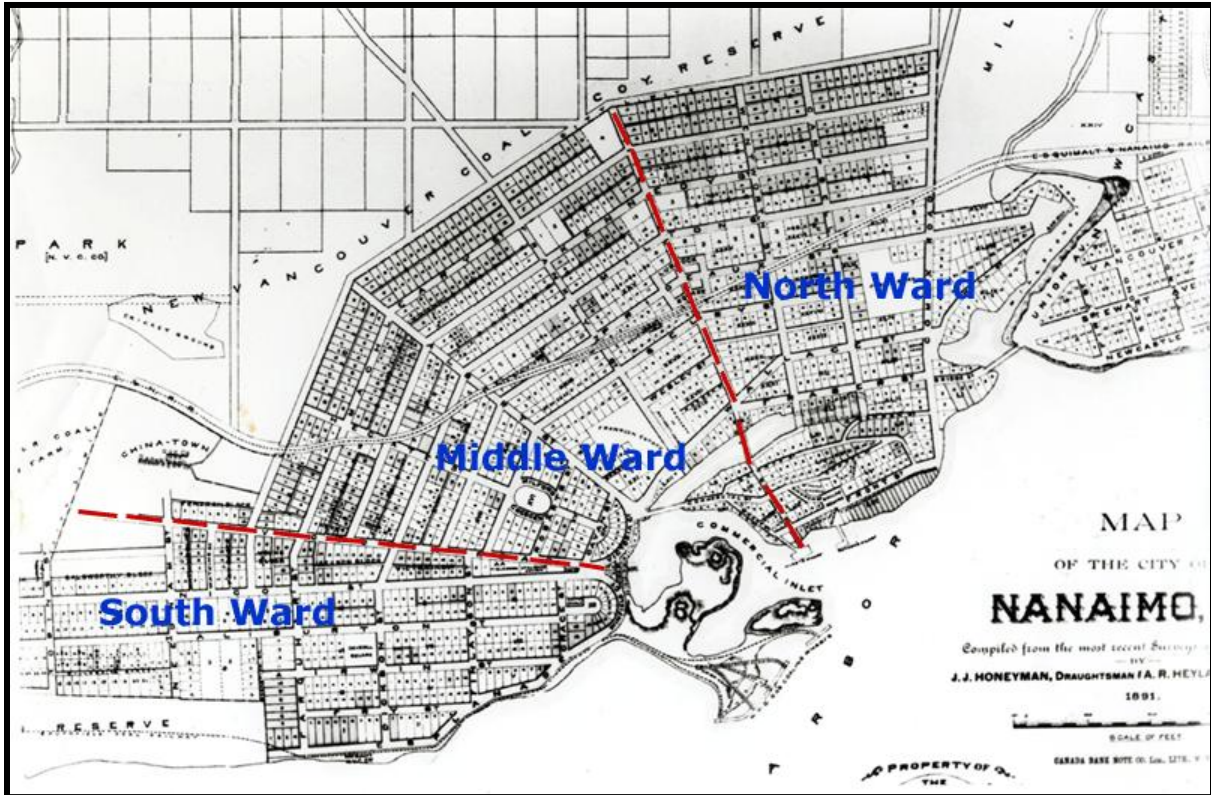
The manifest and offensive actions, such as displayed by Dunsmuir reinforced labours' belief, not just in Nanaimo but also across the province, that positive change would not come through government policy or political processes. As a result, workers directly confronted mine owners through strike actions. In the end, workers' wages and working conditions were further compromised in the struggle and positions of privilege were elevated (Bowen, 2002).

Socio-economic divisions spatially defined the ward system (see Figure 4.1). Originally divided into three districts, Nanaimo's profile typified early industrial development and people lived within proximity to their workplace. Nanaimo's principal coalmine, Shaft Number 1, was located in South Ward along with a residential area consisting mainly of mining families. To the east, Number One Indian Reserve (Snuneymuxw) had been established. North Ward integrated commercial, residential and industrial interests, and demographically represented both labourers and professionals. Middle Ward was largely residential and home to most of Nanaimo's Asian working class immigrants (Bowen, 2002; Malaspina History Department [MHD], n.d.).

Well established Colonial Britons, privileged by their HBC positions, forged connections that further allowed them to exercise authority and dispensation over immigrant workers. Ubiquitous labour issues only served to reinforce the socio-economic division. All three wards, North, South and Middle Nanaimo housed various professions. However, the

South and Middle wards came to embody the working class and disadvantaged, and the North ward personified Nanaimo's more privileged citizens.

Figure 4.1  
Early Map of Nanaimo



Source: <http://www.mala.ca/history/nanaimo/map.htm>

Nonetheless, a strong sense of place had taken hold. Coal mining also became the conduit for a relatively homogenized inscription of communal identity. Europeans, who were initially grouped by country of origin, came together as miners. Occupation became more important than ethnicity in the fight to overturn unfair and dangerous labour conditions (Barman, 1996; Norcross, 1996).

There were two exceptions. Asian immigrants remained on the fringe of social acceptance until after World War II and became the scapegoat for management and labour strife. For the most part, Nanaimo's Asian population, first Chinese immigrants followed by the Japanese immigrants, lived separate from other European immigrants. Tolerance amongst

white workers towards their Asian counterparts turned to animosity. In the simplest of contrasts, Asian immigrants represented cheaper forms of labour to management; for workers, they represented an unskilled workforce that further drew down already negligible standards of living. Despite their presence since 1858, they continued to be on the fringe and subjected to discriminatory practices (Barman, 1996).

Treatment towards Japanese did not differ from the Chinese who were largely responsible for expanding and diversifying Nanaimo's economic base. The Japanese built herring salteries and a cannery; and at its prime, exporting canned goods equated to nearly .5 million ton a year. The Japanese made a solid contribution to Nanaimo's economic base from 1908 until Federal and Provincial discriminatory policies forced relocation and internment during WWII. In the case of the Japanese, more so than the Chinese, their presence threatened the European dominance. Threats in the case of the Japanese were not about decreased living standards or as a security risk, but as a threat to European authority and power, and productive abilities long dominant on Canada's industrializing frontier.

Defined and limited by historical treaties and reserves, the indigenous Snuneymuxw shared the same plight of Canada's indigenous populations more broadly. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese in which the dominant motif reflected subjugation, Nanaimo's indigenous citizens were rendered more or less invisible by colonizing practices. They adapted to discriminatory practices both socially and economically. The Douglas Treaty proviso, which allowed permanent ownership of existing villages and designated lands, interracial marriage, and aboriginal title, afforded some standing that mitigated the same degree of racial discrimination experienced by Asian immigrants (Barman, 1996). In ranking, Nanaimo's Snuneymuxw were positioned above those of Asian descent, but still below European settlers. Both labour/management discord and racism contributed to socio-economic divisions within the wards which remained until WWII for Asian immigrants. Recognition of Snuneymuxw has been much longer in coming. For them, the conference centre has been instrumental in the process for recognition.

As coal demand subsided, the largest and oldest of the mines was the last to close in the late 1930s (Bowen, 2002). The mine's closing was a practical as well as emblematic gesture. The disappearance of the once lucrative mining industry put an end to Nanaimo's identity as a coal mining community. The economic practices founded in capitalist ideology became the

primary means through which industrialization, urbanization and immigration took hold during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the most part, the miners' plight forged a common identity which defined them as labourers and fused them in their goal to repudiate what were broader based industrial bourgeois practices. Their struggle and resolve became the foundation for socialist reform in British Columbia (Barman, 1996)

By the end of World War II, it was clear the forestry industry was emerging to provide the next significant economic base for the community. The forest industry had operated since the 1800s on a small scale. However, William Bennett's post-war Social Credit Party (Socreds) enacted demand-initiated policy that led to large-scale forestry operations in the province overall. These policies propelled forestry as the province's primary economic foundations, which remained relatively strong for nearly four decades<sup>13</sup>. Local miners also transitioned to forestry with the demand (Barman, 1996; Peterson, 2002).

#### **NANAIMO: THE POST-WAR YEARS**

The 1950s and 1960s were a stable and moderately prosperous time for the community, with slow but steady population growth. Nanaimo set itself apart from many other single-industry communities in British Columbia who did not transition when coal demands dropped. In addition to forestry and fishing, the provincial government ousted private ferry links by establishing B.C. Ferries. Constructing a docking terminal provided transportation stability to the Vancouver Island, and importantly confirmed Nanaimo's longstanding status as the hub for mid and north island distributions.

Change occurred however, when the community amalgamated with the outlying areas in the mid-1970s. Amalgamation, coupled with rapid growth over the next two decades grew Nanaimo's population by roughly 40 percent (BC Stats, 2007). As Nanaimo transitioned from a small town with one centralized commercial district to a small City with other focal points, the downtown ceased to be the commercial hub. One of the consequences for the City was that it became an auto-dependent community. The impact of both servicing and maintaining its long linear spatial profile has challenged the City ever since. Equally important, population growth also introduced to Nanaimo new political foundations, challenging the long-standing polity.

---

<sup>13</sup> Changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement implemented tariffs that did not favour Canadian lumber exports and a softening in demand for softwood products are primary among the factors for the decline.

Politically, a strong labour presence dominated Nanaimo's electorate from roughly the end of WWII until well into the 1970s. After an electoral district division in 1962, this remained the case in Nanaimo's south end. For the most part, Nanaimo South has been a relatively unassailable monopoly for the NDP with the exception of three non-successive Conservative mandates (out of 15 general elections). The opposite could be said for the NDP to the North. Political alliances began to bifurcate and a conservative mandate in its variant form - Conservative, Reform or Canadian Alliance - has held the riding for the last six elections. A right of center political mandate has been solidly entrenched for the past 7 out of 10 elections (BC Elections, 2001; McMartin, 2005, 2008).

By way of explanation, Nanaimo South is still associated with the legacy of coal and the working class and the attributes commonly thought of as blue-collar. A strong local memory remains in this constituency and participants suggested very few would argue the political left and right existing in the two ridings breaks down across class lines.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, North Nanaimo represents the migratory patterns of two distinct, but privileged groups. First, it is a clustering of the City's upper middle class who could afford to move to the suburbs; and second, a new generation of citizens who have settled in Nanaimo, largely for lifestyle purposes. Both groups are perceived by long-standing residents to have little appreciation for Nanaimo's industrial foundation, apart from its importance for establishing heritage tourism initiatives.

The backdrop for assessment lies in the asymmetric development that occurred between north and south Nanaimo, commonly referred to as the "north/south divide". In large part, these discernable differences were exacerbated, if not linked, to the 21-year leadership of Mayor Frank Ney who served from 1968 to 1990, save the one term preceding his last. Ney's civic leadership has been well criticised for the extensive and ad-hoc development to the north that profoundly influenced Nanaimo's built environment. Although a popular mayor, insinuations abound that these development decisions promoted his private interests within the real estate and development communities. Regardless, uneven development came at the expense of the south end, but manifested itself most crucially in the demise of the downtown

---

<sup>14</sup> My sense of this was confirmed in a personal conversation with Allen Warnke, Professor of Political Science at Vancouver Island University, located in Nanaimo. I spoke with him in person informally on October 17, 2008, however he was not one of the participants in this study.

core. North Nanaimo is perceived to have noticeably advanced at the expense of the rest of the community.

Criticisms notwithstanding, Ney's leadership reflected the dominant form of land use in North America where settlement patterns shifted towards decentralized growth (Lang & Gough, 2005). Labelled by critics as urban sprawl, it became the dominant post WWII planning discourse (Gillham, 2002) and it is evident in Nanaimo's development and planning history. Scattered development, commercial strip development, low-density land use, and suburban development has typified Nanaimo's settlement pattern. Eight shopping malls or centres within roughly a 10-minute drive, likely led Globe and Mail columnist, Mark Hume to dub Nanaimo "strip mall hell" (*Globe and Mail*, 2006, October 23). The consequence has been a surplus of retail space, making it unattractive for potential investors to redevelop existing space, particularly in the downtown core. Calculated developments during amalgamation precipitated the breadth of the issues impacting downtown and significantly modified the City's footprint.

#### **NANAIMO: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TRANSITION**

Importantly, urban sprawl precipitated the shift of the City's activities from the downtown to the periphery, and underscored the north/south divide. Long-term downtown businesses, which anchored the downtown, followed residential development to the North where malls and big box stores are typical. Despite rapid population growth driven by both migratory and natural increases (City of Nanaimo, 2005 Economic Development Office), by the late 1990s the downtown had virtually been abandoned. Participants and local records cited accelerated infrastructure and development clustering in the north end as key attributes in its demise. The impact was discernable. Nanaimo's downtown fell into a state of decay as vibrancy declined, and any businesses added to the core tended to be short-lived. Many store fronts went dark, and those that were not, were gradually occupied by pawn shops, bargain stores, an over-abundance of night clubs and used book stores, and other similar stores catering to Nanaimo's poorest citizens (see Plates 4.2 and 4.3).

The inner decay of the downtown contributed to Nanaimo's overt downtown social issues. Petty crime, drugs, and the homeless population were primary downtown health and safety issues that Council, together with not-for-profit groups, were addressing with a

modicum of success. Certainly, the social issues contributed to the downtown's ongoing devaluation, but they were not the cause.

Plate 4.2

Existing Buildings on Conference Centre Site, Corner of Terminal and Commercial Street



Source: City of Nanaimo

Plate 4.3

Collage of Pre-existing Buildings on Commercial Street



Source: City of Nanaimo



Very real social issues had accumulated in Nanaimo at the threshold of the new millennium. High rates of income assistance, increased homelessness and poverty, and persistently high levels of unemployment were, for the most part, above provincial or federal levels. Nanaimo's Local Health Area was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> by BC Statistics on its *Composite Index of Human Economic Hardship* in 2003 (John Talbot and Associates, 2004). By 2001, approximately 25 percent of the population made \$20,000 or less, and personal income was 10.3 percent lower on average than the provincial level. The unemployment rate was 11.6 percent, 3 percent higher than the provincial average; and nearly 15 percent of families lived below the federal government's measurement of poverty (Statistics Canada, 2001). Between 2001 and 2002, the local food bank recorded a 40 percent increase in use (Fuller, 2005).

Nevertheless, while the social issues in Nanaimo were severe and challenging, it was beginning to experience the economic upswing occurring provincially and nationally. Nanaimo grew steadily from 2001 forward with growth well above provincial and national averages for 2005 and 2006. The increase resulted in downward pressure on the real estate and rental markets that was largely attributable to provincial, national and international migration. Housing prices steadily increased from 2002, and compounded housing increased 69 percent in the years 2002 through 2006 (BS Stats, 2008). At the same time, rental units decreased the vacancy rate, which peaked at nearly 16 percent in 1998, to an average of 1.8 percent in the years 2001 to 2007 (City of Nanaimo, 2008).

The incremental years of decline in the downtown were further complicated by the social issues. This was one of the concerns that precipitated an urgency to focus on downtown revitalization. However, it was the momentum, coupled with the realization from several different organizations were working behind the scenes that propelled the more aggressive strategy for downtown revitalization.

In reality, urban renewal for the downtown had been part of the lexicon of City Hall since the early 1980s. Council decided the un-coordinated and haphazard development that had occurred in the previous two decades needed to be counteracted in order to reverse the decentralizing trends, and a number of projects occurred almost simultaneously in the downtown. Infrastructure upgrades including "bricks and mortar", sidewalks and streetlight improvements were the first visible changes that took place.

However, it was a series of large capital projects and investments that began to alter the downtown's image. In large part, a number of these efforts are attributable to the Nanaimo Port Authority (formerly Nanaimo Harbour Commission), a federally mandated local commission in charge of Nanaimo's harbour, waters and foreshore. Beginning in 1984, Nanaimo Port Authority (herein referred to as the Port Authority) embarked on intensive, phased waterfront development. The project began with Swy-a-lana Lagoon, a manmade saltwater lagoon which joins Maffeo-Sutton Park, Nanaimo's premier ocean-side gathering place for local festivals and special events (see Plate 4.4).

Plate 4.4  
Swy-a-lana Lagoon



*Source:* Picasaweb.google.com  
[[http://lh5.ggpht.com/\\_C3UbXLw6ZY/SKNe4J3JCPI/](http://lh5.ggpht.com/_C3UbXLw6ZY/SKNe4J3JCPI/)]

The Port Authority continued waterfront development with a recreational walkway in 1987 that eventually connected to a series of promenades complete with retail and office space (see Plate 4.5). A seaplane terminal along the Inner Harbour and 600 foot fishing and walking pier were completed in 1993 (Nanaimo Port Authority, n.d.). More or less synchronized with these initiatives, the City along with private stakeholders in the downtown began discussions

about the Port Theatre, a performing arts centre and a site for a new regional library. These projects were near to each other in a downtown piazza, recently renamed from Harbourfront Plaza to Diana Krall Plaza. Both capital projects were warged as strategies to return vibrancy to the core, and initiated the first steps in placing a cultural presence in the downtown.

Photo 4.5  
Nanaimo Harbourfront Walkway



*Source:* [www.campingbc.com/links/localinfo.htm](http://www.campingbc.com/links/localinfo.htm)

Significant private sector investment also returned. In 1986, The Great Canadian Gaming Corporation opened a 17,000 square foot gaming floor at the Port Place Shopping Centre. The Coastal Credit Union, the Island's largest regionally-based credit union, built adjacent to the library, rounded out the final phase of the plaza. In 1994, Vancouver-based developer, Bosa Development Corporation initiated the third and final of three high density

residential complexes that began in 1990 on Cameron Island (City Council Minutes, 1994, April 18). This last building, 26 storeys in height, remains the tallest tower on the island (see Plate 4.6). Unequivocally, these relatively large-scale projects were significant markers, coupled with the infrastructure improvements that spurred Nanaimo's downtown renewal. In each case, local government spending and investment was required. To some degree, these projects were symbolic of a new threshold in terms of scale and pace for Nanaimo. Within the midst of these activities, the City decided to embark on a community visioning exercise.

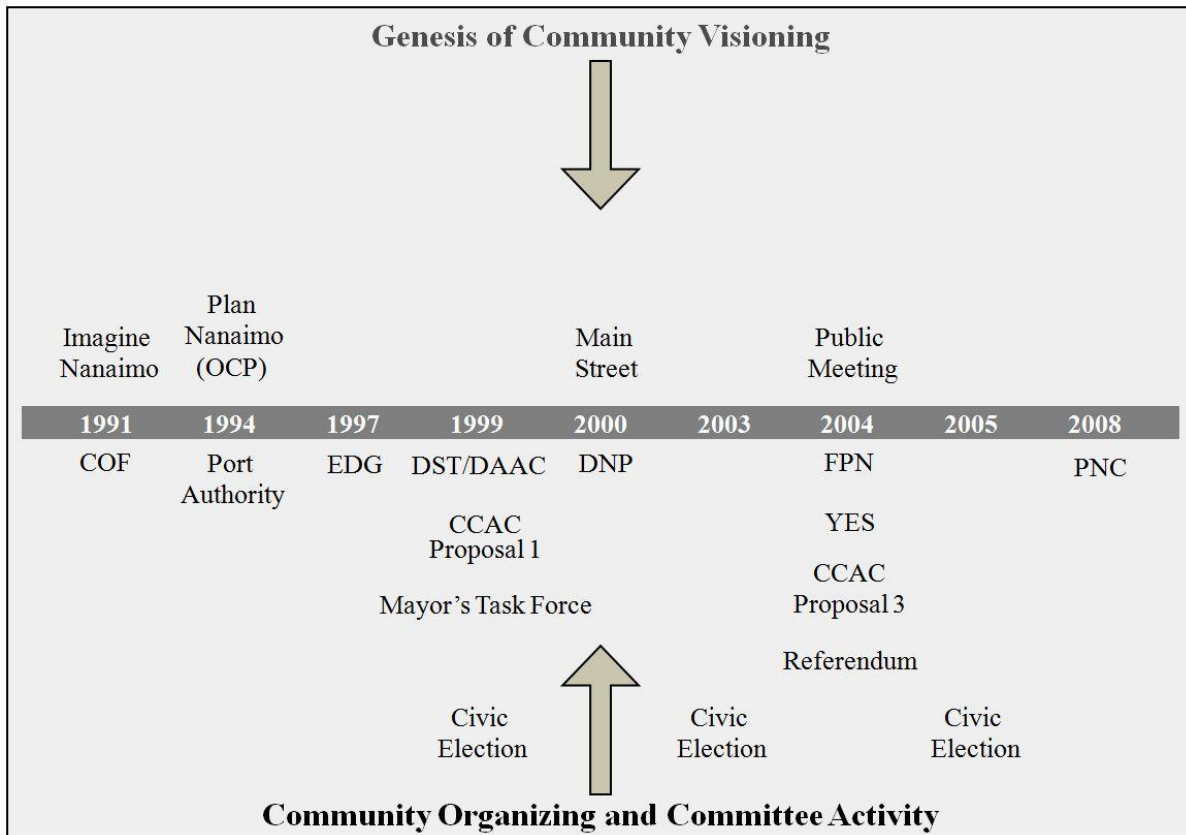
Plate 4.6  
Cameron Island, Bosa Residential Development



Source: <http://image05.webshots.com/5/0/1/21/63900121HC>

As shown below, community visioning was but one gauge of interest in the downtown. More specifically, there were a series of events and actions best described as community organizing that occurred before and following the initial community visioning activities. The organizing took place over approximately a 15-year span. Each of these organizing events are outlined and described below (see Figure 4.2). The ensuing timeline is helpful for charting the sequence of events.

Figure 4.2  
Sequencing of Community Visioning and Organizing



### The Genesis of Community Visioning

#### *Imagine Nanaimo (1991)*

It was under this initial momentum, and under a relatively strong local economy that then Mayor Joy Leach commissioned a community visioning exercise called *Imagine Nanaimo*. (Imagine Nanaimo Steering Committee, 1993, February 8). It was a broad-based, grassroots consultation process and was the first of two comprehensive, public planning processes. *Imagine Nanaimo* was the first process that challenged the community to re-think itself and articulate a vision for the City. Over 4600 residents were directly involved, with many others weighing in on the periphery. The City's Strategic Planning Department, designed the process and struck a steering committee to facilitate. Members represented business, neighbourhood associations, development, environment, and education. (Imagine Nanaimo Steering

Committee, 1993, February 8). The steering committee was mandated to focus on one foundational question: “What would you like Nanaimo to be in the future?”

Through a series of mechanisms that informed and engaged local citizens, a City vision statement was drafted that incorporated a number of key principles that served as markers for political, social, economic and environmental change. Citizen participation was to be at the core of community planning, and neighbourhoods were to be the building blocks upon which to build a socio-culturally diverse community. Initiatives that reduced auto-dependency were primary considerations in creating a healthier, more sustainable environment. Creating a vibrant and diverse downtown by incorporating recreational, cultural and artistic amenities was under-girded by three core values: 1) identification and preservation of view corridors; 2) maintenance and enhancement of public access to the waterfront and; 3) development to complement the existing scale and character of downtown. The process used to derive this outcome engaged the following mechanisms:<sup>15</sup>

- *First Planning Symposium.* This symposium laid the groundwork for the ensuing 12 months. Committed to a community-driven approach, the steering committee involved a cross section of Nanaimo residents in a day-long planning session. Residents undertook a SWOT analysis, identifying Nanaimo’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They brainstormed speakers, contributed ideas on the content of community surveys and expressed their views on the goals and objectives of Imagine Nanaimo.
- *Action Centres.* Citizens could access information regarding Imagine Nanaimo through an action centre in the downtown. Two satellite centres located at shopping centres also operated for the first four months of the initiative. More than 1000 visitors expressed interest.
- *Community Surveys.* A number of surveys (a random sample telephone survey, a self-administered survey, a group survey, a high school survey, and four elementary focus groups) were undertaken to establish resident likes and dislikes, ideal

---

<sup>15</sup> The information is gleaned directly from Blythe and Marson, (1999) work associated with the Citizen-Centred Service Network Canadian Centre for Management Development. They drew their information directly from *Focusing the Vision of Our Future, Imagine Nanaimo: Nanaimo’s Community Goals and Strategies* produced by the Imagine Nanaimo Steering Committee, February 9, 1993 (pp. 5-9). This information was unavailable to me so I drew extensively and solely on their detailed report.

community size, and Nanaimo's future prospects. Approximately 2000 residents participated in the survey process.

- *Speakers Series*. Concurrent with the community surveys, residents were invited to five speaker evenings. The goal of this series was to share with residents the experiences of experts in urban planning from around the world. The key themes surfacing were: Nanaimo's natural beauty, the historic downtown area and waterfront, and the importance of strong neighbourhoods. More than 500 residents attended.
- *Neighbourhood Meetings*. The culmination of the survey process, speaker series, and other City documents were compiled in a workbook entitled *Nanaimo's Future – Now You Decide* that was mailed to every household in the City. A variety of options and priorities were outlined. Six neighbourhood meetings were held over two months to garner feedback. Residents selected more than 30 community priorities to guide planning until 2012. Consensus was reached on controversial topics such as growth, transportation and neighbourhoods.
- *Youth*. Youth were considered an important constituency in this process. Feedback was garnered through essays and posters themed around the City's future.
- *Consultation*. In the fall of 1992, the Steering Committee developed an information summary. Among those responding to the report were federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments, educational and business leaders, and members of the community at large.
- *Second Planning Symposium*. In December, 1992, residents were invited to view the final report. Approximately 170 people attended. The final document was released in February 1993.

#### *Plan Nanaimo (1994)*

*Imagine Nanaimo* led to a second public process in 1994. City Council launched *Plan Nanaimo* to implement the vision set forth in *Imagine Nanaimo* (City Council Minutes, 1994, April 18). With the same spirit put forward in *Imagine Nanaimo*, a second citizen-based steering committee was struck to consult and guide the public through a staged process that eventually

became the City's Official Community Plan (OCP). It was a consultative public process that took more than two years, proceeding through four incremental phases.<sup>16</sup>

- *Stage One* was a fact-finding mission that identified the issues and barriers that needed to be overcome in order to realize the vision of *Imagine Nanaimo*. Residents were asked “What issues do we have to address to become the kind of community *Imagine Nanaimo* said we wanted to be?” Working groups were established and collectively they identified relevant background documents pertaining to the environment, land use, transportation, population and the economy, City form and structure. These documents served as the backdrop for open forums, which ultimately determined what principles would be carried forward into the next phase of planning. Open houses were held on each topic area of background researched. Panel discussions were televised and residents were invited to mail their comments to the Steering Committee.
- *Stage Two* focused on growth management strategies. Residents responded to the question, “What growth strategies do we want to use to address the issues in Stage one?” A primer titled *The Workbook of Choices for Growth Management* reflected the various scenarios, and was delivered to each household in the City. Detailed information about how to consider each scenario and the possible outcomes was completed by 1275 residents. Their feedback provided the foundation for the subsequent stage.
- *Stage Three* outlined four land-use scenarios to the community. The preferred strategies were presented with options and the community was simply asked “Which scenario do you prefer?” In this stage, feedback was garnered through public forums and open houses. A questionnaire was circulated to residents, with a random telephone survey as follow-up. More than 100 detailed responses were received, including 200 telephone interviews.
- *Stage Four* presented a draft plan that offered a final opportunity for the community to provide input, responding to the question, “Have we got it right?” Public forums,

---

<sup>16</sup> Again, the information was gleaned primarily from the work of Blythe and Marson, 1999 in their work associated with the Citizen-Centered Service Network Canadian Centre for Management Development. They drew their information directly from *Focusing the Vision of Our Future, Imagine Nanaimo: Nanaimo's Community Goals and Strategies* produced by the Imagine Nanaimo Steering Committee, February 9, 1993 (pp. 5-9).



pre-paid response cards, open houses and meetings with residents provided opportunities to review the draft.

The final product, *Plan Nanaimo*, built the foundation to guide development and servicing priorities in the City. Five goals were identified, each goal was supported by specific land use objectives and policies that addressed growth management of rural areas, the environment, neighbourhoods, transportation, and the economic, social and cultural life in the City. Briefly the goals were:<sup>17</sup>

- *build complete, viable communities*, as nodes that would support varied lifestyle choices and businesses;
- *protect the environment*, being intentional about finding ways to incorporate this value into the urban environment;
- *manage urban growth* by redevelopment within existing City boundaries;
- *improve mobility and service efficiency* while becoming less reliant on vehicles, while addressing infrastructure and servicing upgrades where required;
- *ongoing planning and community involvement*, to uphold the process of ongoing public involvement (Plan Nanaimo, 1996).

As much as possible, the goal in drafting *Plan Nanaimo* was to eliminate ambiguity with regard to controversial builds, while keeping the document flexible for planning uncertainties of the future. In this regard, the document was acknowledged as a ‘living document’ capable of change as circumstances warranted. Changes were channelled through Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee (PNAC), who served to resolve inconsistencies in the document while remaining true to the original goals established. PNAC served in an advisory capacity to Council on matters pertaining to the OCP. PNAC was comprised of fourteen representatives from a spectrum of interests including business and development, neighbourhood associations, and members from other committees of Council including their heritage, social planning, parks and recreation and the environment committees.

The overarching goals were set within a long-term strategy that were broadly representative of the views and recommendations brought to the Council by the community, and also of Council’s own vision for the City. The goals identified were directed at reversing

---

<sup>17</sup> These goals are adapted from the City of Nanaimo, 1996 Plan Nanaimo document.

the poor planning which had resulted in urban sprawl. The goal was to eliminate sprawl through policy decisions reversing or halting ad-hoc development.

Inherent to the 140-page document was the high value citizens placed on the environment. Protection of the natural environment and utilization of the environment for its aesthetic appeal were identified as high priorities. *Plan Nanaimo* was intended to move the community towards more environmental and socially-responsible planning. Environmental and socially responsible planning called for delineating an urban containment boundary to address past urban sprawl issues, and guard against the potential of future sprawl.

Similarly, downtown revitalization was also promoted in the OCP. Establishing a Heritage Management Plan that aligned with the values of the initial visioning exercise addressed the kind of revitalization desired. Plan Nanaimo's Steering Committee used two consultants' reports to frame decisions directing urban design for the downtown. Collectively, the Spaxman Report (AWA Spaxman Consulting Ltd., 1993), and the Height and Density Study (Urban Forum Associates, 1994), upheld the values first expressed by the community to preserve view corridors, provide public access to the waterfront, and to develop with the existing scale and character in mind.

Council's primary purpose in commissioning the study was to reconcile protection of the waterfront and mountain vista views, with *Plan Nanaimo's* call for urban intensification. Because new development and increased density were desired, and therefore likely inevitable, balancing what could be potentially conflicting objectives was the focal point of the report. Future development would "enhance, rather than detract from, the qualities of downtown" (Urban Forum Associates, Height and Density Study, 1994, p. 4).

In addition, the OCP established that the landscape along with heritage refurbishment were important, not just for pleasure and historical posterity, but to begin diversify the economy and thereby contribute to the future of downtown. Outlined as key objectives under the broader goals, they were perceived as tacit safeguards that protected the values important to the citizenry at large. Maintaining public and private views were to be managed equitably; and recommendations taken from both the Spaxman Report (AWA Spaxman Consulting Ltd., 1993), and the Height and Density Study (Urban Forum Associates, Height and Density Study, 1994) provided the baseline for determining view preservation guidelines for future downtown development.

Plan Nanaimo was a detailed process that took the more than 30 member committee roughly two years to complete. With the support of the community at large, Plan Nanaimo was adopted as the OCP under the Municipal Act in 1996 and adopted by City Council in the Fall of 1997 (City Council Minutes, 1997, September 22). Within the Province of British Columbia, Nanaimo's OCP was the most comprehensive, transparent, and participatory planning exercise undertaken at that time (Stone, 2004). Two professional bodies recognized the citizen-based planning efforts. The Planning Institute of British Columbia honoured the City with an Award of Excellence for outstanding achievement in planning and the City was a finalist in the 1997 Institute of Public Administration of Canada awards (Blythe & Marson, 1999).

Importantly, both *Plan Nanaimo*, and its precursor *Imagine Nanaimo*, conveyed the message that citizen input was important for establishing the organizing principles and policy framework for growth and development of their City. The process signalled a new precedent in which communal input as governance would direct the management of urban growth as both formal and informal networks worked together to address Nanaimo's development principles. While the plan was not perfect, for the most part the process opened up dialogue about how development should occur. For many citizens, these processes represented an occasion to refute the impromptu development of the past, and discharge opportunistic activities modeled by former community leaders. Together these processes set the stage for the community's expectations pertaining to any significant future developments. This was particularly important if development, as defined under the OCP, was questionable.

At the same time, the plan also revealed an urban context where the built environment would cater to visitors. Key stakeholders identified new strategies that focused on market-centered initiatives for urban development and redevelopment. The OCP, while guided by community values, also framed Nanaimo for market competitiveness and investment capital through fostering a favourable business environment. The historic core and the landscape for its aesthetic appeal were resources to be leveraged as two new economic drivers.

By the latter half of the 1990s, Nanaimo was in the midst of an economic recession. Construction and business activity was down significantly from the early and mid-1990s. Considerable effort had gone into analyzing what should be done with the pioneering core, and several steps were taken to reverse the decline. However, in spite of the development that had taken place, the downtown's commercial tax base had eroded significantly, down nearly two-

thirds from 30 percent to 13 percent (City Council Minutes, 2001, April 5). Tax trends in Nanaimo revealed that between 1997 and 2000, residential taxes dropped roughly four percent, commercial taxes in general dropped close to nine percent, and the industrial tax base, in a continual state of decline, had dropped 16 percent (City Council Minutes, 2001, April 5). Neither the private nor public initiatives were sufficient to buffer the downtown, nor were they enough to completely overcome the inertia caused by sub-urbanization, and the steady erosion of industrial stability. Confronting the declining trends, the City determined that if the downtown tax base continued to fall, they would be required to raise the residential and industrial taxes in order to subsidize the downturn further. Civic leadership had worked diligently to bring the industrial rates within the provincial average and they did not want to reverse this trend (Nanaimo Daily News, 2004, October 28). If anything, the economic downturn and devastating statistics underscored the importance of continued emphasis on restoring vitality to the downtown.

This was a pivotal juncture in the community's history and it was here that new beginnings for the community were realized. For the first time in the City's history, the OCP articulated communal values and meanings for Nanaimo that transcended its traditional industrial and functional form. City leadership was determined to act on the momentum that had been building for nearly a decade. The concerted effort directed at the downtown, coupled with the kind of development occurring initiated awareness that a downtown renaissance could restore vitality; and further, that it could refashion the community into a more contemporary urban environment. A metamorphic undertaking could, at minimum, bolster the declining resource-based industry, and potentially replace it as the frontrunner of economic stability.

This decision was not made in isolation. At the time Civic leadership was coming to these conclusions, so too were a number of volunteers primarily from the business sector, who were realizing the importance of working together. One report in particular sparked the genesis of co-operative and co-ordinating efforts among the various downtown groups that had been lacking through this 10-year phase.

#### *Main Street Report (2000)*

The City hired The National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C. (now named the National Trust Main Street Centre, and herein called Main Street) for further downtown analysis in 2000. Several Councillors attended the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Annual Conference and heard of London, Ontario's revitalization programme for which Main Street was hired. Main Street's primary premise is the promotion of public-private partnerships in order to leverage the traditional architecture and local historic districts as a means of re-stimulating urban cores. Renewing heritage buildings was a way to clean up the downtown, and generate economic activity by creating an environment conducive to consumptive lifestyle behaviour. In turn, these activities would create a synergy that would extend the benefits across the community, and importantly, reverse the eroding downtown tax base.

The report, *An Assessment of Downtown Nanaimo's Opportunities for Revitalization*, (2000) reiterated the OCP values and included three key strategies to build the core. Expanding the residential base through new or refurbished development catering to the middle and upper income consumer would offset development to the North and provide vitality downtown. Second, Main Street consultants recommended that the downtown business base should be restructured to create stable investment for the City's economic development priorities. Tourism, arts and culture, and film and video production were among the top priorities identified. The final key strategy focused on creating a niche market for the arts and culture.

At the time the Main Street Report was written, two new City initiatives were being debated by City Council. These were distinct courses of action the City was contemplating at the time Main Street was hired. However, it was important that Main Street take these into consideration in their analysis. Main Street supported the first initiative to purchase of the former CIBC bank building and repurpose it as an art centre. This move was a way to anchor the arts and culture niche Main Street recommended for downtown. An art centre would tie into the existing amenities themed around arts and culture, namely the Nanaimo Regional Museum, the Regional Library and Port Theatre. Doing this, they believed would further cultivate other mutually-supportive civic, cultural and business activities that were unique from what was offered in the suburbs (National Main Street Centre Report, City of Nanaimo, September, 2000).

The second initiative under consideration by City Council was a waterfront conference centre. Under Council's direction in early 1999, the City contracted Grant Thornton, a leading Canadian accounting and business advisory firm, to conduct a Convention Centre Feasibility Study. Grant Thornton concluded that a convention centre targeting regional and provincial markets would be an appropriate course of action for the City. Alongside their investigation

and evaluation of Nanaimo's downtown and upon reviewing the Grant Thornton report, Main Street tempered their response with two recommendations. First, the City should consider this project as a public-private venture with a hotel developer. Second, City Council should not pursue this project until the core had sufficient retail and cultural activities in the core for conference attendees. If these conditions could not be met, Main Street cautioned against the project. Moreover, any plans considered must be phased with appropriate targeted incentives for both the private partner and for the public.

Also surfacing from Main Street's report was the lack of an identifiable common vision for downtown. Area stakeholders such as the Old City Quarter Association, and the Nanaimo City Centre Association (described in detail below) had articulated different visions, and these visions would have to be reconciled for the downtown to be successful. In order to move the downtown forward, a more comprehensive, unified approach was required. Although the OCP outlined the parameters, no pragmatic plan had been defined. Main Street's final analysis revealed that these area stakeholders representing several downtown businesses while all concerned about revitalization, had different visions of downtown, and were not linking to each other. To move the downtown forward, a comprehensive, unified picture for downtown was required.

In light of Main Street's recommendations in 2000, the City revisited the original 1993 Spaxman Report. A second updated Spaxman Report was completed in April 2002, and the second reference plan had few nominal updates. Adopted by Council, *The Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document* endorsed Main Street's recommendations, adding an important caveat to "create a stable policy environment within which the private sector can consider investment decisions" (Nanaimo Downtown Plan, 2002, p. 4).

It was against this backdrop that civic elections took place in November 2002. Not surprisingly, continued downtown revitalization was a key campaign platform for incumbent local council members and those campaigning for Nanaimo's 21<sup>st</sup> Council. The conference centre was the focal point of most campaign platforms, bringing it front and centre in the minds of the public at large. The lagging economy was picking up, and downtown was gaining momentum once again. Returning and newly elected representatives affirmed downtown renewal as the top priority (City Council Minutes, 2002, December 16). Affirmation of this decision collectively acknowledged and confirmed the previous Council's effort and direction.

Revitalization efforts were gradually surmounting the inertia of urban sprawl and the most recent economic downturn. Returning Council members were committed to continuing the momentum that was established, and were equally determined to pick up the pieces of two failed conference centre initiatives.

### **The Revitalizing Mandate: Why a Conference Centre?**

Vague references to a conference centre date back to the early days of Mayor Frank Ney. However, the idea surfaced as a more serious contender when discussions began around downtown revitalization in the late 1990s. The construction boom that initiated the re-birth of the downtown gave the core a much needed facelift and to some degree generated synergy for the impetus of other construction projects.

There was a clear mandate for revitalization. This was well established through City minutes, as committees were restructured to support this mandate. There is some recollection as to why and to whom the conference centre idea can be credited. Broadly speaking, a common desire existed in the community to replace the derelict Malaspina Hotel. The hotel had become a long-standing embarrassment to the community. Occupying one of the premier waterfront spots in the City, the Malaspina Hotel was a hollowed out shell, which served as a reminder of the continual decay that had occurred to the point of abandonment. As it stood, the Malaspina Hotel served as an eerie omen that the downtown more broadly would likely suffer the same fate. A conference centre would end the circular debates that resulted from several attempts to replace or renovate the Malaspina Hotel. It could be an important catalyst to draw further development to the core and in turn broaden the commercial tax base. Second, conference centre initiatives elsewhere in the province had been relatively successful. There was widespread belief among many civic governments that conference centres had the potential to generate income for the City and the business community, drawing outsiders and therefore new money into the community.

Public records credit Doug Rispin, a former City Councillor, as the key catalyst campaigning for a conference centre. However, Councillor Cantelon, the first Chair of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC), was also a principle advocator of the conference centre. Both were senior Council members and considered key crusaders of downtown revitalization. Both championed the conference centre as an economic generator in

the community, despite projections that estimated operating losses for the first five years. They had credibility with Council and as a result near unanimous consensus were achieved<sup>18</sup>.

Initially Councillor Sherry voted in favour of a conference centre on the waterfront. However, he voted against the public-private venture with Triarc because it was too costly to the community. He had grown increasingly uncomfortable with the escalating costs of the project since its inception. He had merited popularity with the voting public for his honesty and his cautious approach. He was not attached to any political party, and he was reputed for taking his civic responsibilities seriously. However, because of his long-standing record on Council of voting no over his more than two decades in public office, several participants suggested this in effect, neutralized his position. In other words, his vote was not necessarily against the conference centre, but against his philosophical stance that he would vote no to represent the community's poorest citizens who could not tolerate any tax increase, at any time.

Councillor Rispin's vision and passion for a conference centre was likely seeded in the late 1990s when he requested permission to attend a conference promoting the merit of tourism as an economic growth strategy for communities (City Council Minutes 1993, October 18). Councillor Rispin's long-term tenure on Council and his leadership roles in the Community Opportunity Fund, the Board of Tourism Nanaimo, and eventually, the Conference Centre Advisory Committee were consistent in promoting tourism as a legitimate means for re-urbanization and revitalization, as recorded in the City Council Minutes (1993-1999). Similarly, Councillor Cantelon's actions are consistent with a pro-tourism growth strategy. Moreover, his various roles as Port Theatre President, Tourism Nanaimo's Citizen of the Year, and Remax Manager of the Year for Western Canada uniquely positioned him to promote the conference centre as a key piece for downtown revitalization.

At the same time, other linkages were taking place and rationalizing tourism as a legitimate form of economic development. Organizations, committees, individuals, and community members began to promote the inherent value placed on producing an urban space that blended life and work for residents with a destination for tourists and individuals looking to relocate. This notion was reinforced by the business community. Business believed that the plan most likely to contribute to their success included tourism related activity, mid to upper level shopping, and arts and culture (Downtown Nanaimo Business Retention and Attraction

---

<sup>18</sup> Councillor Sherry voted no to the third attempt at a conference centre.



Strategy, 2002). Players overlapped in committee work, and an intricate network evolved to reinforce the message that revitalization was best achieved by displaying the natural and heritage assets of the City. Crucially, a conference centre complemented these criteria and became the vehicle through which to showcase Nanaimo. The conference centre would serve as Nanaimo's calling card. Importantly, these organizations believed Nanaimo could enter and compete in a market place that was increasingly oriented towards consumptive practices, catering to those with higher than average discretionary incomes, both resident and visitors alike. "Destination businesses", those providing unique and personalized shopping experiences as opposed to utility shopping experiences (big box and mall) were envisioned. This message was consistently reinforced and gathered momentum as overlap occurred between the various committees that formed the critical mass that gave legs to the vision.

Although revitalization at the outset was not synonymous with a conference centre, the mutually-reinforcing interaction and messaging conditioned City Council to draw the inevitable conclusion that a conference centre was the next step in revitalization. Significantly, several community committees had either laid the groundwork solidifying this directive, or kept it alive when its viability was threatened.

### **Local Level Community Organizing and Committee Activity**

#### *Community Opportunity Fund*

During the early 1990s, Nanaimo's City Council set up a board of community volunteers called the Community Opportunity Fund (COF) to facilitate projects that would enhance the economic potential of the City (City Council Minutes, March 1, 1999). COF was made up of community leaders who had extensive business experience within Nanaimo, and many members were active in other community organizations including the Nanaimo District Museum, the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Nanaimo, along with a member of Council. COF played a key leadership role in the development of a series of projects in the community, initiating discussions with Council to pursue the harbour front development, the Port Theatre, the library, the Credit Union, and the downtown parkade. Having successfully completed the plaza, they turned their focus to finding a new venture.

The Chair of the Community Opportunity Fund, Councillor Doug Rispin, also sat on the board of Tourism Nanaimo. In 1999, Jane Bremner, who was President of the Meeting

Planner Association B.C., was commissioned to do a feasibility study for the City. Under the auspices of Tourism Nanaimo, the Convention Centre Strategy Research Project touted the benefits of conference centres for economic development. Based on the results of the Convention Centre Strategy Research Project, the COF recommended to City Council that the next capital project be a multi-purpose convention centre. Their rationale was as follows: “Other cities are actively pursuing conferencing, tourism, and “smart-city” strategies and Nanaimo needs to adopt a leadership stance in regard to these emerging and developing opportunities” (City Council Minutes, March 1, 1999). They argued the momentum from the plaza development should be carried forward. A convention centre development within proximity could also take advantage of the waterfront walkways and be advantageous to the Port Theatre, Coast Hotel, and smaller uptown establishments. Based on their recommendations, City Council authorized City staff to move forward with a conference facility review and provided the funding to determine the feasibility of a conference centre in Nanaimo (City Council Minutes, March 1, 1999). Doug Rispin’s long tenure on Council and his catalytic leadership, coupled with COF’s influence were vital components in City Council taking this recommendation seriously.

#### *Economic Development Group and the City’s Economic Development Office*

COF’s position was made stronger by the support of Nanaimo’s Economic Development Group (EDG). EDG is a coalition of organizations, institutions, and businesses who assumed an economic leadership role in the community in the early stages of the downtown development that began towards the end of the 1990s. Their genesis stemmed from a series of meetings and workshops hosted by the City’s Economic Development Office inviting business leaders to come together to reverse the charge that Nanaimo was unfriendly towards business. This reputation, of concern to the economic development office, stemmed from a survey conducted in 1997 by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. In order to reverse the civic bureaucracy that led to that initial assessment, EDG agreed to meet on a regular basis with the City’s Economic Development Officer, Tanja McQueen (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 1999, February 24).

From those initial meetings, and over the next two years, EDG worked with the City’s Economic Development Office to outline an economic development strategy for business, government, local organizations and community citizens. A report entitled *Working Together*

*to Build a Prosperous Future*<sup>19</sup> was first introduced in February 1999 at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon. The strategy synthesized the work plans and activities of a number of public and private-sector organizations and set priorities for future action. Importantly, the report identified five industry sectors as economic drivers for growth. Knowledge-based high-tech industries, value-added manufacturing, arts and culture, tourism, and film and video production were identified for their ability to generate new wealth, contribute to the tax base and provide employment opportunities, and the focus shifted from shrinking, commodity-based industries. EDG and the City's Economic Development Office believed establishing these sectors would provide the foundation for Nanaimo to be a healthy community sustained through its diverse economy. Together these sectors would generate wealth for residents, businesses, and all of those who interact with the City (*Working Together to Build a Prosperous Future*, 2000). This message under-girded what they referred to as the Circle of Prosperity.

EDG's strategy outlined four conditions required for the Prosperity model to work. First, business, political and community leadership must be committed to a healthy economy. Second, the City must provide a foundation that created opportunities for business to succeed. Third, Nanaimo must have quality infrastructure that makes the most of economic opportunities. In other words, business would do its part in training and keeping skilled workers, but the City was responsible for providing an environment where people want to live and work. Being a desirable place to live held the key to the fourth condition. Nanaimo must create a positive image that communicates to outsiders that Nanaimo is an attractive and supportive place to live and invest. This network between businesses, coupled with the City's Economic Development office, galvanized the relationship of Business to the City more formally, and the jointly-established document and strategy provided the basis for a cohesive economic base.

EDG met formally with Council to present the document and they requested Council endorse their Community Economic Development Strategy as a decision-making tool (City Council Minutes, 1999, May 31). This meant any reports or projects submitted to Council be vetted through this document by the Economic Development Office staff and EDG board members to determine the degree to which they meet the strategy's goals. Moreover, EDG

---

<sup>19</sup> A second, updated copy of *Working Together to Build a Prosperous Future* was drafted in 2002

requested City Council use the strategy when determining budget decisions, grant requests, policy direction, planning and participation with other organizations. These recommendations were adopted by Council in May, 1999 (City Council Minutes, May 31, 1999).

Importantly, EDG's support for the conference centre decision sent a message to City Council that they were charting an appropriate course of action. EDG's support was important because the backing of several prominent business leaders fuelled the City's conviction that the conference centre was an appropriate next step for the community.

### *Downtown Strategy Team*

In response to the work by EDG and the City's Economic Development office to promote economic development, City Council established a steering committee to work on the downtown portion of EDG's strategy. This ad-hoc committee was known as the Downtown Strategy Team (DST) (City Council Minutes, January 11, 1999). The Committee was comprised of representatives from City Council, the Nanaimo City Centre Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Old City Quarter, and the Port Authority (then known as the Nanaimo Harbour Commission). Their mandate? To attract people, residents and visitors alike, to work and live in the downtown. The goal was to infuse it with life in the hopes of creating a positive image for the City. Shortly into their mandate, and after a number of short-term projects, the DST began to realize sustaining the core would require long-term planning and the co-ordinated effort of several key business leaders and organizations.

With this in mind, the DST met throughout the year with key downtown stakeholders, primarily made up of members of each of the respective organizations represented in the core. They began the process of identifying a long-term strategy to shape a future direction for downtown. In the spring of the same year, the DST held two workshops that brought together downtown business people and residents to dialogue about the nature and direction of downtown revitalization. The brainstorming and networking sessions were open to the public and worked through a variety of priorities. By the fall of the same year, three main goals had been identified. Essentially, these were the goals adopted later in the Main Street Report: 1) attract more people to live downtown through suitable housing development; 2) create a larger employment base downtown by focusing on attracting new business and expanding existing business; and 3) position downtown as a centre for arts, culture, and entertainment, creating a "unique" theme for the downtown area to set it apart from other areas of the community.

More than 40 people were directly involved in volunteering for the sub-committees that provided feedback to the DST, along with representatives from more than a dozen community organizations. Each committee determined a course of action specific to their role, but which would complement and not conflict with each of the other committees' plans of action. Collectively, the strategies would work in unison to advance downtown revitalization.

A vertical and horizontal management structure for the DST was established and formalized by City Council. Under the proposed format, a supervising committee was established to oversee the sub-committees and network with other community groups and organizations. The vision that surfaced repositioned Nanaimo from its past economic base, "Downtown Nanaimo is the heart of the City, a unique and people-friendly place. It attracts residents, corporate and other businesses, government, professional services and tourists because of its beauty, excellent transportation links, cultural and culinary attractions and its diverse shopping opportunities." This vision was to guide the plan to "attract significant private sector investment in downtown" (City Council Minutes, April 13, 2000).

By December 2000, City Council approved a name change from the DST to the Downtown Action and Advisory Committee (DAAC). Officially, DAAC was comprised of three downtown stakeholders. Representatives from the City, along with two business districts in the core, the Nanaimo City Centre Association (NCCA), and the Old City Quarter (OCQA) formed DAAC. These non-profit business associations governed specific areas in the core that operated as business improvement areas (BIA). The NCCA formed in 1988 and the OCQA, established in 1993 represented the original pioneering economic core of the City. Collectively, they represented six BIAs in the core. Importantly, the co-ordinating effort addressed the competing visions that existed about revitalization that the Main Street report had suggested was a major impediment to re-establishing the City's core.

The original mandate of the DST was altered slightly to recognize the new governing function of DAAC: "to oversee the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the downtown districts" (City Council Minutes, December 13, 1999, p. 11). Key groups conscripted into DAAC included those who were part of the DST along with Tourism Nanaimo, and the Nanaimo District Museum. The City's committee system was effectively restructured to include significant representation from the business community for determining the direction for downtown. Meetings continued throughout 2003, with the focal point centered

on a building a case for urban development and redevelopment that centred on tourism and consumer-oriented activities.

DAAC as the governing body, now required a way for this vision to be realized. The Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Society (DNP)<sup>20</sup> was the mechanism in which this occurred. Importantly, establishing the DNP, as the entity mandated to fulfill the vision, addressed Main Street's primary concern over the lack of unity in this regard. Their role is examined next in more detail.

#### *Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Society*

The initial groundwork of the DST that led to establishing DAAC eventually resulted in creating a formal quasi-independent entity called the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership Society (DNP). At its core, it was a tripartite public-private funding agreement between the City and the Nanaimo City Centre Association and the Old City Quarter Association. The objectives of the partnership were those first identified by the DST, and then outlined by Main Street. The DNP's launch was more formally acknowledged when the City delegated authority to DAAC through the development of the Downtown Revitalization and Development Service Establishment to hire a managing director.

The DNP served as a tangible marker acknowledging the public-private partnership that had evolved between the City and two key downtown business sectors. Equally significant, this relationship created working alliances in which the previous visions for downtown among the three entities were curtailed. Moreover, both the NCCA and OCQA were, because of their membership, able to provide on-the-ground information to the DNP. The unique partnership effectively doubled their BIA funding (DNP public meeting, July 29, 2009).

Their mandate, guided by the Main Street Report, was to actively recruit and assist potential investors in overcoming hurdles associated with a smooth transition into the core. Several sub-committees were established under the DNP: Business Development; Housing, Design and Development; Promotions; Arts, Culture and Entertainment; and Marketing and Events. Each sub-committee channelled recommendations to the DNP Executive Director who reported to DAAC and who in turn, made recommendations to City Council.

---

<sup>20</sup> It is commonly referred to as the DNP, and is referred to as the DNP throughout this thesis.

In particular, the Business Development Committee and the Housing, Design and Development Committees were instrumental in establishing new re-zoning amendments for the core. Members of each committee were principally comprised of business owners from the core and residents in the community with specific areas of expertise. For example, the business development committee were downtown business owners, real estate and development experts. When conflicting amendments arose, an overseeing body called Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee (PNAC) determined whether requests were consider major or minor amendments to the City's OCP (*Plan Nanaimo*). In turn, Council would take into consideration PNAC's recommendations prior to making a decision. Any decision made ultimately lay with City Council.

The DNP Executive Director also established lines of communication with the City's Social Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), although they were not formally part of the formal sub-committee structure. The relationship was established to procure a reporting system around the social issues germane to the downtown. SPNAC struck a Working Group, comprised primarily of not-for-profit organizations to report to the DNP. Members of the Working Group sat on the existing sub-committees of the DNP to provide input into ways of improving the image of downtown, and as a way of having input into the downtown policy plans. However, their priority was to retain and attract businesses. The foundation for the DNP's working plan lay in the *Downtown Nanaimo Business Retention and Attraction Strategy Report* completed in March 2002. It was beyond the mandate of the DNP to address the community's social issues. Their goal was to ensure that they did not hinder the positive image that Nanaimo was trying to portray.

At its core, the DNP is a co-ordinated effort bringing together the various organizations and committees internal and external to the City. The DNP served first as the anchoring point through which the vision was realized, and importantly, the clarion call for establishing a more formalized and tighter-knit network. It served as the primary mechanism and co-ordinating body dedicated to downtown revitalization. As a formal body, the DNP continued making strong links in the community, particularly within the business sector. Close working relationship were established with the local Chamber of Commerce and with EDG. The relational networks that existed among many of the organizations, committees and key players coalesced to solidify the shape, form, direction and nature of downtown revitalization.

Incrementally under the DNP, businesses were re-establishing in the downtown and the strategies recommended by Main Street were being realized. City Council representation on the DNP meant the DNP had direct access to City Council. This link meant that the DNP could assist in policy development and implementation strategies that served to shape the downtown (DNP, public information meeting, July 29, 2008).

*Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development, Tourism and Conferencing*

Established at the same time that the DST morphed into DAAC, the City Council established a short-term committee entitled the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development, Tourism and Conferencing, in December 1999. As understood in the name, this internal task force was comprised of only the Mayor and senior Council members Rispin and Cantelon. The task force's role specifically was "develop a strategy for coordination of community economic development and tourism efforts" (City Council Minutes, February 7, 2000). Community groups and/or businesses that came to the City requesting funding were channelled through this task force to "ensure efficient use of taxpayers' money in supporting those efforts" (Special Open Meeting, City Council, February 3, 2000).

This organization of the committee's work around tourism and conferencing initiatives as means of economic development suggests the efforts of the initial groups such as EDG and the DST were beginning to take hold. City Council recognized the elevated importance of tourism to the community's economic base. The committee, as a funding mechanism, effectively acted as a gatekeeper for the kinds of activities that would be endorsed by the City. More than \$375,000 was available to fund requests from varying organizations whose activities would build the City's tourism base and/or provide complementary services to the conference centre. Funding came partially from casino gaming revenue and from other service level funding designated in the budget.

In keeping with Council's decision designating a conference centre as their top capital priority, they also ensured funding was designated and made available for infrastructure development. In addition to their community grant programme, the Task Force drafted an action plan to procure higher level government funding specifically directed at municipal infrastructure projects related to tourism initiatives, for which the conference centre qualified.



### *Conference Centre Advisory Committee*

In light of the conference centre activity, the Task Force responsibilities were assumed by a newly established Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC), (now known as the Port of Nanaimo Advisory Committee). The City Council decided the structure of this committee would include Community Opportunity Fund members, representatives from the Nanaimo and District Museum, Tourism Nanaimo, and the general public (City Council Minutes, December 18, 2000). The goal was to appoint local “experts” whose knowledge extended beyond business acumen and possessed expertise in tourism. In addition to working with the various committees and organizations specifically oriented to revitalization initiatives, the CCAC also held joint meetings with the Conference Centre Marketing Committee of Tourism Nanaimo to address increased marketing and promotional materials for the proposed conference centre.

The CCAC was comprised of six volunteers, along with one appointed representative from the Nanaimo Port Authority. Initially Doug Rispin, followed by Ron Cantelon, served as the Chairs for the CCAC, both of whom were the original and only members serving on the Mayor’s Task Force. Despite the critical role the CCAC played in positioning Nanaimo for a conference centre, little information is available about their specific undertakings. For the most part this is because most of their meetings were held in camera, making it difficult to discern how the relationship with their private partner evolved. The CCAC relationship with the private sector was in large part dictated by private sector protocol for which public accountability is not required, nor necessarily desired. Although not officially a part of the CCAC, all City Councillors were invited to attend any or all of the meetings held by the CCAC. Formal reports were channelled back to the City Council for formal approval.

Al Kenning, the City’s Deputy Manager took a lead role in the conference centre development and his attendance was vital in directing the activities of senior levels of City staff. Because Mr. Kenning had successfully overseen the building of the Port Theatre and Regional Library projects, he was appointed by the City Manager to oversee the conference centre. Although committee members changed over time, it was this committee who saw the conference centre through a variety of iterations to its current location and form.

### **Conference Centre Initiatives**

On June 29, 2005, the City of Nanaimo’s news release, *History in the Making*, announced the opening ceremonies marking the start of construction for the Port of Nanaimo Centre. At the

opening, Mayor Korpan's speech of July 5, 2005 reflected a change in direction, and a new history being written for the City,

After years of decline, discussion, debate, discussion, deliberation, discussion and finally decision the citizens and Council of Nanaimo have commenced a bold new initiative to establish our City as a destination for new businesses, residents, and visitors. . . With substantial support from our partners in the private sector, the federal and provincial governments, the taxpayers of Nanaimo are determined and confident in our future.

While there are a number of insights that can be culled from Mayor Korpan's remarks, the opening sentence is telling. Punctuated between each "discussion" is a story. If one probes deeper, Nanaimo's concerted efforts towards a conference centre can be mapped. The relatively linear and cooperative process of community participatory planning segues into the story of the conference centre and the two previously failed attempts to bring it to fruition.

One of the final decisions made by the Mayor's Task Force before morphing into the Conference Centre Advisory Committee was to recommend the City set aside \$5 million toward a conference centre. This recommendation occurred in March 2000, (City Council Minutes, March 27, 2000) and in September of the same year, the City issued calls for "expressions of interest", seeking potential private sector partners for the development of a proposed new conference centre in the downtown. Four proposals were received, however all proponents assumed the City would service the related capital and operating costs. Council opted to reject all interested parties' proposals, but continued with conference centre discussions.

Towards the end of the same year, the City, in partnership with private developer, Egon Kuhn, began negotiations for a conference centre and a privately-owned hotel on the site of the derelict Malaspina Hotel. The Nanaimo Waterfront Centre Inc. (NWCI) costs were a combined \$31 million, of which \$12.5 million would be required from the City, up from the \$5 million initially set aside. Untenable negotiations with Mr. Kuhn resulted in nearly two years of delayed deadlines, and termination of their agreement occurred on January 13, 2003 after the NWCI failed to secure funding for the project.

The City opened the proposal process once again in February 2003. By April 2003 however, the City had received only one other proposal from Front Street Projects Ltd. Front Street Projects Ltd. was a partnership between the Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) and the

NWCI. Together they proposed continued work at the Malaspina Hotel site and the SFN provided the \$50,000 deposit required. Within months, InSight Holdings, a third party and local developer, became the majority shareholder of Front Street Projects and worked with the NWCI to move the project forward, and the SFN was removed from the negotiations. A new non-binding Memorandum of Understanding was drafted, laying out the framework for the legal agreement, signed by August 2003. However, for reasons not fully understood, nor available in public record but summarized as a lack of confidence and risk factors associated with a hotel, the Front Street partners and the City were unable to negotiate satisfactory terms (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2003, October 30). This second 3P was terminated and the proposal disbanded.

By the end of December of the same year, City Councillor Cantelon, also Chair of the Nanaimo Downtown Partnership, referenced in his year-end DNP report that the City was on the threshold of welcoming two new residential projects on the waterfront. By March 2004 a private developer, Cape Development Corporation announced a proposal to redevelop the site of Nanaimo's Malaspina Hotel. Fifty million dollars was to be invested in an upscale waterfront residential condo development that included 187 units and 13 townhouses. Similarly, InSight Development proposed a residential project on the waterfront, located just down the block from the Malaspina Hotel shortly thereafter.

Despite two failed proposals inside of a year, the CCAC continued to remain active. The residential development proposals were positive developments for the downtown, and in this regard, aspects of the Main Street were being realized. Throughout this time frame, and under advice from the CCAC, City Council and senior staff began to realize the initial and subsequent incremental funding increases were insufficient to develop both the vision that was materializing, and their understanding of the best location and facility for Nanaimo. As the vision for the project sharpened, the incremental costs increased, which moved from the initial \$5 million commitment was increased to \$12 million, and then upward to \$18 million. This final allotment would deplete the City's reserves.

However, important movements were afoot in the province, along with growth in the community and a strong economic climate more broadly. British Columbia had just announced its 2010 Olympic bid, which if successful, would profile not only Vancouver but also the province. Expansion plans were in the works for both Victoria and Vancouver's conference

facilities, and based on the success of other conference facilities in the province, namely Penticton and Kelowna, City Council under the guidance of the CCAC, moved forward.

If anything, the frustration and delays of the false starts served several purposes, providing time for analysis and further refinement. In their post-mortem analysis, discussions with City Staff and members of Council suggested the previous failures were because ownership of the land did not reside with the City. Where the City had previously negotiated successful private-public partnerships, they had a land ownership role. As a result, City Council drew the conclusion that City-owned land was crucial to any form of future negotiations (New Nanaimo Centre Question and Answer Guide, 2004).

These false starts in many ways served to refocus both the CCAC, and subsequently City Council. With the benefit of hindsight, some study participants felt the preliminary forays and unrefined goal of a conference centre were naively undertaken. Had either of the preliminary proposals been undertaken, an unsatisfactory outcome would have resulted. These participants believed that neither the initial developers nor the City possessed the expertise or background in hotels or conference centres to be able to enter into an increasingly competitive market. While initially unsure of how best to go about building a conference centre, as time progressed the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC) were able to refine the process. A series of related but not necessarily chronological steps was a means of educating the conference centre leadership.

Throughout the 2000-2004 period, specific council members on the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC) took an active role in keeping the vision moving. For participants in leadership positions, either City Council or the CCAC, Nanaimo was a community plagued by resistance to change and they were determined to move forward with the project, convinced it would provide the necessary stimulus to propel Nanaimo's economic development forward. Field trips were taken to other communities<sup>21</sup> where significant initiatives had been undertaken. The Conference Centre Advisory Committee commissioned studies and looked for experts to assist in determining the right size and location.

Moreover, two conferences were attended in 2001 and 2004. Both conferences, hosted by the International Economic Development Council centred on the theme "If You Build It

---

<sup>21</sup> Windsor, Ontario, and Seattle, Washington, had both undertaken significant projects to revitalize their downtowns. In addition, Kamloops, Kelowna, and Victoria were other communities within British Columbia where conference venues were studied.

They Will Come.” The conferences were largely oriented towards communities planning to build sports facilities or conference centres. Councillors Cantelon and Krall, both of whom had at one point in time chaired the CCAC, attended both conferences, along with the City’s Economic Development Officer in 2001(City Council Minutes 2000, December 18), and the City’s Deputy Manager in 2004 (City Council Minutes, 2003, December 15). Despite having no 3P prospects on the horizon, Councillor’s Cantelon, Krall and Deputy Manager Al Kenning attended the last conference in January 2004, affirming the City’s ongoing commitment to a conference centre. It was through these initiatives that the conference centre concept was not only kept alive, but as one member of the CCAC summarized during our interview these activities were instrumental in framing their understanding, and refining their vision (Participant Timothy).

Subsequently, when local resident Jim Stevenson called “out of the blue” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, September 18) offering to examine the feasibility of building a conference centre and hotel, through the development company Triarc International of Connecticut (hereafter referred to as Triarc), the City responded positively. The President of Triarc, Melvin Katz came to the City and with some of the City’s Councillors, and Senior Staff, confirmed one of the two locations the City was considering. By the spring of 2004, according to City Staff and members of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee, the City was discreetly purchasing privately-held property downtown in order to secure the 2 plus acres site. The City determined they would if necessary expropriate tenants, and they began expropriation of one tenant unwilling to move in early fall of 2004 (Special Open Meeting, 2004, October 15).

Unknown to the public at that time, the City had entered into negotiations with Triarc. Triarc negotiated with the City to forgo the tendering process, and would in turn provide a hotel feasibility study. An Agreement in Principle was signed precluding other developers. The City was comfortable with these conditions knowing that the previous proposal calls did not produce any viable tenders. Once an agreement had been reached, the City announced the public-private-partnership (P3) in early September 2004. The partnership was a complex agreement that entailed three significant building projects at three different locations, valued at approximately \$200 million.

Because the City had negotiated two previous attempts, study participants suggested there was a growing awareness of the City’s intent to build a conference centre and that in

general the feeling was that residents were supportive of City Council's direction. The business community in the downtown core was supportive, as were businesses across the community. A number of residents also supported the idea, including members of the community who later formed the FPN. The risk was nominal to the taxpayers. Study participants suggested two readily identified two benefits. A conference centre would address the decrepit hotel, considered a blight on the landscape. Second, the City held adequate funding in reserves, which meant it was unlikely that taxes would be increased to cover the costs associated with it. The modest outlay was considered reasonable in light of the possible benefits. Importantly, Nanaimo's economy reflected the healthier economic environment of the province more broadly. Nanaimo's housing market was growing significantly, in turn increasing the City's revenue base. For the most part, the public perceived a conference centre as a logical step in the next phase of Nanaimo's development.

However, discussions at the public level did not reference amendments to the OCP, a significant consideration in hindsight. With the announcement of the new partnership agreement, residents eventually came to realize the new proposal involved the addition of three new high-rise developments on the waterfront. In order for the proposal to be approved, quite apart from public approval, meant major amendments to the OCP. Specifically, City Council would have to vote in favour to remove the City's current by-law that limited building heights to 15 storeys. Importantly, requests were being made by PNAC to make these concessions, however as one PNAC member suggested, their approval to raise the cap was done without knowing any details of the significance of this decision. For them, when the request was made, it was for the two proposed high-rises on the waterfront that were not connected to the conference centre project.

Subsequently, when the conference centre surfaced once again for public scrutiny with the September announcement, it appeared as a multi-functional space that far exceeded the previous proposal plans and, subsequently the public's expectations. Despite the beliefs of the local officials about the benefits of this publicly funded centre, scepticism arose among a group of concerned citizens. Initially galled by the City's decision to raise the height capacity, despite overwhelming support to the contrary, they began to investigate further the conditions under which the conference centre would be built. This group identified themselves as the Friends of Plan Nanaimo. The name, stemming from *Plan Nanaimo*, reflected this group's concern that

principles established with broad-based community participation and input were gradually being eroded. The genesis of FPN is often incorrectly tied specifically to the conference centre. In reality, the violation on the goals and objectives of the OCP began earlier than with the conference centre announcement.

A series of re-zoning applications in the City that were publicized through the local newspapers caught the attention of one local citizen. However, one application in particular, prompted this individual to place an advertisement in the local paper inviting residents who may be concerned over the planning decisions to meet. This was the informal start of FPN. This small group of community residents were concerned only at that time with high-rise development on the waterfront. The application was the rezoning of a downtown waterfront property by Insight Holdings. Insight Holdings wished to construct a 24-storey high-rise on the waterfront and requested the right to increase the height of their development project beyond the 15-storey OCP cap. According to the by-law amendment process, several steps had to be taken. First, the City's Development Services staff reviewed the application, forwarding their recommendation to the Plan Nanaimo Advisory Council (PNAC). Formed in 1997, PNAC plays a gate-keeping role, ensuring the basic tenants of Plan Nanaimo are upheld. PNAC, had over the seven years, approved several amendments.

Although the OCP included a policy which limited height of all high-rise development in the community to 15 storeys, it also made provisions for a downtown plan. This was the Downtown Plan adopted by City Council in 2002 (Downtown Centre Standing Committee Minutes, 2002, February 11). The vision expressed in that plan included downtown residences with the goal of improving and stabilizing the downtown economy. Moreover, the Downtown Plan recognized the unique character of each area and provided specific development guidelines, which highlighted use, density goals, and provided guidelines tailored to reflect the existing character and proposed focus of each area. Three locations were identified for high-rises downtown that did not include the proposed development on Front Street by InSight Development. Following the adoption of the Downtown Plan, Spaxman Consulting was requested to prepare a draft-zoning bylaw (Planning and Development Standing Committee, 2002, February 14). Based on the input they received from the Downtown Zoning Stakeholders Group, revisions were made to include high-rise developments on Front Street, and to remove sections from the Entertainment District of Commercial Street (City Council Minutes, 2004,

August 16). In other words, there was a trade-off between where high-rises could be located in the core.

With this knowledge in hand, and following the recommendations of senior staff, on June 17, 2004 PNAC approved the zoning request. This drew the attention of the public at large because it was the first time the public became aware that high-rises could be located directly on the waterfront, and that the City was proposing the removal of the height ceiling. Moreover, based on Development Service's senior staff recommendations and PNAC's approval, City Council passed the first two of three readings by August 16, 2004 (City Council Minutes, August 16, 2004). A third and final reading took place on September 9, 2004 immediately following a public hearing (Special Open Meeting of Council Minutes, 2004, September 9)

The public hearing was the final step required in order for Council to seal a third and final reading and make the bylaw amendment law. Divided opinions surfaced at that public meeting in which the overwhelming majority spoke against lifting the 15-storey cap and, according to most study participants, sent a strong message that City Council reject the up-zoning request (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, September 11). However, contrary to the expressed disapproval at the public meeting, that same evening after the public meeting, City Council voted 8 to 1 to amend OCP Bylaw 996 No. 6000. Council's vote effectively completed the final stage and set a new by-law in place. OCP bylaw 2004 No. 6000.055 removed the 15-storey height limitation, and Amendment By-law No.4000.353 permitted a new cap (Special Open Meeting of Council, 2004, September 9). Residential high-rise development's new height was allowable to 74.5 metres, or 24 storeys for both the City core and regional shopping centre designated areas.

Prior to that public meeting, a local resident approached a former OCP Committee member to express concern over the impending changes to the downtown. The changes, although supported by the by-law amendments initiated with the amendments to the Downtown Reference Plan, and backed by the PNAC and Council's most recent approvals, were disconcerting because they undermined the communal decision to restrict buildings to fewer than 16 storeys. The concerned group of citizens who met prior to the public meeting met again and issued an open invitation to the public to meet to discuss the recent and unfolding by-law amendments. This was the more formal beginning of the FPN.



Council's most recent amendment decisions cleared the way for two additional nearly simultaneous up-zoning applications. The condominium plans announced earlier by Cape Developments, requested up-zoning of another 7 storeys. The third application came from Triarc International with whom the City announced a 3P on September 13, 2004, confirming reports and media accounts of the anticipated conference centre. While the conference centre was anticipated, the scope of the project came as a surprise to the community. Because of the City's announcement, FPN took an active and public stance to dispute the partnering agreement. At the outset, they believed the project was high risk, and violated the spirit and intent of the OCP. Reviewing the documents available to the public, the first of which was the partnering agreement with Triarc, reinforced their initial concerns.

### **The Partnering Agreement (Public Private Partnership)**

When the City announced the P3 agreement it was the first time the community heard about a phased, comprehensive \$200 million plan to revitalize the corner of Gordon and Commercial streets. The complex Partnering Agreement documented the relationship between the City and Triarc related to the development of the Port of Nanaimo Centre and the sale of the Foundry/Civic Arena development site (see Plates 4.7 and 4.8). Of the \$100 million required for the first phase of the project, Triarc was expected to invest \$47.5 million, up to \$30 million would come from long-term borrowing from the City, \$19.5 million from City reserves, and \$3 million in grants already allocated from senior governments for the past proposals. The first \$100 million phase of the plan constructed the Port of Nanaimo Centre:

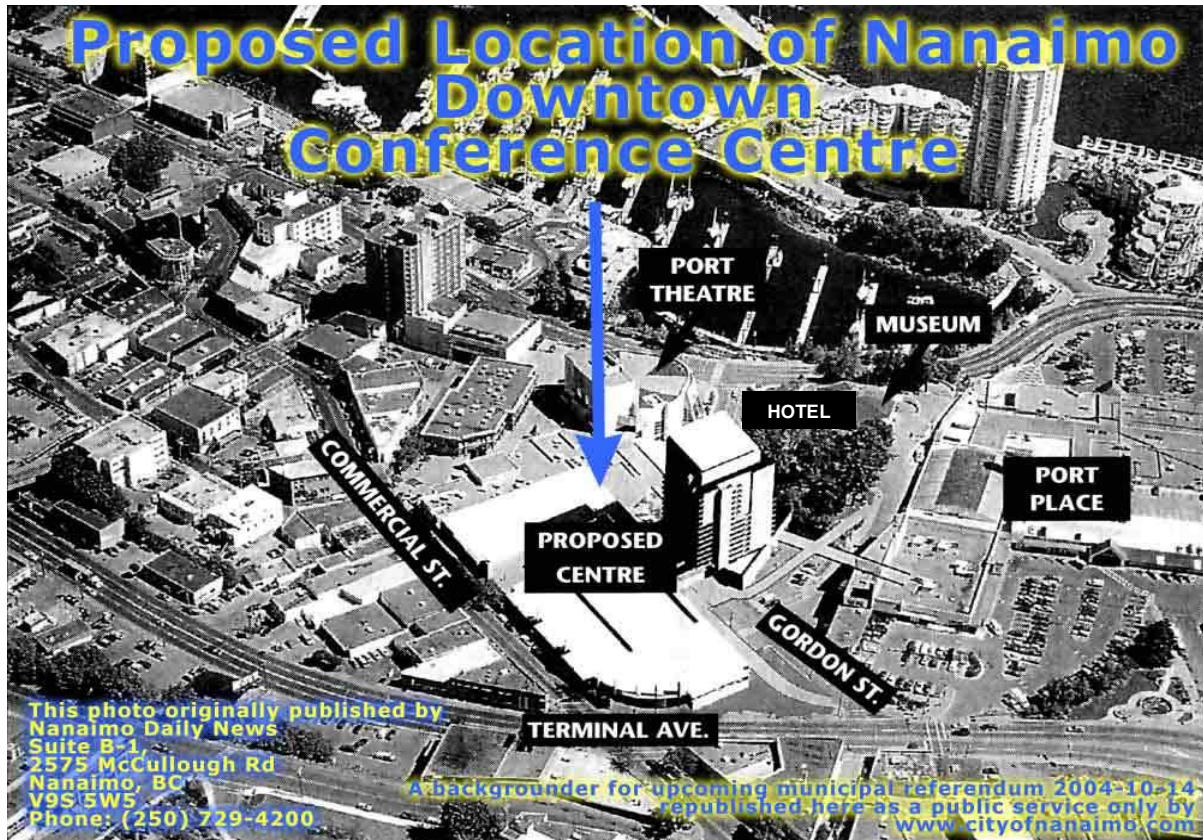
- 20 storey, 140 room Marriott Courtyard hotel with condos on the top eight floors;
- replacement facilities for the Regional District Museum;
- a 225 seat auditorium for council meetings and other community meetings;
- conference centre and meeting rooms for 1,000 delegates;
- 400 parking spaces (under the conference centre);
- 15,000 square feet designated high-end, store-front retail space.

The second \$100 million phase was funded by Triarc and included:

- demolition of the Foundry and Civic Arena sites (to accommodate two condominium high-rises);
- construction of twin ice surface arena;

- seating for 500 – 200 spectators
- multi-purpose community space.

Plate 4.7  
Initial Conference Centre Proposal with Hotel and Condo Units



Source: Nanaimo Daily News

The contractual obligations of both Triarc and the City involved a number of subsidiary agreements involving development, land sales, transfers, air parcels, easements, building schedule deadlines and payment structures. The documents were more complex than could be fully understood by the general public. To mitigate confusion, the City released a summary fact sheet outlining the most salient points to the public on October 25, 2004, roughly one month prior to the Referendum voting date.

The City's \$52.5 million commitment gave them ownership of the conference centre, the Museum, the theatre-styled community meeting space (serving as the new council chambers), parkade and commercial space. If costs exceeded the agreed \$52.5 million, the City

had the option to cancel the project. Triarc would own and pay for the hotel and condominium units in the airspace above the City-owned land and conference centre and parkade. Triarc would purchase residential parking spaces from the City for the condominiums situated above the hotel.

Plate 4.8  
Development Activity on Waterfront



*Source:* City of Nanaimo

Because the hotel would cost approximately \$10 million more than its market value, the City was to provide Triarc with a development-ready site for two residential condominiums located at the waterfront Arena/Foundry location. In exchange, once the condominiums were built, the City would be entitled to 10% of the net sale proceeds. At the time of the agreement, it was estimated this would generate in excess of \$9 million, the estimated land value at the time of transfer. These funds were to cover site preparation and servicing costs including

sewers, parking and road upgrades. Also incurred was demolition of the Foundry, a historic building at the water's edge, and the Civic Arena built in 1939. In the event that the site required remediation, costs would be incurred by the City. No payment was required from Triarc until the City fulfilled these obligations. Development was to begin no later than December 31, 2010 or Triarc would forfeit the land back to the City. In addition, the City would replace the Civic arena with a twin ice complex, the final component of the agreement. Proceeds designated to the City from the twin residential complex at the Arena/Foundry site were to cover site preparation and servicing costs. Proceeds would also cover short-term borrowing costs of the financing package for the new twin-ice arena.

Finally, the City further agreed to increase spending on tourism destination development and marketing by \$200,000 a year until an annual budget of \$1 million was attained. The initial benchmark \$350,000 began in 2005 and would carry through until 2012, representing approximately a \$6.6 million increase. The City retained the right to approve the management contract for the conference centre and auditorium. In keeping with an earlier City Council decision to stimulate downtown revitalization, Triarc would incur no development cost charges.

In return, Triarc was responsible for managing the design, development and construction of the public components of the conference centre as well as the hotel and condominiums in the airspace above the conference centre. The 140 room Marriott Courtyard included a restaurant, lounge, fitness facility and swimming pool. Triarc was to provide construction and completion guarantees for the hotel. Financing was to be confirmed for the hotel and residential components by August 2005.

In addition, Triarc agreed to pay a 2% hotel tax that would be designated specifically for conference and tourism marketing or to fund additional tourism destination development marketing costs. Final details pertaining to design, budget and construction schedules were contractual and binding, with cost over-runs assumed by Triarc. The agreement was binding. The only exceptions were soil conditions, design changes by the City, a *force majeure*, or circumstances beyond their control.

### **The Port of Nanaimo Centre**

According to one member who served as Chair, when the Conference Centre Advisory Committee first presented the third and latest conference centre vision to City Council, they

recognized the 3P was a serious deviation from the two past initiatives. By comparison, the previously proposed conference centre proposals were modest. However, as it was presented by the CCAC, and mulled over by Council as a whole, they realized the expanded proposal could address a number of perennial challenges concurrently. Importantly, this proposal fit Main Street's recommendation that any consideration of a conference centre should be as part of a multi-purpose facility.

The Nanaimo District Museum had been requesting funding for an expanded facility and more central location. Studies in 1991 and in 2003 pointed to the need for the museum to expand beyond the 9500 square feet it had occupied since 1967. The museum's membership and budget had increased roughly five-fold, and staffing had more than doubled over the past decade. Space constraints had for some time limited their ability to display artefacts pertaining to the area's rich history. Although increasingly gaining a higher profile in the community, its obscure location made it difficult for people to see and access.

The Museum first approached the City with relocation/expansion plans with the first waterfront conference centre proposal in 1999. According to one study participant involved in the negotiations, the Museum's request was not considered at that time. However, including the museum in this proposal had a three-fold benefit. First, the new facility would be located in a more desirable and visible location and would resolve the space restrictions plaguing the museum for nearly a decade (Nanaimo District Museum, 2004). Second, over the years the museum staff and board of directors had worked hard to make the museum a more integral part of the community, and had, as a result, generated a great deal of citizen support. Third, a new museum supported the overall goal of creating a cultural niche in the core

Interviews with participants involved with the Conference Centre Advisory Committee acknowledged that both the museum and ice arena were likely to secure the votes of their users. Both of these ancillary components represented direct benefits that could easily be identified by the public. By contrast, residents would not necessarily see how a conference centre would benefit them.

Furthermore, a shortage of parking in the downtown had been an ongoing issue besetting the City for a number of years. City Council had attempted on previous occasions to find viable solutions, however this proposal would mitigate the parking issue (City Council Minutes, 2004, September 13). A waterfront parkade had been built when the Harbour

Commission redeveloped the waterfront, however many of the issues remained unresolved. Parking was a barrier deterring residents from coming back to the core from the periphery. Should revitalization occur as anticipated, parking would remain an unresolved issue. A parkade located under the conference centre would further serve to address the parking problem. The option of a second potential parking facility at Maffeo-Sutton Park was also possible with phase two of the project. As downtown demands grew and with the popularity of the park, a second parking facility was desirable.

Despite relatively recent upgrades to the Civic Arena, increasing demands for ice times made a new arena a likely capital expenditure in the near future. The City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan suggested that new ice sheets would be required in the next decade. Although removal of the Civic Arena would accelerate this expenditure, the facilities could also be relocated to a more central location where other recreation facilities were being concentrated. Moreover, as noted earlier with regard to the museum, there was a constituency of residents who would be more likely to support the project if the twin ice surfaces were part of the project (Rieper, 2005). Relocating the arena would also result in Maffeo-Sutton parkland being increased by 20%, thereby enhancing public access to Nanaimo's waterfront.

Moreover, the Information Brochure outlined the 225 short term jobs that would be created through the \$200 million expenditure with many local companies benefitting because the agreement supported the use of local trades where possible (City of Nanaimo, *NNC Public Information Brochure*, 2004, November). Although not able to participate in the tendering process, a senior Snuneymuxw First Nations (SFN) administrator made it clear that one aspect of the negotiated terms (because the centre was located on ancient burial grounds) included hiring the SFN members and extending municipal services to their appointed federal lands.

Council also estimated that roughly 150 full-time long-term jobs would be created. These jobs would help to offset the number of government positions made redundant by the Liberal government elected two years previously. One social advocate interviewed suggested that Nanaimo, as a centre for provincial services, had been particularly hard hit by the programme and staffing reductions. The staffing requirements for the conference centre, new arena, hotels and condominiums would represent alternative forms of employment for members of the community.

The chosen site for the conference centre was also in the heart of the business district where investment was needed most, and where because of costs associated with upgrades, investments had been most difficult to attract. The bulk of the buildings required for the site possessed some heritage value, but the City reasoned that the most significant heritage buildings in the area would remain intact. In addition, reconfiguring the pedestrian and vehicular linkages would link key streets to the waterfront enhancing the streetscape, traffic and pedestrian flows. Currently there was no direct access to the water, and the City wanted to capitalize on its waterfront. Site lines and design issues would not only function more pragmatically, they would also be aesthetically pleasing for the businesses in the core, residents and visitors.

Finally, Triarc's proposal meant residential units in the downtown core would be added. This was one of the primary goals of the OCP, Main Street, and the DNP for re-establishing the downtown's vitality. Another 250 plus residential units on the waterfront meant that within roughly a 5-year span, 4 upscale high-rises would be added to the core. Increased residential stock in the downtown would serve as a form of self-policing to curb vandalism and petty crimes.

Of no small consideration were the increased tax revenues that would result from the residential high-rises. Moreover, as mentioned by City Councillors interviewed, they noted that part of the rationale for City Council was that they believed declining property values in the core would be curbed. This would, in turn, arrest the pattern that showed the core's overall tax contribution declining. There was a strong likelihood that property values would increase, and reverse the decline, restoring a more balanced tax distribution across the City (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, October 8). With these considerations in mind, despite some misgivings of some of the Councillors, a final vote saw the Council unanimous, save Councillor Loyd Sherry who opposed the project.

In preparation for a public announcement, the City's senior staff and Conference Centre Advisory Councillors met with key community leaders in both the public and private sectors requesting their support for the project. Just prior to the announcement, the City invited media representatives and several community leaders to a briefing outlining details of the project. On September 13, 2004, at the weekly Council meeting Mayor Gary Korpan officially announced the details of the Port of Nanaimo Centre to the public.

Also, in preparation for the announcement, the City had allocated \$100,000 to an extensive information campaign to inform local residents of the project. A four-page information brochure was circulated through the *Harbour City Star*, a free local paper in the City. There were seven key messages presented in the brochure describing the overall project. Oriented towards the public, the Information Brochure did not outline the partnership agreement, but conveyed the following key points:

- *Increasing the number of people who live, work and play downtown;*
- *Working together to enhance our economy;*
- *Triarc International - A company with a proven track record;*
- *Creating New Jobs*
- *Re-establish Downtown as the Heart of the City;*
- *An affordable Investment;*
- *Improving the health, safety and vibrancy of downtown (Information Brochure, 2004, November, p. 1-4)*

A consistent message in the information brochure was that Nanaimo needed a healthy downtown in order to position Nanaimo as a desirable place to live. “Making Nanaimo one of the most desirable liveable small cities in North America” (p. 2) was blocked and bolded. This tag line was the consistent message conveyed by Jerry Pink, EDG’s President in EDG’s weekly column entitled *Nanaimo Proud*. The artist’s rendering showed the proposed all glass structure, the high-rise escaping beyond the picture frame, and numerous people on the corner of Commercial Street and Terminal Avenue.

Also included was a section entitled, “What do you think?” This conveyed the perspectives of three local citizens who represented a cross-section of the community members, including social services, business and the youth/students. First, Dawne Anderson, Fundraising and Promotions Co-ordinator for the Salvation Army was quoted, directing attention to the jobs that would result from the conference centre. As a representative of Nanaimo’s lowest income resident, her message directly reinforced the “rising tides lifts all boats” logic. The Salvation Army had recently completed a new building adjacent to the conference centre. She was quoted saying,

I will definitely vote “yes” in the Nov. 20 referendum ... it’s going to help the economy. It’s going to bring jobs. It’s going to make the community a more pleasant place to live in ... I also think this project will give people more pride in



where they live and it will bring people from all over to discover what Nanaimo has to offer.

The second representative and verbatim quote for “What do you think?” came from Bob Bennie<sup>22</sup> president and CFP of the Coastal Credit Union. Mr. Bennie was responsible for bringing the Credit Union to the downtown when many of the other banks were relocating to the periphery. The bank was built almost simultaneously with the library and Port Theatre in the mid-1990s. His message positioned Nanaimo’s waterfront as one that exceeds the many he had encountered in his travels. For Mr. Bennie, the project was about vitality and his belief in the downtown, to celebrate and highlight the harbour front. The third, Trevor Dickenson, a local student at then Malaspina University College,<sup>23</sup> positioned the conference centre as representative of progress, with the ability to overcome the inertia and stagnation that was evident. As a musician, the conference auditorium was a venue for acoustical concerts. All three of these messages complemented the front page message of the Howell’s, who were long-standing business owners in the core for 21 years, “... just imagine the revitalization of Commercial Street with new stores and people visiting from all over the world.”

In addition, presentations were made to community groups and organizations by Councillors or committee members of the CCAC. Town hall style question and answer meetings were held for residents. In addition, the City’s website featured an interactive question and answer format that residents could access. The City and Triarc officials hosted several charrette-oriented booths and open houses at shopping malls as well as downtown at the Port Theatre. A temporary communication director was hired as a liaison between the City and inquiring residents.

### **The Public Response**

The City requested residents vote on November 20<sup>th</sup> on whether to borrow up to \$30 million dollars to build the proposed conference centre, in turn solidifying the 3P Agreement. However, as a feedback mechanism, within the first two weeks of the information campaign,

---

<sup>22</sup> Bob Bennie was also co-chair of the Yes Campaign, however this effort, I do not believe, was mounted at the time the brochure was printed.

<sup>23</sup> The University has transitioned over the years from college to full-fledged university standing and that has been reflected in a series of name changes. It has been known as Malaspina College, Malaspina University-College, and most recently, the name has been changed to Vancouver Island University.

the City hired Venture Market Research to conduct a telephone survey.<sup>24</sup> Four areas of interest were probed: awareness and support for downtown revitalization, awareness and support for the proposed development, support for fundraising and partnership, and areas of concern. A summary of the results released on September 27, 2004 by the City. The findings were also conveyed to the public through both the *Nanaimo Daily News* (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, September 28), and the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* (*Nanaimo News Bulletin*, 2004, September 30). The survey highlights were released approximately 2 months prior to the referendum. The details awareness and support for the project were outlined in the *Nanaimo Daily News* (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, September 28) and were summarized in three sections:

❖ AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR REVITALIZATION

- Most residents (89%) believe it is important to have a vibrant downtown area, including 58% who said this is “very important.”
- A total of 87% of residents surveyed are at least “somewhat aware” of the city’s plans to revitalize downtown Nanaimo, including 41% who are “very aware.”
- Agreement with the need to revitalize the downtown area is high, as 91% agree, including 63% who “strongly agree.”

❖ AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE CURRENT PROPOSAL

- Nearly all (94%) of those surveyed are aware of the recent announcement to develop the New Nanaimo Centre complex.
- More than 7 in 10 (71%) said that someone in their family would be likely to visit or use such a facility, including about half (49%) who said that use of the facility would be “very likely.”

❖ SUPPORT FOR FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIP

- Based on information given to survey participants regarding the proposed borrowing for the project, and subsequent increase in property taxes to finance the borrowing, a majority (63%) said they support this funding proposal, including 27% who indicated that they “strongly support” it, while 32% are opposed, and the balance did not know.

---

<sup>24</sup>The survey design consisted of telephone interviews with a random sample of 413 residents of the City of Nanaimo. Survey participants were asked to confirm that they resided within the city boundaries, and that the person to be interviewed was 18 years of age or older. The margin of error for a sample size of 413 is at most plus or minus 4.8%, 19 times out of 20. Response rate to the survey was 52%.

- Similarly, a majority (63%) support the partnership with Triarc for the project, including 34% who “strongly support” this partnership, and 25% are opposed to it.
- Overall support for condo development on the Foundry site stands at 67%, of which 35% “strongly support” this development, while 30% are opposed.
- Almost two-thirds (65%) “strongly support” opening up and enhancing waterfront parkland, while a further 20% “somewhat support” it.
- More than eight in 10 respondents (81%) indicated that they support building a new multiplex with twin-ice sheets, which includes 62% who “strongly support” the project.
- About three-quarters (76%) at least “somewhat support” the entire development package, including 41% who “strongly support” it.

A secondary but important consideration of the survey was to determine questions that were surfacing from Nanaimo’s residents. A modern glass, steel and concrete high-rise proposed for the first phase of development were amongst the primary concerns identified in the survey. It stood in stark contrast to the quaint heritage feel of the downtown, and respondents felt, it did not reflect the historic business street where it was to be placed. According to City officials, the architectural rendering were conceptual drawings and could be altered. However, interviews with study participants involved with FPN made it clear that for residents previously concerned about the City’s decision to raise the height cap, the renderings were representative of how far removed City Council and City staff were from the values expressed in the OCP and Main Street’s recommendation encouraging historical restoration. Instead, for study participants who were part of the FPN, the renderings represented the length the City would go to support developer-driven agendas. These factors spurred the formal organizing of Friends of Plan Nanaimo, so named for their motive to reflect their support for the values housed in the OCP.

### **Mounting Opposition from the FPN**

As noted earlier, the coalescing momentum over concerns surrounding the height cap removal spurred FPN to action shortly after the 3P announcement of September 14, 2004. City Council’s decision to lift the cap on the height restrictions, despite opposing public sentiment suddenly made sense. When the 3P Agreement was announced four days after the controversial public meeting, FPN deduced that the 3P agreement hinged on the OCP amendment.

There were a number of issues that were of primary concern to FPN from the time of the announcement to well into the building phase. However at the time of the announcement, as the details of the agreement were made public, FPN's principle concerns were that the City had circumvented both public participation and tendering processes; amended the OCP against the public's expressed wishes, and, denied fiscal public scrutiny (Bolin, 2005; Ricker, 2005; Stone, 2005). FPN believed the City lacked the expertise and experience required for a project of this scale. In addition, that the City's actions suggested a development-oriented mindset instead of a community-oriented focus.

The OCP in its current form permitted high-rise development in the Chapel Street and Front Street section, but they questioned the changes that allowed for additional towers along the waterfront side of Front Street. Although the views were of primary concern, so too were the shadows that would be cast over the public walkway. While checks and balances were in place for some public control, the City held the power to permit high-rise development in Nanaimo's most visually desirable and prominent shore-land. As the interviews with FPN participants made clear, the power exercised in the decision-making was reminiscent for them of the kind of leadership that had been typical of Nanaimo's decision-making in the past. The most recent developments were particularly indicative of Frank Ney's leadership when "rampant and unchecked development" occurred and the long-term implications of questionable planning practices were exempt from consideration.

Initially, the FPN working group of eight residents determined their first plan of action required locating experts to analyse the PNC plan. Their first formal order of business was to approach City Council to fund an external assessment of the project. FPN requested 10% of the \$100,000 information campaign be set aside for independent analysis by experts in the variously related fields. As observed in Ricker's (2005) overview of the referendum process and the lead-up to the 2005 civic election, this working group felt this was a necessary step to ensure residents could vote from an informed perspective. For these individuals, geo-technical assessment of the building site that was once part of the ocean bed, overall City planning and design, and economic cost/benefit assessments were three areas where independent analysis would be helpful in assessing the claims made with the announcement. In their view, independent analyses would provide residents with a baseline for evaluation and degree of objectivity upon which to base their vote.

After City Council denied their request, FPN began to communicate their concerns primarily through the local newspapers by way of letters to the Editor, City Council meeting presentations and delegations, their website, and through community-based open meetings. Throughout the referendum campaign, their membership<sup>25</sup> and voice within the community grew, despite what they perceived was the lack of media co-operation and support from any of the three local papers.

FPN continued to reinforce the message that the 3P was not developed with broad-based community input. Rather, it was conducted largely behind the scenes between the City and Triarc. For FPN, this violated one of the principle goals of the OCP. Further, the development occurring seemed contrary to the incremental development emphasized in the Main Street report and their recommendation that a single project could not revitalize downtown.

The City reported that a flagship hotel was a necessary component of a successful conference centre. Although Triarc was negotiating to build a Marriott hotel, the contract negotiations for this portion of the first phase were not finalized. FPN was concerned that the City was asking its residents to approve costly expenditures for a conference centre without having the hotel secured. The City had been unsuccessful in attracting a major hotelier in the past, something that was not lost on the FPN, and they were concerned that the City was proceeding at all cost.

In addition, the two independent high-rise projects that were recently approved, and the possibility of three more as outlined in the contract between the City and Triarc, represented development in Nanaimo that otherwise would have taken well over a decade, and possibly two (City Council Minutes, 2004, September 13). The projects collectively would all be complete within a four-year window. Again, FPN was concerned that the City disregarded the cautions outlined in the Main Street Report. According to Main Street, residential development was to be incremental to avoid saturating the market and driving property values downward.

Of primary concern for the FPN was that the final partnering agreement, which did not materialize until six weeks after the referendum announcement, was not delivered to all residents in the City who were asked to vote. This left residents approximately four weeks to

---

<sup>25</sup> One board member of FPN suggested their membership grew, although they would not disclose a membership list, nor did they confirm the membership numbers.

understand the project, request feedback and clarification on the complex multi-phased, multi-sited proposal. Part of the information campaign distributed to the residents was a four-page referendum brochure that used the Grant Thornton and PKF feasibility studies upon which to demonstrate the economic viability of the project. Importantly, these studies were demand studies. They did not take into consideration the capital costs of the project. As a result, in the FPN's view, the information presented was, at best, partial and favourably skewed the economic picture. For example, whether the City spent the original \$5 million allotted or the \$52.5 million proposed, was not recounted to the residents.

Also of concern was that a risk-analysis study was not commissioned to accurately predict the economic effect on the community. In correspondence provided by one participant between the City and one private citizen, the City acknowledged the City's Economic Development office did not evaluate the financial obligations against projections and/or qualifiers found in the project. These were discrepancies that raised warning flags for FPN.

As they began to probe deeper, FPN continued to demand accountability from the City or as Don Stone, then president of FPN was quoted as saying "keep City Council's feet to the fire" (Ricker, 2005, p. 11). Increasingly, FPN and other participants suggested the City's responses and rebuttals, particularly those of Mayor Korpan were inflammatory, inappropriate, and belittling. Animosity began to mount between the City's representatives and members of FPN. FPN believed the City's collective responses were unsuitable for civil servants whose obligation resided with their residents and not with what they perceived were developer-driven demands.

Three experts contacted by FPN on a pro-bono basis, made some strong statements about the City's information, and further fuelled the mounting criticisms of the FPN. Lewis Villegas, based in Vancouver, was an architect and consultant in planning, architecture, and design expertise. He worked with local architects known and supportive of FPN to propose an alternative vision for the community that would still meet the requirements of downtown revitalization, namely residential density and vibrancy. They represented an alternative vision for the community, suggesting that anti-development sentiments were not accurate, but rather a comprehensive plan incorporating old industrial lands be incorporated into the design (Ricker, 2005).

Dr. Robert Bisch, Professor of Public Administration and Economics Professor Emeritus of University of Victoria, examined the City's reports, in addition to the feasibility studies commissioned. He found the reports sound, but that the City's accuracy regarding the economic benefits was unsubstantiated. Instead, Dr. Bisch noted that the City had interchanged economic impact with economic benefits and that without a cost/benefit analysis, there was no concrete evidence demonstrating the project benefits exceed its costs (Bisch, 2005)

Dr. Bisch's recommendations were further substantiated by Mr. de Leeuw, a consulting engineer with 40 years of field expertise who responded to FPN's inquiry regarding the practicality and relevance of a risk assessment. Given the information surfacing regarding potential site contamination, the site's structural integrity and the cautions exercised by both Grant Thornton Report and Triarc's Preliminary study, Mr. de Leeuw noted a risk assessment was prudent. His analysis concluded that the City's degree of financial exposure was in all likelihood cause for alarm (de Leeuw, 2005).

With the City's refusal to concede any of these points, FPN drew the conclusion that City Council and senior City staffs were committed to this project, with little genuine regard for the community or the development criteria that had been drafted over the past 15 years (Stone, 2005). The City's decision to purchase site properties prior to the 3P announcement, a decision they defended to avoid inflationary and opportunistic pricing was one such example. In addition, the City opted to forego the standard call for proposals. This effectively truncated the tendering process, and fulfilled the developer's condition to move forward. These issues solidified the City's tunnel vision for FPN. They concluded that the City was desperate for success after the two failed attempts, and would not retract their position. Their actions suggested to many FPN members I interviewed that the City's actions were perfunctory, and did not engage the residents in any meaningful way.

FPN remained persistent throughout the ten weeks leading up to the referendum in their desire to inform the public and hold the City accountable in areas of major concern. Quite apart from the conference centre were the alterations to Maffeo-Sutton Park negotiated in the 3P. Redevelopment of the waterfront during the 1980s had made Maffeo-Sutton Park Nanaimo's most popular waterfront gathering place. The Civic Arena, the Foundry and a parking lot anchored the park. As noted elsewhere, approval of the referendum would result in those buildings' demolition, and the land transferred to Triarc for two proposed high-rises, 18 and 23

storeys in height. The City's suggestion that parkland (20% at Maffeo-Sutton Park) gained in exchange for the condominium development overlooked the heritage and communal value placed in both the Foundry and long-standing civic arena.

Moreover, FPN members expressed concern, quite apart from the heritage value, the wording used in the publicly circulated in the City Information Brochure left residents with the impression that should the referendum fail the new ice surfaces would not be built. "By turning the foundry site into residential condo units and parkland, the City will replace the Civic Arena with anew recreation centre with twin ice sheets. . . If the referendum is successful construction on the recreation facility and twin ice sheets will be complete within 18 months." (City Information Brochure, New Nanaimo Centre, 2004, p. 3). This statement reflected the FPN's concern the City used the ice issue as a carrot to entice a Yes outcome, again a subject raised repeatedly in the interviews.

Despite what they felt was a biased campaign and the media's favouring those opposed, those who supported the conference centre believed the FPN was gaining members and opposition to the project was mounting. They noted the growing animosity and deterioration of relations between the City and the FPN in particular. The communication channels were deteriorating rapidly and as a result, presented a serious threat to the project's viability. Several community leaders determined the only way to stem FPN's forward momentum was to mount a counter campaign called the *Invest in Yes* campaign.

### **Countering the FPN: The Yes Committee's *Invest in Yes* Campaign**

The Yes Committee also had its genesis in the public meeting debating raising the 15 storey high-rise cap. Interviews with participants involved in the Yes campaign made it clear that concern was evident among several downtown stakeholders and supporters who had observed the undercurrents of discontent at the September 2004 public meeting. Out of those concerns, a committee comprised of roughly 15 business leaders, met to consider the counter-measures that could be taken to offset FPN's opposing stance. They mobilized a counter campaign, and on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004, when they announced the *Invest in Yes* campaign, the volunteer list had exceeded 200 names and the Yes Committee<sup>26</sup> exceeded two dozen members (*Nanaimo Daily*

---

<sup>26</sup> Diana Johnstone (Chair), Community volunteer; Bob Bennie (Chair) CFO Coastal Credit Union; Steve Arnett, Executive Director Nanaimo Youth Services Association; Russ Burke, VP & Manager Canadian Western Bank & Chamber of Commerce President 2004; Brian Chatwin, Chatwin Engineering; Dave Francis, Contractor;



*News*, 2004, September 14). The DNP publicly acknowledged strong support for the downtown revitalization project (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, September 14) and Executive Director, George Hanson served on the Yes Committee and in this way, publicly acknowledged an instrumental role in launching the Yes Campaign (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, October 19).

According to two members who spearheaded the Yes Committee, most if not all of the individuals present at that first meeting were directly or indirectly involved in the City's sub-committees that at some point had examined the issue of downtown revitalization. They had observed its decline and subsequent previous efforts at revitalization, as well as the improvements that were beginning to pay off in the downtown. In their view, the conference centre would continue to propel further desirable development. It was evident through their interviews that these study participants believed Nanaimo was at the threshold of significant change, and that the significant changes downtown would continue the development domino effect, in return creating a ripple effect that would be beneficial to the community.

It was commonly speculated among the FPN members that this committee had funds in excess of \$100,000. However, one member of the Yes Committee made it known that over \$150,000 was raised at that first meeting with individuals donating upwards of \$10,000, with donations continuing over the course of the campaign. The financial and physical support received for the Yes Campaign allowed them to organize almost instantaneously. The Yes Committee was well-funded throughout the Referendum campaign and had a surplus budget at the end of the campaign. At the time of the interviews, the Yes Committee remained active, but with much reduced visibility to the public at large. Their current function loosely monitors the downtown's progress, as well as supporting development to areas outside of the downtown that will complement the conference centre or downtown development (e.g., the airport's expansion).

The funds were used for print advertising and a telephone campaign in which personnel were hired to co-ordinate their efforts. One business leader in the community provided office

---

Peter Godfrey, Private Citizen\*, George Hanson, Executive Director of the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership (DNP); Don Hubbard, Hub City Paving; Rich Johnston, Malaspina University-College President; David Lobay, Lobay, Beaubier; Mark MacDonald, Business Vancouver Island Newspaper; Chamber of Commerce President 2003; Bob Moss, J.J. Barnicke Realty; Jerry Pink, Tourism Nanaimo; Dr. Fern Savoie, Seniors Representative; Jim Stewart, Coast Realty; Jim Turley, Turley's Florist.

\*Although not listed in the committee, Peter Godfrey was also Managing Editor of the *Nanaimo Daily News*.

space to co-ordinate their efforts. Where possible Yes Committee members made presentations to community groups and even arranged transportation for residents in the community to vote in favour of the project. They attended Council meetings, donning yellow t-shirts with the logo *Invest in Yes* printed across the front.

As noted earlier, a prominent downtown business leader co-chaired the Yes Committee alongside a committed community volunteer. Among the visible support for the campaign, apart from the Chamber of Commerce and business sector, were endorsements from the President of the local university, and the Managing Editor of the City's only subscribed print newspaper. Importantly, the project also had the support of a number of the leaders of the not-for-profit sectors including union representatives and social programmes.

The Yes Committee filled a vital function during the campaign for the City. Despite City Council's decision to support the project, the Yes Campaign championed the 3P agreement, a position that the City staff were reluctant to assume because they were paid public servants. Also surfacing with these participants during the interviews was a strong belief that they represented the silent majority in the community but one of their primary concerns was the fickle nature of voters and the low voter turn out in Nanaimo. They were of the opinion that the residents who were generally satisfied and would likely vote yes, would not necessarily make voting a priority. By contrast, individuals who were not likely to support the proposal were more likely to vote, especially in light of the prominent role played by FPN. The Yes Committee feared this scenario would manifest out of the referendum vote.

*Invest in Yes* was deliberately chosen to reflect what was at stake in the community. For members of the committee interviewed, the implications associated with losing the referendum far exceeded simply rejecting a conference centre. A vote against the conference centre threatened the essence of any revitalization effort. For the City to announce a partnership with the private sector and then have it rejected was far more detrimental than had the City not have entered into the agreement at all. The message to the development community within Nanaimo and, equally if not more important internationally, was essentially that Nanaimo was closed to business. This would have been a significant blow to the progress of the City and the efforts of EDG, the DNP and other organized committees in the core. The committee and the DNP were concerned that a no mandate would result in delaying any consequential development for at least a decade, and would reverse the growth that had been occurring slowly.

With the benefit of hindsight, the Yes supporters gauged accurately FPN's cogent momentum. By the time the referendum was held, it was anyone's guess as to the direction and both Chairs were recorded as being "relieved and happy." (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, November 22). These comments reflect what both the FPN and the Yes members interviewed suggested was a race to the end. Several participants, not knowing which way the vote would go, believed the counter-measures likely made the difference in the results that favoured the 3P agreement. When asking about the referendum in the interview, this was for many Yes Committee participants, a moment re-lived with visible relief. Several participants suggested that if the referendum would have extended beyond the November 20<sup>th</sup> date it was quite probable the community would have rejected the City's request to borrow \$30 million, thereby effectively squashing the project.<sup>27</sup>

The essence of what each of these groups stood for was captured in the local newspapers. The Yes Committee consistently portrayed the message that the project was about revitalizing the downtown, progress and community economic viability. The FPN's stance reiterated the need to evaluate the merit of this project in accomplishing these ends, and consistently raised the question "at what cost" both literally and figuratively. This ongoing dialogue was kept alive during the lead-up to the referendum.

FPN sharply criticised the role of the local media for both sound journalism skills and integrity (Ricker, 2005). They found the role of Peter Godfrey, Managing Editor of *Nanaimo's* only subscription paper particularly troubling because he served on the Yes Committee yet failed to acknowledge his relationship with the paper in that role.<sup>28</sup> The debate continued long past the referendum; however, the focus of the role of the media centers primarily on the lead-up. Given that the referendum was the community's decision, the role of the media during this time was particularly crucial.

### **The Role of the Media in the Case of the Port of Nanaimo Centre**

Roughly three months of media coverage followed the September 13, 2004 announcement and the local papers served as the primary public sphere where the proposal was debated. Three

---

<sup>27</sup> To some degree, these impressions were reinforced when the FPN commissioned the firm, McAllister Opinion Research based in Vancouver to conduct a post-referendum poll throughout May and June 2005. They found the majority of the residents surveyed less than a year later opposed the conference centre.

<sup>28</sup> In the paper's recount of the Yes Committee members, Peter Godfrey was listed as a private citizen (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, October 19). FPN suggested he had an ethical obligation to divulge his position to the public.

print media outlets were available to the public. The *Nanaimo Daily News*, a subscribed daily paper, and its bi-weekly free subsidiary *The Harbour City Star*, operate under the community-publishing arm of Canwest Global Communications Corp., Canada's largest publisher of daily newspapers. Their competitor, the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* is published three times a week under the conglomerate Black Press is free.

As the story of the conference centre unfolded, it became the primary focus in Nanaimo's press. Quite possibly the most controversial building project in the City's history, the conference centre held the public's attention because of FPN and the Yes Committee surfaced to publicly debate the project shortly after it was unveiled. The media's coverage was extensive across the City's three local papers, and left little doubt that the conference centre project was of paramount interest. Moreover, that there was an unprecedented number of letters to the Editor also suggests people were actively engaged in the debate.

These impressions were found in an earlier study conducted by Naava Smolash<sup>29</sup> (2004) whose primary objective was to determine if equal coverage was given to both local residents on both sides of the debate. Her findings revealed unequal coverage across hard or soft newspaper content over the 10-week period. "Hard" and "soft" are media values describing media output, and both surfaced in Nanaimo's local newspapers. Hard news is typically understood as serious, fact-based coverage probing all aspects of important issues of the day. New sources are straightforward. Government or scientific reports are considered "real" news and represent for the public balanced accounts of the current event under scrutiny (Henderson & Kitzinger, 1999). By contrast, "soft news" states opinion found in Editorials, opinion-editorial articles and guest columns. Soft content functions to offer readers a distinctive and authoritative voice that will speak to them directly about problematic situations (Greenberg, 2000). One of the primary distinctions, and often the appeal, of soft content is that it is remiss of objectivity or neutrality. Although the distinction between hard and soft news is helpful, it remains problematic as discussed later.

Using both conventional content and discourse analysis as two separate steps, Smolash compared both Yes and No sources across all three of the local papers. Four hundred and

---

<sup>29</sup> Smolash was at the time teaching Mass Media and Popular Culture at Malaspina University College. Although not published in a refereed journal, her findings were part of the collective writings edited by Dr. Erik Ricker in Nanaimo, *Between Past and Future: Critical Perspectives on Growth, Planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* published in 2005.

eighty-nine hard news articles appeared between September 13, 2004 and November 20, 2004. Soft or opinion pieces totalled 517; roughly, 90 percent of those represented feedback via letters to the Editor. In the case of hard news reports, coverage was considerably higher across all three newspapers that reported the facts as they were outlined by sources endorsing the conference centre. When the hard output or news articles are disaggregated by week, coverage was consistently higher across all three papers, with the exception of the 9<sup>th</sup> week, in the *Harbour City Star*. As indicated in Table 4.1, news coverage gleaned from those promoting the conference centre far exceeded articles providing investigative analysis and critique. The *Daily News* carried the most Yes-oriented news with coverage was nearly four times higher than No news sources. The *Harbour City Star* was five times higher, and the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* was by far the highest with over six times Yes coverage.

Table 4.1  
Media Coverage during the Referendum Campaign

NEWSPAPER	HARD CONTENT			SOFT CONTENT					
	NEWS			EDITORIALS			LETTERS		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Mix	Yes	No	Mix
<b>Daily News</b>	220	61	281	21	1	8	112	103	10
<b>HCS</b>	64	13	77	3	2	2	36	46	1
<b>Bulletin</b>	113	18	131	11	2	5	73	96	10

Source: Adapted from Smolash (2004)

Smolash (2004) noted that despite the No supporter's increasing popularity both hard and soft media output favoured the Yes campaign and that weekly coverage was, with the exception of one week, consistently higher across both hard and soft content. Smolash's work demonstrates the level of importance accorded to the Port of Nanaimo Centre. In addition and equally important her work exposed a marked tilt favouring the Yes perspective, which simultaneously denied the No side equal treatment in reporting the issues.

Most of the participants interviewed who supported a No stance were not surprised. For them, her study affirmed what they observed throughout the campaign and if, anything,

Smolash's work vindicated their accusations that the powerful voice of business unduly influenced the media. Paid advertising is the bread and butter of the local print media and much of the discussion by participants assuming a No stance reflected the power the business community held over the print media. The fact that at the time, the Managing Editor of the *Nanaimo Daily News* was a vocal supporter of the Yes Committee confirmed their assessment. However, the issue is more complex than simply focusing on the print media's coverage from the time of the announcement on September 13, 2004 until the referendum on November 20, 2004. Truncating the role of the media to that specific time frame is like entering a story that was well underway.

On January 25, 1999 discussions surrounding the need for business and the City to work together surfaced in the local paper when Nanaimo's Economic Development Group (EDG) went public with a draft report, in essence a blueprint for a long-term economic growth strategy for the City. Couched between the message for improved rapport between civic leaders and business, was an emphasis on revitalizing the community through alternative economic drivers currently not part of the existing equation. The opening sentence "Nanaimo needs a convention centre" (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 1999, January 25) was merely one aspect of the article that framed EDG's goal of reorienting the community towards a cohesive plan that required co-operation from the City's most prominent and powerful actors of which EDG members were key participants.

This was the first of several articles and editorials that surfaced over the following year consistently directing the public's attention to City Council's consideration of a conference centre as a serious contender of capital projects for the City. It is important to note that the initial tone and tenor of the articles were neutral or cautious, and more often than not, editorial comment could be construed as negative. Citizens' responses via letters to the Editor and a loosely assembled column entitled *You make the Call*, cobbled together one or two sentences from responding residents, leading to one of the first assessments that taxpayers in the community were not in favour of this kind of project (Taxpayers Cool to Convention Centre Study, *Nanaimo Daily News*, 1999, March 4). Regardless of tone, the media served a crucial role in bringing the discussion into the public sphere.

City Council's record of accomplishment was being criticized extensively at that point in the community's history for a number of reasons that largely had to do with providing basic

services. What had recently fuelled the community's ire was a decision to build a 52-metre swimming pool, despite the local swim club's decision to renege on their financial obligation, a condition of the agreement. It was a decision, because of circumstances, that many believed should have been forfeited. Introducing a conference centre, yet another expensive proposition in the midst of an economic decline, had the potential to be an explosive proposition, and proved an irresistible lure for the media. Gauging the affective responses elicited by the pool issue by residents who believed sewer and water upgrades should be priorities, would likely guarantee that discussions surrounding a conference centre would elicit some kind of community response.

How the community came to understand the need for a conference centre depended in large part on how it was presented and by whom. "Facility Will Boost Tourism" (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 1999, August 18) made the front page, and City Councillors, along with board members of the Community Opportunity Fund (COF) quoted "expert opinion" from Tourism Nanaimo ". . . the average conventioner spends an average of \$210 per day. That means even a small conference centre with a 500 person capacity could pump roughly \$100,000 a day into the community". The news detailed the successes of other civic conference centres such as in Victoria and elsewhere: "Victoria conference centre a boon: Capital gives no operating subsidy to convention facility" (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 1999 August 19) was one such example. The implication was that local taxpayers' financial obligations would be exonerated beyond the initial nominal commitment.

The culminating effects of the various committees concerned about the state and subsequent fate of the downtown were also speaking through the media and reinforcing the agenda which made the downtown a priority. The message was that the decaying downtown was to be addressed through downtown revitalization in which the conference centre would play a vital role. By the end of 1999, the conference centre discussion entered the political realm, becoming the significant issue among candidates running for City Council. Downtown revitalization and the conference centre became inextricably linked. The conference centre would be the means through which the downtown would gain back its vitality. Business would return to the downtown as would residents and visitors alike. For the first time, since the exodus from the core to the periphery, a solution was presented. Those who defined the problem, primarily the business community and the City leadership, also held the solution,

defining the conference centre as a suitable strategy for its resolution. “Reach for the tourism potential” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2000, March 17) and similar articles continued to reinforce the message that the conference centre would be Nanaimo’s calling card.

The conference centre continued as a focal point of local news as it went through a series of iterations and proposal calls over a two-year period. News around the conference centre ebbed and flowed according to the newest details. During this time, two weekly columns, one entitled *Let’s Talk Tourism* by Tourism Nanaimo and the other promoted by EDG entitled *Nanaimo Proud* with a regular tag line that read “Nanaimo, one of the most desirable, liveable small cities in North America” began positioning the City within tourism and consumer oriented framework. For approximately 2.5 years, *Let’s Talk Tourism* consistently sent the message that tourism was viable economic base for the community.

EDG’s column, long a regular feature in the local paper, oriented commentaries to promote the conference centre as it surfaced, and this became more consistent with their weekly column *Nanaimo Proud*, themed around EDG’s vision, strategies and successes, which began in early 2001 and continued until the elections in 2005. This likely was not haphazard or coincidental. The longest serving author to the column at the time of analysis also sat on the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC). The conference centre was a vital piece that would complement the synergy that was beginning to manifest through live theatre, music performances, art demonstrations and festivals, and funky, high-quality restaurants in the downtown.

In particular, what could be considered re-branding and re-imagining messages in the column, statements such as “Nanaimo offers outstanding attractions, including our unique history, the talent of our arts and cultural community, and instant access to a myriad of outdoor experiences” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2001, September 28) were particularly powerful. Implicit in their message was that Nanaimo could evolve beyond the nightclubs, pawn shops and empty store fronts of its current reality, to capitalize on its landscape, heritage and culture. Nanaimo had the potential to become more than a gateway to the Pacific Northwest. Nanaimo could be a “destination in its own right” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2001, September 28). The rationale undergirding a strong tourism economy were the benefits the community would incur: new facilities that would benefit residents and visitors; a warmer community environment and overall increased enjoyment of Nanaimo as a result; new businesses established, increased



public cash flow and tax benefits; job creation in both tourism and other industries result (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2001, November 16). Through the media, these key actors were able to communicate a specific vision and interpretation of Nanaimo that was first articulated through the various committees and organizations working to re-tool Nanaimo's economic foundation. Although the media did not author these re-urbanizing strategies, they conveyed this message over a prolonged period in the community.

Subsequently, when the conference centre became a reality after more than three years of negotiating, the media was not a critical forum to help the local residents distinguish the conference centre from downtown revitalization. Little if any critical investigative journalism can be claimed to have occurred during the lead-up to the referendum. The media's failure to delineate between downtown revitalization and the conference centre helped set the terms of the debate as "all or nothing." If the conference centre was not built, then revitalization would not occur. Moreover, the over-exposure of opinion pieces entrenched this binary stance. Because citizens wrote their opinions, they were not held accountable to ethics and principles governing the media. And in this case, the letter writers typified those on either side of the debate.

This chapter started with a discussion of the overall image of Nanaimo, set against a backdrop of federal and provincial discussions. It then refocused to capture in finer detail of the role of the many varied interests that were a part of the conference story. The next phase of the study refocuses the lens once again to highlight the very personal perspectives of some members of the community as they gave their views about the events surrounding the conference centre. This then is the focus of the Chapter Five, entitled "Resisting Process or Resisting Progress? The title reflects the key issues which surfaced in the interviews.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE NARRATIVE OF NANAIMO  
*RESISTING PROGRESS OR RESISTING PROCESS?*

---

**CHAPTER FOCUS**

The review of literature indicates that at least initially, participation in the decision-making process typically meant offering prescriptive alternatives as a means of reaching better decisions. More recently, studies contributing to our understanding account for the role of *power* in determining how outcomes are derived from these processes (collaborative frameworks, participatory approaches, and so forth). As noted at the outset, this study aligns with scholars interested in examining the power dynamics within communities. A critical component of this study identified community stakeholders and key informants to garner their perceptions about the decision-making process in the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC). To some extent, this chapter builds on what can be constructed through the more clinical documents, that primarily served to provide the context for the previous chapter. This chapter differs from the previous in that it represents the deep, person-centred accounts of individuals in the community, all of whom, I believe, were committed to making Nanaimo “better” despite very different visions of what that entailed.

The interviews provide life to the one-dimensional reading of the events as they unfolded in the various written and formal documents. Although these documents are invaluable for providing time-lines, charting progress and establishing linkages, they do little to present the lived experiences of the residents. The voices of the participants brought an added depth to the fore, offering more than a sterile account of the process. In addition, illuminating their accounts provides insight into how the positions were constructed among the various participants, and importantly, how they portrayed others in their narratives.

The participants’ involvement in the project varies. Among those interviewed were active volunteers in the downtown, paid civic employees, elected officials and local residents keenly interested in the process with little formal involvement apart from providing input through public channels, such as the local newspapers, council meetings and more direct interaction such as email correspondence and personal exchanges. A number of the participants spoke retrospectively about the conference centre decision-making process, and some spoke nostalgically about Nanaimo. Throughout the course of the interviews, participants displayed a

great deal of congruency in identifying the issues, despite their different accounts of what occurred in the community. Pseudonyms were used to protect their anonymity in their verbatim accounts.

Borrowing grounded theory techniques for the analysis of the interview data revealed a number of central issues that clustered around three key themes. Each theme highlights the more salient aspects of the participants' collective experience. The need to revitalize the community was commonly expressed and thus *Repositioning Nanaimo* is one of the key themes that emerged. This core theme also reflects the trend within urban and tourism studies about how much revitalization and regeneration discourse is centred on cogent arguments favouring tourism-oriented activities. The second core theme, *Participating in Community Consultation and Decision-Making Processes* addresses the interactions and opportunities in the community that extended over four years of public interaction and debate, and how they were interpreted by those who invested themselves during that period. In large part, it provides insight into why and how dissention occurred. The third and final theme is *Provoking the Divide: Perceptions of the Local Press* and speaks to the role that the local media played in facilitating the debate.

The core theme *Repositioning Nanaimo* has three sub-themes. The first, *Overcoming Barriers: Transcending the Meanings of Coal Town* highlights concerns over Nanaimo's image and reputation to outsiders. One dimension in this sub-theme focuses on the external image of City as a barrier to tourism and the redevelopment strategies necessary for revitalization, while a second dimension to this sub-theme highlights the internal perceptions residents held of one another. This is particularly revealing because one gains perspective on the complexity of community residents and the multiple layers of dialogue that shaped, and continue to shape Nanaimo by way of resistance and counter-resistance. The second sub-theme *Creating a Destination: Securing a Future in Work and Play* reflects the desire of the local leadership to move the City beyond its industrial roots and refashion Nanaimo as a destination. However, in order to accomplish this, Nanaimo's local government realized their role was critical to shaping this overall vision. The activities of Nanaimo's local government are captured in the next sub-theme, *Shifting Government Roles*. There were a number of dimensions of this third sub-theme that surfaced to suggest Nanaimo's local government was shifting their priorities. First, the City was actively courting the private sector was evident to the study participants.

This observation was one that not all study participants were entirely sure aligned with the community's values. Second, participants in positions of leadership believed in order to transition Nanaimo as a community for work and play, they needed to move beyond their traditional responsibilities such as roads and municipal services and expand their mandate to include high-level infrastructure projects. With this new mandate however, came the observation that there was an elevated risk to the community simply because of the costs associated with "doing business." This raised the question of whether the City was taking calculated or unnecessary risks, the third dimension in the sub-theme shifting role of government. The fourth observation of many of the participants was that in order to accomplish a project as significant as the conference centre, there needed to be solidarity among the Councillors. Harnessing political will, the fourth dimension, was largely seen as a way of creating and maintaining a united front. In other words, their partisanship came second to strategic planning for the community, but the way they framed the message to their constituents was an important consideration.

The second core theme that emerged was *Participating in Community Consultation and Decision-Making Processes*. This theme provides insight into how participants' rationalized their stance to support or challenge the decisions and actions taken by the City across the approximately four years that the conference centre was the focal point of both discussions and activities. Much of the tension surfaced through the participants' perspective as to whether the City was prioritizing projects above principles and dissention over this fundamental consideration set the tone for civic debate. Two considerations were important in determining where participants stood. First, how they interpreted the OCP determined whether or not they believed the City was following the principles of the OCP, which in turn shaped the nature of their involvement and the degree to which they felt they were able to participate. Second, this theme speaks to the organizing efforts to shore up the mandate put forward by the City, and manage the City's message that those who supported the conference centre wished to convey.

The final theme, *Provoking the Divide: Perceptions of the Local Press* accounts for the participants' perspective on the ability of the media to convey the salient issues surrounding this conference centre. Collectively, these three themes provide insights into the experiences of participants at this crucial time in the community.

## **THEME I: REPOSITIONING NANAIMO**

One of the core themes identified was the need to reposition Nanaimo to attract business, tourism, and lifestyle residents. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, analysis of the contextualising content showed revitalization as a key motivator behind the building of the PNC. It had long been part of the local vernacular and discourse of the City Council's minutes and the local papers. The need for revitalization in the community was well articulated by the majority of the participants. It began with the visioning exercise *Imagine Nanaimo* that led to the community's OCP document, *Plan Nanaimo*. The latter, in particular, was a well-vetted guide, outlining the community's technical and philosophical orientation to planning, growth and development in the community. Not surprisingly, revitalization re-surfaced as an integral part of the discussion among all participants. Moreover, revitalization constituted more than just a single objective of re-facing the downtown. As shown below, it evolved from a reactive stance, such as a programme addressing lighting and sidewalk improvements, to a proactive approach for repositioning the City.

This theme has three sub-themes. The first, *Overcoming Barriers: Transcending Meanings of Coal Town*, addresses two dimensions that surfaced in discussions with the participants. First, in order to reposition Nanaimo, study participants in favour of the project suggested the City needed to transcend its long-standing reputation and image to outsiders. However, as captured within the subtext of this discussion, community resident profiles were constructed, suggesting these too, were barriers to repositioning Nanaimo. The second sub-theme, *Creating a Destination: Securing a Future through Work and Play*, reflects the direction taken to reposition Nanaimo as a destination, desirable as a place to visit and live. Several strategies working in concert were fashioned around strengthening Nanaimo's built environment, and capitalizing on its aesthetic attributes to secure the community's future. The third sub-theme *Shifting Role of Local Government* has four inter-connected dimensions. First, accommodating the private sector and second, building non-traditional infrastructure projects were ways to facilitate specific pro-growth strategies. However, the actions of City Council, particularly around the contract and relations with their private partner raised questions about the degree of risk the City was willing to assume. This is the third dimension for consideration. Nonetheless, the harnessing of political will and the subsequent solidarity conveyed by City

Council around the conference centre was a crucial factor contributing to the project's follow through.

### **Overcoming Barriers: Transcending Meanings of Coal Town**

Two significant barriers surfaced while speaking with participants. The first barrier reflected the current state of the community largely associated with the demise of industrial era, and the City's inability to move past the coal-town image. The second barrier was less obvious, but no less disquieting. Prevailing divisive attitudes in the community were a source of frustration and concern for many of the participants, which if not overcome, would undermine any vision proposed. For the most part, the attitudes that surfaced reflect perspectives on growth, development and change. Importantly, they reflect the degree of resistance or support for the project.

With regard to the first barrier, Nanaimo's legacy as a coal-mining town lingered within the community having two predominant, residual effects identified by the participants. First, the boom and bust cycles of a resource-oriented foundation and the social challenges accompanying cyclical downturns gave way to a permanent, negative reputation. Despite the overwhelming desire in the community to alter this reputation, one community member who was active in promoting the downtown, summarized the challenges plaguing the City.

Other people on the island, specifically Victoria and certainly people on the mainland, Vancouver and other places, had a very bad impression of Nanaimo. Nanaimo's a shithole, it smells bad, it's a mill town, it's got nothing but strip malls and bikers, that's all that's here. (Walter)

Participants spoke of Nanaimo as a community once characterized by a disproportionate number of poor and homeless, a poorly funded school district, petty crimes and drug issues, and "everything else", meaning Nanaimo's "vibrant underground" (Frank). The impression conveyed by many of the participants was that Nanaimo lacked sophistication, and as one participant offered, "Come to Nanaimo if you want to get into a fight on Saturday night sort of thing" (Frank). It was a community having nothing to offer, and with little to do, and therefore an access point to the island, but not a community in which to stay and visit. Unless one lived in Nanaimo, "There was no reason to stop; you'd stop for gas, you'd stop for an Oh Henry bar, you'd get a coffee, but you keep going" (Walter). While other small

communities had grown in sophistication, Nanaimo remained a *hick-town* possessing little appeal and very few services beyond the essentials.

At the same time, many of the participants, particularly those who supported the conference centre, stressed the potential of their community. Costly transportation infrastructure was in place directing traffic to Nanaimo. Two ferry terminals meant it was a catchment area for most vehicular traffic to and from the mainland. A regional airport, serviced by a major Canadian airline, was located ten minutes from the City's core, and there were expansion plans to upgrade the radar equipment and lengthen the runway.

When participants referred to the community in this way, they were speaking of the need to rewrite the local economic context and more specifically, the downtown. The core was perceived as the nexus of much of the chronic and undesirable activity. In particular, the Malaspina Hotel, a recent and commonly cited example, was emblematic to overcoming the City's external image. It was a large building located in the core and a series of concerted efforts in the 1990s to renovate this building were unsuccessful.<sup>30</sup> As a result, the Malaspina Hotel sat as an eyesore in the community, abandoned for a number of years. It became the "blot on the City" (Patrick), abandoned apart from roosting pigeons. Its presence was symbolic of the "pit" (David) the downtown had become.

For many of the participants, the Malaspina Hotel personified the social challenges largely associated with the downtown core. Equally important, all participants suggested it detracted from the core, which unless addressed, would continue to detract from any new vision for the downtown. Moreover, for participants articulating a new vision for the community in which the conference centre would play a pivotal role, it was a negative beacon deterring investors and visitors, as well as potential residents from the City.

It sat there looking like a bombed out building straight out of the Middle East for years. And so, it really sends a terrible message to everybody that visited Nanaimo because here in the most prominent location of our downtown, on our beautiful waterfront is a bombed out shell of a building kind of thing. So what's wrong with Nanaimo? (Hart)

The Malaspina Hotel was not an anomaly surrounded by other areas that were brimming with activity. The whole of the downtown largely felt abandoned. Apart from a few

---

<sup>30</sup> Despite getting to the construction phase for all three projects, the plans to renovate the Malaspina Hotel as an office building, a condominium, or a conference centre all failed to materialize.

long-standing businesses in the core whose customers remained loyal, very few storefronts offered anything of substance. As one civic leader noted, “So we actually had through parts of the 1990s, ah sections of the downtown core that you could practically blast a cannon through and not hit anybody; it was becoming very, very ah much of a derelict” (Graham).

One long-standing business owner provided a sense of the struggle that had characterized the downtown for a decade before the Port Theatre project was built, and subsequently two decades from the start of building the conference centre. As noted by Rudy, the example of the Malaspina Hotel was not an isolated event, but was the most recent reminder of the struggle facing the core.

When, ah we bought the building there was a fire across the street there [gesturing with hand] and ah, I think it was October 13, 1983, there was a major fire down town that ah, destroyed something like 20 odd businesses [*Lisa: wow*], and in the fire was the Continental Bank, a legal, four or five different legal firms, ah you know I think there was a gas company and a whole bunch of “... [transcription unclear] and [named his business]. And there was a finance company, and we tried to ah find somewhere similar to ah, ah, lease. We couldn’t. And ah, ahm, this building was owned by the [family name] family, and uhm, they were elderly guys, and their father had bought this building in 1922. And ah, so I approached the family and said “I’m interested in leasing the building.” And they said, they ah, they didn’t want to lease, the economy went bad; that’s when ‘83 came and everything was dead, and they just wanted to sell and one thing lead to another and ah, “Gee, I’m not really in a position to buy a building, just having had a building burned down” but I went to the bank to see about a mortgage to buy the building and I ah, ah, and ah... the bank said: “You’re serious, you really want to ah, by the building in downtown Nanaimo?” You know, is your head screwed on right, you know (chuckling)? And, it was ah, it was bad then in those days, you know. I imagine there are Americans cities facing the same thing with the downturn in the economy and I arranged to buy the building and people said, “Ah, you’re nuts to buy this building. You’re going to regret this, this is a bad decision.” Well, of course, 25 years have gone by, you know (chuckling), and people say now “Boy, you sure knew what you’re doing, you bought it at the right time, with the conference centre and all this stuff.” You know something? The conference centre wasn’t even dreamed about when we bought this building, what was across the way was a huge open ditch. [*Lisa: hmm*], Just unbelievable. It looked like a gravel pit, a burned-out shell, they left it year after year after year. And they had several proposals for it, and it all fell through, one after the other after the other after the other – and all fell through. And finally ah, they ah, put together a plan to build the Port Theatre and that’s the large building there [gesturing up the street]. (Rudy)



Moreover, Rudy's account also shows how local residents espoused a particular attitude towards downtown. Most of his peers had little confidence that one could successfully operate a business in the downtown, and this attitude remained in the community over an extended period. A relatively new resident who was committed to revitalization in the core reinforced this perspective. This individual suggested when he first came to Nanaimo, he could see the potential that the locals were taking for granted. "I've always maintained, by the time the people of Nanaimo figure out the value of their downtown, no one in Nanaimo will be able to afford to invest in downtown Nanaimo" (Hart). Overcoming this inertia began with building the Port Theatre and changes, though slow in coming, were manifesting and instilling a new confidence and energy in the downtown.

This message of change was one that resonated with the City's north-end residents. Several participants spoke of the physical and psychological barriers existing between the north-end of the City and the central and south-end of the City. Although the north-end was part of the City, it functioned like a separate community. There was a desire by the City's leadership to integrate not only the people, but to either reverse the image that the north-end residents held of downtown, or equally relevant, remind the north-end residents that there was a downtown.

This perspective was reinforced through the example provided by one participant who was committed to revitalization as he spoke about a brief encounter with local residents he mistook for visitors due to the questions they asked. He was quite shocked when through the course of their conversation, the "resident tourists" (Hart) admitted they lived in the north-end, but in their 17 years of residency had never been downtown. According to most participants, they were not an anomaly. Thus, when participants spoke of the lack of local foot traffic downtown, they were referring to the north-end residents, who perceived the downtown in much the same way that outsiders perceived Nanaimo.

For the most part, participants suggested that neither distance nor inconvenience accounted for the absence of north-enders. Rather, downtown was perceived as undesirable and lacking in amenities, "it was deteriorating, it was becoming unsafe and it wasn't a pleasant place to be" (Timothy). There was general agreement in the community that if this perception could be eliminated, that north-end residents and visitors alike would restore the vibrancy to the core that had been missing for nearly a quarter century. For many of the residents, the

conference centre was a logical step towards reversing the trend, and one that would facilitate in the overarching goal of improving the City's image and altering its reputation as a community with few desirable attributes and offerings.

As I listened to the participants tell their stories about Nanaimo, it became evident that the north/south divide in the community still played a vital role in shaping the images *in* and *of* the community. The north-end housed a new generation of Nanaimoites who, while lacking a strong attachment and understanding of downtown, controlled its destiny without any real sense of either the issues or history of the core,

The vast majority of the people in this town have no idea, they have little interest. If you live way out in the north-end, you don't really care, you know because, "Yes, clean up the downtown, get all those hobos off the street, you know wipe out all the old buildings and we'll put up some shiny new ones there", and you know somehow they think that's going to be the panacea that's going to drive all the social problems away. (Dennis)

Ironically, the North-enders were perceived as residents who never frequented the core, yet they were, in large part, responsible for saving it. There was frustration expressed over this irony for the participants who did not support the revitalization project. The north-end embodied progress in which the only way to save downtown lay in negotiating away its most prized possessions, its history and its gathering places. The cynicism behind erecting shiny buildings and getting on with it was directed at the City's commitment to the conformity occurring elsewhere. In other words, the transformation to new and shiny robbed local residents of those aspects that had characterized Nanaimo, and instead, offered in its place a sanitized environment similar to other communities. As one retired community member who had grown up in Nanaimo lamented,

You know it's the north-end that has carried this whole program about the downtown, most of them don't know a damn thing about the downtown. But the vote for the conference centre project predictably showed that it was the north-end that supported it the most and the south-end and central City people supported it the least. And to the north-end, the downtown is just some derelict thing that has to be cleaned up; "get on with it" you know? They don't care about the history, they're new, they're new people; they don't care about the history. (Randy)

What surfaced in the discussions with all participants was that the challenges facing the community were not just about rewriting a new by-line for people external to the community,

but that long-standing perceptions existed in the community about who *others* in the community were. Dennis and Randy's introductory comments regarding Nanaimo's north-end residents personified the divisions woven deep within Nanaimo's social and political fabric, highlighting what was predominantly understood as the north/south divide. In large part, the conference centre proposal seemed a contemporary example highlighting some of the residual effects stemming from Nanaimo's coal legacy. What surfaced on the one hand was a criticism over those who held and wielded power to serve their purposes (the north-end); and on the other, a criticism of those who continually resisted and pushed back against the City's development decisions (the south-end). Their narratives highlighted an internal logic that was underwritten by different images of Nanaimo. When these images were combined with the prevailing north/south attitudes, it reinforced the historical divisions. In turn these divisions became a second barrier threatening any vision to reposition Nanaimo.

To south-end residents, north-end residents represented those citizens in the community who were welcomed into the community's long-standing Old-Boys Club, (detailed in the ensuing paragraphs), and as a result, would in some way or another benefit from the changes occurring in the core. These were individuals perceived as the city's elite who could subtly influence public policy. Among them were the pro-conference supporters driving the proposed changes. To the contrary, south-end residents were generally perceived as those who resisted change in the community and were perceived largely as the Old Guard, blue-collar, naysayers, or Nanaimoites. For the most part, those who supported the conference centre characterized the FPN's membership as residents who fell into these categories, and carried with them deep-seated feelings about newcomers and progress.

More specifically, the perceptions by those favouring the conference centre was that Nanaimoites were the residents in the community who believed they had a right to wield influence because their local lineage still held currency. By virtue of having lived their lives in the community, they held a sense of entitlement. It was not a class division as much as it was an old/new mindset. *Old* referred to keeping Nanaimo as it was, as static, and *new* represented those who believed the community needed to change and evolve.

Broadly speaking, "old Nanaimo" (Sam) was linked to community members associated with the vocal "No's" or naysayers. This group of citizens had existed long prior to the formalizing of Friends of Plan Nanaimo Society (FPN). However, when the FPN surfaced,

they were perceived by a number of the study participants to be the organized, collective voice of the arm of the community who stood against progress.

I mean FPN is a group of people who in my view are really opposed to ... certain aspects of densification and ahm ... in particular high-rise activity. It's hard to boil down their, their I guess key mission statement but I would have to say those are two of the key components. They do not favour densification and they are adamantly opposed high-rise activity. They, [long pause] that manifested itself in a bunch of different ways. Ah, they didn't agree with the decision-making process of Council and they didn't agree with ah, use of public funds for the convention centre and they had a number of areas where they, they felt Council was leading the community astray. But I think it, it boils down to their desire to keep sort of small town Nanaimo and limit, ahm, redevelopment of the core and other segments of the community. (Martin)

For those participants, such as Martin, who identified themselves as having a more “progressive mindset”, Nanaimoites' sense of entitlement gave them a false sense of ownership and authority over *how* or *if* the community should evolve. Because other community groups were asserting an alternative voice, it threatened the close-knit community whose local memory lay in the nostalgia of a former time. Dorothy who had lived in the community for 20 years and with no former history in Nanaimo, had a sense of the divisions,

*Lisa: Sorry, when you say “Old Guard”, I'd better make sure that I know what you're talking about.*

*Dorothy: People who are born and raised in Nanaimo, have lived here forever, generations ... even back right? So were here when Nanaimo was half the size, when it was just downtown, there was no north-end, the downtown was still alive and all the newcomers weren't here ... bit of a British influence. A fairly good British group and influence in the community who didn't want to see, see things change.*

For the most part, this group of individuals had witnessed the migration to the periphery, and as a result, had a lingering distrust of local government because the City's decision-makers had initiated the migration to the north and allowed the unchecked development that was now the north-end. Moreover, City Council's most recent decision to build a conference centre was, for these participants, reminiscent of other projects over which local government demonstrated incompetency and lack of foresight.

“Blue collar” is a term used by some of the participants to refer to those in the community with working class attitudes and did not necessarily refer to their profession. Blue-

collar attitudes defined the working relationships in the community, summarized primarily as a “lack of acumen” and “amateurish-ness” (Larry). It was a form of verbal shorthand describing the dynamics of community interactions and communications, particularly with regard to decision-making and planning. Blue-collar represented the inability to foster compromise or conciliation, representing an entrenched attitude that resulted in continual resistance surrounding *any* dialogue addressing community transition and transformation.

And I was always struck in every meeting that I went into, these little groups, it was so divisive right from the get-go. There just doesn't seem to be any culture in this town of people genuinely interested in each others' opinions, and trying to find middle ground and it's [long pause] ... I started to have this ... and this may be way off topic but I started to have this theory that Nanaimo being a blue-collar town - traditionally ... maybe has, a real built in ... suspicion of people from away; people who move here. You always, you always hear the South-end versus the North and it's this or it's that. The Chamber of Commerce doesn't, at least at one time didn't talk to the City, and the City wouldn't talk to Tourism board and Tourism board wouldn't talk to the Chamber of Commerce, and ... again maybe it's everywhere, but I just can't believe that other communities work this dysfunctionally [long pause] ... And it just, it just never seems to be a culture here that really genuinely and honestly tries to work together towards a common consensus of decision. And, and if I ever express that to Nanaimoite, I would be slammed and boxed over here as the North-ender or as someone who just moved here, although I have been here off and on for 35 years [chuckling]. (Larry)

This division between old and new was acknowledged in the discussions of those who supported the conference centre as well as those who opposed it. These participants largely described newcomers as those without history in the community, arriving during the influx of growth during the 1990s. Most, if not all of the participants who supported the project, described themselves as newcomers. They had moved to Nanaimo for personal or professional purposes. If their career brought them to Nanaimo, they soon realized there were several benefits to living in Nanaimo, but they also realized that there were significant issues in the community as well.

As they began to work together towards a solution for downtown, long-standing community residents whose imaginations were sparked through the eyes of the newcomers began to come onside. A cohesiveness formed between these relative newcomers and those in the community who began to believe change was possible. Collectively, they determined that the community needed to move beyond its deeply entrenched resource-based roots and directed

their energies accordingly. Though the community was first marked by the north/south geographical division, it was now marked in a different way. As the vision took hold through a number of organizations, these same participants suggested that it sparked resistance from the Old Guard.

One community member, reflecting on the past, suggested the history of dominance was not easily forgotten. Despite the voice gained through the strong labour movement, re-visioning their community was reminiscent of the boss/labour relationship that spanned the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was a period defined by a lack of voice in community structure, and dominated by those occupying positions of power. In the current context, newcomers were perceived as representing 21<sup>st</sup> century boss owners, now identified by their geographic, socio-economic status and their politics. The common reference to the north/south division embodied all of these aspects.

*Dorothy:* And even though it hasn't been here, our coal mining ended in the 40s, early 30s, 20s even – by the 40s there was pretty much nothing – but I think it's affected the community, it still shapes the community today. That still shapes the community today, that working class versus the big miner owner kind of thing.

*Lisa:* When you say, you see this all the time, what do you mean? Is it a mentality or –

*Dorothy:* Yeah, yeah. The way the people, the way things operate, the difference between the people who have lived here all the time versus the ones who came in the last 10, 15 years. The people who still think Nanaimo is a small town and don't want to see a change versus new people coming in and the other attitude to want to see us develop and grow. That conflict, that dichotomy is there all the time between the north and the south. The south working class, lower income end versus north, new people, higher income, and then kind of the Old Guard in the middle.

However, newcomers with no previous history in the community could not identify or sympathize with its resource-based legacy. Rather, they saw Nanaimo as a beleaguered jewel, brimming with potential. For these participants, the community was disillusioned by a false dependency on declining resources and that if the City were to progress, alternative economic foundations were necessary.

And it was well on its way to disappearing which is why you have to look ahead long enough to realize the value of projects like this instead of just saying I want my old job back. Well the harsh reality is you're not getting your old job back,

but we'll get you a better one or we'll get you another one. "Do you want your old job or no job, what's it going to be? Because the option here is your old job is no job, but we can do things to diversify and grow this economy and that's what this kind of project represents." It has to happen that way, you have to move forward and the nay-sayers are the ones who affiliate with the other side. "We don't want that change, we don't want; just give me my job back, to stop sending the trees to the States. Just do whatever you can to keep the mill open, keep the mine open. Let me fish." (Walter)

Newcomers began to gain a foothold in the community through the relationships established with each other, and more importantly with the civic leadership. Some participants felt strongly that a civic culture akin to an Old Boys' Club entered during the days of Frank Ney, continued to permeate civic leadership. It was "virtual" in the sense that although the same individuals were long gone from the community, their attitudes, and behaviours lived in perpetuity.

I think you've got an establishment mentality ah . . . historically that's been the established mentality here, but ahm . . . I think, but can't conceive of doing anything differently. You've got to have a radical change. And ah, I'm not holding my breath over that. (Art)

The Old Boys Club represented a "local oligarchy" (Art) or "the more established downtown business association types" (Nolan), who were successful at lobbying local politicians to their advantage. It was a "system of behaviour" (Nolan) amongst local people possessing power and control in the community. Importantly, power was used for personal gain, to promote cronyism, or to foster a patriarchal posture over the community. This group of citizens was not necessarily made up of only newcomers, nor was it restricted from long-standing residents. Instead, identity was associated with a lack of accountability to the citizens at large and with nepotism, the "behind the scenes deal making" (Nolan) that infused civic leadership circles. One had to be prepared to play the game or "dance that dance that gets you into the clique" (Larry), or whatever was required to be part of the group that pulled the strings.

A lot of people in this town will tell you the town is run by a group of 50-year-old men and, and that's true. They get their own way and ahm, people have sort of resigned to that you know, that they can't get a handle on changing it, and in a way they're right and in a way they're wrong. And ah, the way in which they're right is that it is a behaviour pattern; the way in which they're wrong people have to take an interest in you know their own situation. I, I've got friends in Nanaimo who have never left the place who I talk to so they, they went away for you know for five years to college and came back. They're,

they're part of the problem you know . . . They just "Oh well that's Nanaimo, there's nothing you can do about it." Even so even given an opportunity to get involved they're so resigned to complacency that they, or defeatism or whatever, that they won't get involved. (Randy)

Moreover, the frustration for a number of the participants was that the Old Boys' Club assumed a stance of *needing* to win. In particular, a number of participants, whether they agreed with the PNC or not, expressed concern that civic leadership did not recognize that good design evolved out of competing and contrasting opinions. This stance was volatile when pitted against the Old Guard.

The need to revitalize Nanaimo was an agreed upon goal for all the participants. Nonetheless, their perceptions of what constituted north-end residents and Nanaimoites (or south-end) residents was defined equally by the physical geography and by the attitudes attached to residents who came to embody either the City's north or the City's south sides. In order for the City to reposition and compete, both of these barriers needed to be overcome.

### **Creating a Destination: Securing a Future Through Work and Play**

Underlying much of the discussion was a sense that Nanaimo's future lies in its ability to be a destination, desirable as a place to visit and live. Revitalizing referred to changes in the built environment in order to capitalize on the natural surroundings. Participants identified a number of strategies helpful for revitalization, which if employed, would raise Nanaimo's profile to both those in and outside the community.

Several of the same strategies identified in the OCP were noted by several participants on both sides of the debate. Increasing density in the urban core, fostering arts and culture, capitalizing on the landscape and heritage, and promoting service-oriented economic development were all important strategies to promote growth and secure Nanaimo's long-term viability. Moreover, many proponents of the conference centre commented on the interdependency between the strategies. For example, high-rise development in the core, although a strategy to increase density, would be a strong support mechanism for the budding arts and culture community, who in turn would showcase their work, fostering a unique consumptive niche. Importantly, the synergy created between these distinct processes (density, promoting arts and culture, landscape and heritage and more service-oriented development) would collectively serve the goal of repositioning the City for leisure and career pursuits. For the most



part, and especially for participants familiar with the City's Official Community Plan (*Plan Nanaimo*), this was a solid, growth-oriented strategy that would contribute to the community's future benefits.

From my perspective, ah it was ah tourism. Bring people into the community to look at our community which would, ahm, I know when I travel ah I say "Boy would I like to live here or would I not?" So it had the future, ahm, it was an investment in bringing people here in the future. Ahm, but it, it was mainly the attraction of people to Nanaimo, that, that it would bring a significant number of people to Nanaimo, and it would create activity downtown, which would in turn help clean up downtown, which would in turn help the retail market there downtown, which also would in turn develop residential, it's, it's... You know once the downtown got to be a better place to live and work it would attract more people and more. So to get back to the original plan of density, so still in my mind was kind of just be another building block in getting to the final goal of, of having a dense, vibrant, healthy downtown core. (Bernard)

Implicit to the success of this growth strategy, references to both work and play were linked to specific kinds of improvement and development in the core. The underlying rationale was to create density by attracting visitors and new lifestyle residents who would in turn, contribute to the local economy. As retired working professionals or entrepreneurs, they would assist in turning the downtown once again into a productive, albeit decidedly non-industrial, economy. The kinds of shopping, leisure activities, and housing envisioned reflected the desire to attract high-income residents or tourists who could support the niche market the downtown was creating. These residents and visitors would possess or demand a certain level of urban sophistication and their involvement meant a new and more stable economic foundation for the core.

A powerful cultural symbol establishing Nanaimo as a desirable community in which to work and play was the creation of new consumptive experiences. When participants spoke of shopping in the downtown, they were referring to a different kind of shopping than that currently offered in the City. They were not referring to big-box or chain-store shopping which epitomized the north-end. Rather, they were speaking of catering to the affluent, lifestyle consumer. In order to lure the affluent north-end suburban shopper, the conference attendee or the tourist, a mixture of high-end retail service and entertainment options needed to be offered that would distinguish the core from its suburban counterpart. When participants spoke of these kinds of shopping experiences they pointed to the new businesses established, including funky

restaurants, new retail boutiques, gift and gallery shops, urban décor specializing in unique designs, and the re-creation of small-scale unique accommodation space catering to discerning tastes.

They, they want to have uhm you know, these shops that are going to be in the front of this convention centre? ... They're not going to be sold to little mom and pop places of course, they're going to be you know Fifth Avenue whatever. Kind of fancy shops for clothing, purses and whatever, that kind of stuff eh. So it's going to be geared to the tourists, geared to the conventioners, and hopefully people who come on cruise ships and go in from the boat; walk around downtown. (Sandra)

The transition was as much symbolic as it was physical.

Moreover, community members who supported the project suggested there was a reciprocal relationship between the budding built environment and the core's historical and aesthetic properties that would further complement one's experiences in the downtown. This winning combination - matching heritage and tradition, with the demand for consumer's preferences - against a naturally beautiful backdrop would nicely position Nanaimo to compete among communities with conference centres. It was a way of building not only an economic bottom line, but one which would also reverse the decaying social and cultural fabric of the community.

For me, this is absolutely a gorgeous downtown. I think this harbour is far prettier than Victoria's harbour and look how they sell their harbour and how much it meant to them, and this is much nicer. I just think it would be a shame, you know the beautiful bowl shape of the City, the way the old City natural bowl comes down to the water, how the harbour ... [transcription unclear, due to float plane taking off]. The Bastion, the second oldest building in BC, it would be a shame if it was stuck in a dying neighbourhood where no one lives, and nobody cares, and no one ever saw it. It would just be a shame to lose all that. So I think the old and new help each other. I think those who are against the new, or the new building or taking down those old buildings, that's not necessarily what it did. This new helped keep all the rest of that old. (Dorothy)

In addition, as noted by yet another City leader, Nanaimo's close proximity to Vancouver was advantageous in that it could serve as a suburb for metropolitan Vancouver. People could take advantage of what a larger City could offer, while retaining the benefits of living in a smaller, more affordable community. There was a tacit understanding among the leadership that their role was to draw people to the community, and in this case, through the

conference centre, and thereafter visitors would realize the benefits of relocation. This strategy, while clear to City Council, was difficult to communicate to the public at large,

Part of their rationale around that is very, very, very hard to explain to the public and is still very hard to explain to the public today. Because in their minds [City Council], and in my mind, there's a long-term benefit of showcasing the community. Because Nanaimo has a lot of attributes that are advantageous. We think ecotourism is the way of the future, uhm, we'd like to promote the lifestyle on Vancouver Island; have some awareness of the transportation connections - all those benefits that exist. But generally people aren't aware of that. So in their minds [City Council], a conference centre would ahh, bring people in who otherwise wouldn't be here: they'd go to Newcastle Island, they'd see the a waterfront walk way, they'd understand they could buy a house here for a third of Vancouver prices; they'd figure out that you could fly to Vancouver for \$60 or \$70 in half an hour and be in person's office. (David)

Conveyed through those study participants who were part of the decision-making, was a commitment to envisioning a new Nanaimo, and a new form of city building that would restore Nanaimo's core to its former vitality when it would, once again, serve as the heart of the City. Associating Nanaimo with a more positive image was to move into a new era, marked by a new future, one no longer associated with a downward slide, and an industrial economic foundation. Inherent in Nanaimo's new image were visions of a city that would be clean and economically upbeat, catering to consumptive and leisurely lifestyles that made many destinations desirable and successful. A City Councillor, recounted this vision during his first term on Council in 1999.

We determined what we need in our downtown were new buildings ah, a new attitude, people living, and people shopping, people visiting, people feeling safe. And in order to do that, you needed to transform the character of the downtown and oh ah, another way of ah addressing that would be to take your oldest portion of the downtown, demolish it and create something that became a magnet rather than a repellent. (Timothy)

For many of the participants who had been active in the early discussions surrounding the conference centre, the only way this could happen was for the City to intervene in a significant manner. This determination came on the heels of significant community volunteering specifically addressing the downtown. Many of the volunteers who served on these committees, expressed concerns about how to achieve the levels of infrastructure required to move from revitalizing the downtown, to repositioning the City with an intentionality that heretofore had not been evidenced in the City. They suggested the

incremental momentum occurring in the downtown was not enough to guarantee that the inertia of the past several decades could be overcome, nor would incremental development solidly place Nanaimo “on the map” (Walter) to keep pace with what was occurring elsewhere. Discussions of this nature were the focal point for those involved in the early stages of planning. Martin, one of the members of the Yes Committee and downtown developer noted:

It became pretty evident to those of us who were keenly involved I guess that there needed to be some fairly significant changes in downtown in order to move forward. Uhm it wasn't just going to be a process of gradual evolution, there had to be a determined effort to make a difference because otherwise it was just going to ah, ahm ... wander along its own pace and suburbia would take over and maybe there would be something eventually to happen downtown and maybe there wouldn't. So we became convinced that something large needed to be done. And it wasn't, there was a whole group of people that were coming to that conclusion at the same time. (Martin)

When these participants spoke of the conference centre as a piece of the puzzle in solving the downtown revitalization issue, they were speaking also about the evolution of Nanaimo. For them it was an opportunity for people to come and see a “different Nanaimo” (Raymond) and change the perception of the community; “the evolution of Nanaimo from a resource-based town into a tourism, commercial-based town” (Raymond). It was “something that would primarily bring people here and keep them here” (Walter).

In summary, many of the participants suggested that Nanaimo had a number of inherent strengths, which when combined with building high-level infrastructure projects would not only help to transition Nanaimo's former image, but reposition the community to compete with similar communities in the province. In working towards this end, several participants noted the role of the local government in facilitating the transition.

### **Shifting Roles for Local Government**

Throughout the interviews, participants raised either tacitly or implicitly the way their local government's role was evolving and changing in the community. For some this was borne out of cynicism, while others fully supported the changes they observed. City Council's activities marked a discernable philosophical shift in how the City provided for the community, moving from more traditional services to those that built other kinds of community infrastructure. Importantly, those participants in civic leadership noted that this was not abandoning

traditional government sector activity, but a way in which they, through other revenue streams, could continue to provide the community with high level civic services.

This sub-theme is comprised of four dimensions. The first dimension is *accommodating the private sector*, wherein the City could attract private sector interests to assist in the rejuvenation process. The second dimension highlighted their desire to attract new residents and visitors to the community by *providing amenities, a build it and they will come* discourse that surfaced around high level infrastructure projects and the kinds of amenities considered. These observations led to a third dimension where civic government was perceived to assume a level of risk that heretofore had not been observed by community residents. *Taking [un]calculated risks* draws attention to the concern around the degree of exposure the City was acquiring on behalf of the community. Finally, the fourth dimension observed by these same participants was *harnessing political will*, both locally and provincially. For some, this observation demonstrated solidarity, while for those who opposed the project, it was an effective mechanism through which to stifle dialogue and democracy.

#### *Accommodating the Private Sector*

With Nanaimo's decayed core, the nearly non-existent housing stock, and numerous superficial and relatively unsuccessful revitalizing attempts, civic elites pushed for cooperation between City politicians, downtown institutions and political parties. If the City was going to overcome its economic and social ills downtown, a concerted joint effort was required. City Council began to understand that it needed to create an environment conducive to the interests of the private sector if the core was going to experience an urban comeback, or if Nanaimo could reposition itself more generally.

Although full of potential, Nanaimo had not yet been fully discovered. This made it not only an unproven market, but also a risky market for the private sector. If the City was serious about repositioning itself as an urban destination, let alone revitalizing the core, they would have to be prepared to take a lead role in courting the private sector. As one corporate business leader and active downtown volunteer observed, the City's role was crucial in determining private sector decisions.

If you don't have your municipal government at the table to ... make decisions in a fully engaged manner to make decisions about moving your downtown forward, it's not going to happen. It's just not going to because you can't, you just simply can't do it without, without having those, those compromises those,

those adjustments to be made at the municipal level. The funding in some cases, the, the recognition of the greater good of the community and therefore, the use of taxpayers' money to make it happen, without that it can't happen because development money or private sector money will just simply go to where it's easier to get returns. (Martin)

The relationship fostered through the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership (DNP) facilitated the mindset that the City was open for business, and a distinctive shift was discernable across the City's activities. The City assumed a more instrumental approach to civil politics. The focus was no longer on the structural aspects of city building such as the support and maintenance of social relations and traditional infrastructure projects such as sewers and roads. Rather, City Council's priorities began to shift towards other kinds of development goals and agendas. The focus became removing barriers and providing opportunities for the private sector that reflected their desire to communicate that Nanaimo was open for business.

A number of the participants suggested the City's presence and support were important to furthering economic development and growth. Support was not merely perceived to be token lip service, but rather the City's role was to lead the transition. Their active role was crucial in conveying to the private sector that Nanaimo was an upwardly mobile community. The private sector could count on the City to accommodate developments that were mutually beneficial. As this message made its way into City Hall, the City began to justify its decisions to subsidize the project with land transfers, and increased taxes for the project. Those who opposed the project suggested this decision would not serve the public at large, while those supportive of the project suggested it would not be understood by the public at large.

According to those in support of the project, public sector expenditures were necessary in order to create an interest in Nanaimo. They believed this initial action was a way of setting in motion other developments that would continue to revitalize the downtown. Moreover, several believed this was not an option, but a necessary step. Unlike Vancouver, where a private hotelier was prepared to make the investment of a conference centre without public intervention, the unsuccessful proposals and the lack of proposal calls for tenders in Nanaimo was evidence that Nanaimo did not hold the cache of destination cities. Rather, the only way this could occur is if the local government was prepared to provide incentives.

There seems to be this belief among some people that you can just kind of snap your fingers and the private sector will come running because it's such a golden opportunity. Well that's just not the case right? It isn't a golden opportunity for the private sector. Lots of times, I mean it's interesting, because a lot of the publicity generated by the FPN led the public to believe that. So we had lots of people from the public saying "Oh, I want to, I'm going to do this you know, I'm going to make a proposal" and ah when they really found out what it was really like they kind of just "Oh well "... [transcription unclear]" you mean you're not paying for it?" "No." "Oh well, I won't do that" [chuckling]. There, there's just nobody out there who really wants to invest in a big hotel in Nanaimo without a significant amount of priming the pump. (Raymond)

"Priming the pump" was a way of conveying that the City was willing to co-operate with the private sector, and more specifically with Triarc, the private partner with whom they were entering into an agreement. After two failed proposals, and no other prospects in hand, Triarc's interest in Nanaimo was somewhat of a *coup d'état* for City Officials. In a desire to demonstrate their co-operation, one of the opening moves signalling their assistance was expropriating a parcel of land, something the private developer could not do on their own. The challenge facing many private developers was their inability to consolidate enough land in any urban core that would be profitable enough for development to occur on a large scale. The City's expropriation powers could be used to this end. This demonstrated to the private sector that it was engaged and supportive.

The expropriation and subsequent demolition of the buildings were justified because the conference centre, housed within a multi-function building, could be framed as an alternative infrastructure project. It could be justified because it would serve as a catalyst for future growth and development.

If we invested in some of the infrastructure that would spur private investment and ah, and ah, one of the things in addition to the traditional things of roads, and water lines and sewer lines that local government can do, is you can build facilities that might be, not profitable in themselves, but could create the ripple effect into other job creating ventures. (Graham)

Infrastructure aside, the demise of the building in the core, which most participants supporting the project argued did not hold heritage value, would make room for new retail spaces that would encourage urban shopping downtown. Moreover, these sanctions would promote growth when, based purely on speculation of the conference centre's impact, business owners would either return or locate to the core.

But, [this Councillor]<sup>31</sup> just ah ... I think felt that if we built the conference centre, then that would be a catalyst that would create other ... construction and and, ahm, that it would in fact from that breed more, bring in rather, more hotels. And ahm, and it, it, it, is and it *has*. You know, ah, the Ramada just opened up here, and as you know there's a hotel component in this new conference centre complex. And ahm, that's all because ah, there's a perceived need for rooms to accommodate the convention attendees. (Rudy)

However, the move by local government to accommodate private sector interests was not without resistance. Some participants expressed dismay, believing the City abused their power in order to facilitate a private sector activity, which compromised its role of acting in the public good.

Like to me expropriation in a country where you think of as you know, you have some rights to your home and some permanent rights. Expropriation, I always thought, was needed for military bases, hospitals, schools, fire departments, you know, maybe widening highways; not hotels, retail spaces. There's all those retail spaces on the main floor, condo's you know that, it just didn't strike me as the kind of thing that we need, which is what I think expropriation should be reserved for, for things that we *need*, not the things we like. You know, "Geez, I'd like to open a theatre over there, just kick all those people out of their houses and buy that up." Does that sound like Canada do you? It doesn't sound like my Canada. Sounds like something that would happen in some dictatorship, some little Banana Republic. (Sandra)

Alongside these concerns, the most troublesome of the City's actions was providing land at Maffeo-Sutton Park in exchange for building the hotel. A hotel by all accounts was deemed necessary for the conference centre's success. Even those who supported the project and who stood to gain financially and professionally from the project, were conflicted over the City's decision. As Paul notes, "there are some aspects of the deal that I was never really comfortable with and in particular, the Maffeo-Sutton Park piece." Others however, were more strident in their opposition. One vocal opponent suggested development in their beloved local park was akin to mining in Yellowstone National Park. His comments suggested a philosophical shift in local government. The encroachment of private sector influence in local government was, from his perspective, based in broader political trends that occurred under U.S. President Reagan's administration. For others, their concern was not with public policy shifts or trends. It simply came down to giving away the public's park.

---

<sup>31</sup> Referring to, a former influential City Councillor who is well recognized as the first champion of a conference centre for Nanaimo.



I guess part of it was they had to sweeten the pot to get these guys to do, to help build and that was to give away some of the land at will. Swyalana Park and stuff. And I think, quite frankly they probably could have picked a different place, a different property to give them. And that is probably the absolute primo real estate in the City, our beautiful park and yes it's the front end of the park, but it's still a park. It got a lot of people mad because it's the park and it's *our* park. (Frank)

*Providing Amenities: "Build It and They Will Come"*

Local government activity needed to provide an atmosphere conducive to business, but also, and in-keeping with their desire to position Nanaimo as a destination they needed to consider the kinds of infrastructure projects required to create an attractive work and play environment. This issue surfaced among participants as they spoke about the kinds of projects and activities taking place in the community associated with local government activities. A number of other amenities were being considered or were already in progress. When the participants spoke about these projects, there was a sense that the City Council would continue to make decisions that would favour infrastructure amenities thought to be desirable. A former council member suggested,

You read in the newspaper that people say, "Ah, Nanaimo has no recreational facilities." Well I want to, to those folks, I say "Come with me for a ride, I'll show your facilities. Our facilities are uhm, something to admire and appreciate." And yes we don't have an arena or a Multiplex that seats six or seven thousand people but maybe that's because we're not ready for that yet. We will be in time. (Timothy)

Other decision-makers further affirmed this stance suggesting the ideas floated were made not only contingent on economic analyses, but were informed by what "they'd seen elsewhere" and in response to the "way the world was going" (David). This rationale was part of the justification for the conference centre. Moreover, participants spoke about a multiplex as the next capital project under consideration in conjunction with airport modifications and upgrades to accommodate larger regional jets; the expansion of the downtown casino; and retrofitting one of the industrial peers for a cruise ship dock. They also spoke of the museum, housed inside the Port of Nanaimo Centre (PNC) in the same light. In their assessment, momentum towards a new economic development strategy was finally beginning to be cemented.

Conference centre supporters expressed this as healthy dialogue about the direction for Nanaimo. It meant they were continuing to think “into the future” (Mark) about what the next steps should encompass. Conference centre supporters in particular, defended the amenity development discourse stance. For them, the Port Theatre and the decision to build a competitive size swimming pool, and now the conference centre were indicators of how the community was changing for the better.

However, captured in the sub-texts of some of the discussions with participants, was a concern that the merit attached to a facility was based on ensuring Nanaimo was on par with services offered elsewhere. For some participants this marked a return to a former mind-set. The incremental and steady development occurring in the downtown, in keeping with *Plan Nanaimo*, was no longer enough. Instead, there was a concern that what was surfacing reflected the old well-worn adage, “Keeping up with the Jones’s.”

I think the business community felt if you build it people will come, you know like a bit of an Ice trap. And I, I don’t think that based it on a great deal of sound knowledge. I think they just based on the fact that Parksville’s got a semi-convention centre with the Tyna Mara and the buildings up there, Victoria’s got, got a big one. “We’re the Hub-City, you know! Heck we should have a convention centre!” And it was about as intuitive as that. (Harland)

The concern for those who opposed the conference centre was that the decisions were reactionary, framed within the context of what was occurring elsewhere, reflecting the “latest panacea” (Art) or development trends more broadly. For these participants, it did not reflect careful community planning shaped by the broader public. Moreover, several participants suggested this pattern would be repeated as the City moved to consider building a multiplex. This was yet another project entering into local discussions and in articles circulating through the local print media. The concern was that decisions would not reflect the desires or needs of the residents, but would be susceptible to developer-driven and personal agendas attuned to a more consumptive orientation.

That, that part of ah, you know ah a general discussion, part of the kind of things that I’m raising here, the general discussion “Is this, is a conference centre and this kind of a project, in the best interests of the community? Ah, is this something the community really wants?” Now I bet you a dime to a donut, the next big project is going to be a multiplex. You know a developer is going to come along and want to build a multiplex and want to get the City, ah it’s already happening. And ah, discussions going on while we’re speaking about wanting to develop a multiplex. (Dennis)

This hit at a visceral level with those who opposed the conference centre because they believed the City was reverting to *ad hoc* development associated with the “establishment mentality” (Art) of the past, and it raised the question of whether it had ever left. However, because the stakes were so high surrounding this project, it blatantly highlighted the “inner circle” (Todd) at work. Quite apart from being prepared to take on significant debt for the community, they appeared to have little regard for the social costs of this project. Although not verbalized, those who opposed the conference centre were suggesting, there are costs, and then there are *costs*.

There was a group there who really wanted to see this thing happen, it had failed a whole bunch of times, and this time there were going to be no slip ups and it was going to happen. At any cost. And it has happened at any cost. (Todd)

These participants suggested that in the drive to be comparable to other similar sized communities, and therefore competitive with them, civic leadership was not merely “selling Nanaimo”, but had in essence sold out Nanaimo, not only fiscally, but socially as well. For these participants, the downtown revitalization project was an indication of how far they were prepared to go. For these participants, it exposed Nanaimo’s relatively healthy balance sheet to risk for a project oriented primarily towards private sector interests.

#### *Taking [un]Calculated Risks: [un]Necessary Exposure?*

There were a number of concerns raised among those who voted against the conference centre. The first was that the local taxpayer assumed the risk for determining Nanaimo as a viable market for the private sector, as well as assuming responsibility for stimulating the local economy. In particular, because there were financing issues attached to the private partner, participants who opposed the conference centre suggested the City could not act in the best interest of the community.

Ah, the City was, the sad thing here is that it was such a conflict of interest, the City just in this, but in some ways the City had to be because it’s the partner. It’s a partner in this deal. And because, see that’s one of the weaknesses of the P3’s, is when you are a partner in the deal and your partner’s in trouble of course you’re going to come and save the partner! Well guess who we are? We’re the good old bank here; the taxpayer who is going to save the embarrassment for this P3 because our partner is having problems getting financing to build this up. (Dennis)

This was one of the key criticisms made by the FPN members who were interviewed. Local government should not be in the business of risk. Risk was a private sector activity and not a function of the public sector. Participants arguing this aspect, suggested that if the municipality carried significant debt, it would likely result in their inability to provide other essential services in the community that were not adequately covered currently such as education, health, fire and police services. Engagement in projects that extended beyond the local government's traditional mandate exposed the public to an unprecedented level of risk.

It seems to me, when the City is putting, potentially putting as much money in or reputation or prestige into a project such as this that they would want to do their due diligence. Uhm ... let's see if this is really the right site for it ah... let's call in people who really know things of a convention centres and let's see what form it should take, where it should be, ahm, what specific attributes could be plugged into it in Nanaimo has that maybe would set it apart from other communities. I don't, I am not privy that any kind of that study was done. To me it just, it seemed to be the brainchild of someone on Council, and ... quite often, what I call about what seems to drive decision-making in Nanaimo is what I call "catch as you catch can" kind of decisions. An opportunity presents itself and so you just grab it, you don't really stop and do critical assessment of whether that really is the best option, comparing it to other blue sky options let's say. (Larry)

In the case of the PNC a number of disturbing observations contributed to their growing concerns over the risks to the public as the project unfolded. For FPN members in particular they believed the City was so entrenched in the project that they overlooked a number of key factors in determining the validity of the contract and the costs.

First, the City had not examined the broader context critically and members of the FPN suggested it was an antiquated aspiration. "In the meantime, the whole world was changing. Victoria got into the business, Vancouver got into the business, every Tom, Dick and Harry got into the business but they couldn't see the changing context" (Randy). They expressed concern that the project could not compete against other already solidly established centres offering stronger amenities, and whose locations already held strong international appeal. Further, both Vancouver and Victoria were renovating and adding space to their conference centres. The meeting space they provided would be reconfigured to accommodate the same target market that Nanaimo claimed as its niche. They feared that the conference centre would place a burden

on taxpayers with a “white elephant” that would not successfully achieve revitalization goals, nor would it benefit the community.

I mean a thing as when somebody comes and ah makes an offer that you ah been scrambling for – I mean ah do you do due diligence and that, and not just on the individual but then let’s, let’s see what the real forecast is. I mean and, and you take the time to send people away to two conferences, not just one but two, and they’re told at both conferences: “Before you do anything you need to nail down, secure in the hotel.” Okay? Because they more or less told you that a conference centre without a hotel won’t work. So I mean the flags are up from day one and you don’t do anything. (Jack)

Second, participants opposing the project suggested the existing transportation infrastructure as it stood, was inadequate. Transportation to the area by ferries was scenic, but not efficient for business travel. The local airport was planning upgrades to accommodate smaller regional jets but expansion, if approved would not be ready until a year after the conference centre opened. That these amenities already existed for both Victoria and Vancouver made some of the participants question if success was realistic.

Third, senior staff, members of the CCAC and Council were all clear in expressing the importance of a hotel to the project. A hotel to be built in conjunction with the conference was an absolute must and touted as the cornerstone to the project’s success. However, participants opposed to the conference centre expressed frustration that the City broke ground on the conference centre prior to having hotel financing in place, despite knowing that the City did not have enough hotel rooms, nor the calibre of hotel rooms that conventioners would demand. Participants noted that comparable communities had roughly 50% more hotel capacity than Nanaimo would have even with the addition of the new 140-room hotel. For these participants, not only had they put the park at risk by pursuing the conference centre, the City also put the taxpayers at risk if the project was not successful.

And ah, then they can’t secure funding. So that was one of the opportunities to pull away from Triarc, to continue the process on our own without them, without the hotel and invite hotel proposals in. But no! The City decides to offer Triarc the chance to secure funding and this time Triarc is proposing an 18 storey building. They actually shrunk the hotel from their initial, what they were going to build. Now why would they do that? Because they want the Maffeo-Sutton property. Extremely valuable piece of land. Yeah, they might have to contribute \$8 million to the City of Nanaimo, but the return is in the hundreds of millions. That’s the bottom line with Triarc. The free land and they have to build a hotel for that. (Jake)

Participants who followed the events closely and debated the decisions openly in front of City Council, suggested the City's decision to continue the relationship with Triarc was reckless, defying their responsibility to be accountable to the public they served.

Similarly, a few members of the community who were not involved in the decision-making process but who worked closely with the City and supported the project, expressed similar concerns, believing the City had stretched beyond their level of expertise in the contract negotiations. This not only put not only the project at risk, but jeopardized the City's financial ability to carry the project. These individuals agreed with the FPN, suggesting one of the greatest risks the City took was to assume a subordinate relationship to Triarc. Moreover, as one participant noted, these conclusions were also being drawn by the business community who were observing the City's actions,

[It] was just patently obvious to anyone with any experience ah that these, these guys out of New York were just; their attitude was that they, they had landed in Hicksville and they were going to take the City for every ride imaginable and ask for everything under the sun and get it because the City had no, no exit plan. You know they [City Council] were in this, gone through the referendum, they were in for a penny, in for a pound. And they [Triarc] were going take them for a long, very costly ride. (Hart)

However, participants involved in the negotiations disagreed with the assessment that the City had taken unnecessary risks. Instead, they conceded that there were some issues they should have secured, which would have made the relationship with Triarc less tenuous. For example, timelines could have been tighter, and "cultural differences" (Raymond), in other words the value systems between private and public sector made for a difficult partnership. That this made for a difficult working relationship was noted by one City employee involved in the contract negotiations.

Our partnership hasn't been a great marriage. Uhm, our partners have let us down time and time and time again. And we can't say that in public right? I can't say to the FPN, "Yeah you're right these guys are jerks." I mean we're married to them right? It would be like somebody coming up and saying "Why's your wife an idiot?" and I say, "Well she's just an idiot." You can't do that! (Raymond)

That they did not engage as equal partners was indicative of the differences between the public and private sectors. The City had a moral and legal obligation to its constituents, and

because it committed itself publicly, it could not back out of the project. However as Raymond went on to explain, the private sector did not assume the same moral accountability to the public. Instead, the private sector gauged their commitment according to market conditions. Some participants believed the decision to follow through with the partnership was the right one. They believed the conference centre was still a sound economic mechanism and investment. A conference centre's value had been demonstrated through its utility in a number of communities.

There's a lot of work on that, I mean there's a lot of work around the value in terms of a conference centre. Ahm, the Economic Development Association, uhm "... [transcript unclear]" American Group, but there's actually a group that meets to talk about building conference centres and host seminars, *The Build It and They Will Come* [transcript unclear]. There is a lot of economic development theory around the merits of a conference centre. Ahm, you know, as opposed to say, an arena. I mean there's quite a bit of theory around how much more economic development impact you get out of conference centre then there is around a sportplex. So there's a lot of work out there. So I don't think it's really disputed about how, how a conference centre can positively impact your economy. Ahm, and there's not many other billings like that would have the same impact. (Raymond)

Members of the FPN who were following the project closely argued that studies justifying the project contained errors and exaggerations that were misleading, and that the City's belief in the "build it and they will come" theory was not critically assessed, but a reaction to what was occurring elsewhere. Moreover, because the City had not exercised due diligence in implementing safeguards, they believed the City deliberately left numerous expenses off the balance sheet in order to paint the conference centre in a more favourable light than what was realistic.<sup>32</sup> For these participants, the cumulating of the construction costs

---

<sup>32</sup> Particularly concerning were costs to provide road access for the condominium development at the park; demolition and clean-up costs that included unknown costs for soil remediation. In contrast, participants suggested the City exaggerated the financial benefits. The most erroneous to them was the \$250 per delegate per day spending based on 100,000 delegate-days per year that would result in \$25 million in direct economic benefit. They could not reconcile these figures based on the consultant's reports the City used to provide the rationale. Nor did they believe that this was representing new economic activity, but accounted for changes in venues – money shifted from other locations within the City. For them, the focus on local and regional markets did not necessarily translate into hotel stays, nor expenditures based on averages derived on small and mid-size conference data.

Similarly, they noted that the average resident would not realize other real costs they would incur such as the increased destination and marketing initiative that would see taxpayers in the City paying in excess of \$6 million to promote the project within a 7-year time span. Correspondingly to these concerns were that other programmes would be lost and services forgone because of the PNC project's financial needs.

reported, the off-site servicing costs, the operating losses, land value, advertising budget, the interest costs of the long term and short-term loans were not part of the picture that the City painted for the citizenry.

From the way the referendum was run right on through to the way construction was run and ahm while I have absolutely nothing to go on uhm, I strongly believe that a lot of the costs, that a lot of the true costs of the project have been moved in a shell game around different budgets and so on. And you know I think we would need an in-depth forensic audit to, to demonstrate that kind of thing. But I think that, there's a lot more cost to this project than was actually reported ahm, due to allocation and things like that. Things being hidden. (Todd)

Overall, FPN members believed the City did the taxpayers of Nanaimo a tremendous disservice by not undertaking the proper economic studies of both the potential benefits and the substantial risks. "You know, never once was the fact mentioned that most convention centres in North America fail" (Jake). They believed the project was launched using demand studies, two conferences hosted by the convention industry, and conference delegate data based on averages that did not reflect Nanaimo's specific situation. Exacerbating these concerns, several FPN members noted the City failed to produce a risk-analysis study and questioned whether it had ever been commissioned.

Their final assessment was that the City, in skirting issues of public accountability and in the face of critical scrutiny and demand for accountability, could not rely merely on cheerful boosters. As one participant who invested considerable time scrutinizing all public records and financial information available questioned,

Where have all the pro-PNC cheerleaders gone? ... Those who were fond of touting the economic spin-off benefits for the project? How come when asked for documentation to support their employment and spin-off benefit claims, there is nothing but silence? (Marty)

### *Harnessing Political Will: Creating and Maintaining a United Front*

Harnessing a collective political will is best understood as creating and maintaining the united front put forward by City Council. City Council's unanimity was, for many of the participants

---

Finally, as time passed and changes to the contract occurred, the documents and figures provided were not updated to reflect a more accurate financial picture. Retail strata space and parking initially accounting for nearly 30% of the gross revenue in the first year were sold, yet figures available to the public never once reflected these changes. According to them, this made the information published just prior to the 2005 civic election relatively ineffectual.



supporting the project, an important message to convey to the community and the broader international community. Although one Councillor did not support the Triarc proposal, he had a reputation for consistently voting “no” on all major projects and budgets throughout his tenure in office. However, participants recounted that this Councillor was guardedly comfortable with supporting the concept of a conference centre when the idea first surfaced. That he would do so initially, given his reputation for voting no, suggested to them that his discomfort was not with the idea, but with the expenditure required. Because of this, his vote was not necessarily interpreted as supportive of the FPN’s position, nor was it seen as a vote against the conference centre. For this reason, his actions were discounted by most of the participants.

He’s been on Council 23 years, only one year he voted for it [the budget]. I think that if his voting record had been more significant than once in 23 years that might have been more meaningful. (Rudy)

In light of this consideration, participants supporting the project believed that Council’s solidarity and conviction to move the project forward was necessary and one aspect of the process done well. With the benefit of hindsight, these participants acknowledged ongoing unanimity was important and, according to most, was a significant factor in determining the outcome. In light of the growing acrimony, and with the challenges arising with the private partner Triarc, had even one Councillor withdrawn his or her support, it may well have created a domino-effect compromising the project. The inkling of concerns that first surfaced with the private partner continued to plague the project. Participants suggested this factor, coupled with the increasing vocal-ness of the FPN, would have unnerved an already increasingly uneasy public. For those who were part of the process, that they “worked and stuck together” (Dallas) was an important accomplishment. In other words, “Not only did they make a decision, but they stuck to it over multiple years” (David).

Moreover, Council’s solidarity was all the more significant given that City Council members held various political stances. As one civic official suggested, “there was a coming together of small C conservatives, City Councillors and the more left wing” (Graham). Support from across the spectrum of represented parties sent a message to the community that partisanship could be set aside for a decision they all believed was pivotal for moving the community forward. As one Councillor recalled, the final proposal generated some concern

initially, however, they were able to overcome their hesitations because they could find ways to align the project politically. For this councillor, Council's decision to support the project was procured for four reasons. First, the primary motivator to support the project lay in the potential for long-term jobs, creating economic stability for Nanaimo. Initially, Council saw the conference centre as a way to revitalize the downtown, but this stance evolved to see the conference centre as the road to diversifying the economy, and moving the community from its heavy reliance on the fishing and forestry industry. Councillors on the left, particularly concerned with how they could justify expenditures for a conference centre to their strong union constituency, positioned the message around job creation.

... that there were jobs. Good high paying jobs in the construction of it, and that there would be high ah, end tech jobs. Tech jobs at the end. The Civic Auditorium – you know, that ah, that sort of, that sort of technology that's in there is very sophisticated technology. Those are good jobs that are associated with that kind of stuff. Uhm, Malaspina, and their Tourism and Rec programs, and the Chef's program, those are, are, those are people in our community who would be able then to access jobs ahm, that are here in town. So that can like, that was good too. I know that there are lots of uhm temp staff, some of the tourist jobs or some of the restaurant jobs are low-end and uhm, low-paying jobs. But if we've got a Tourism and Rec degree up there or diploma, and a really respected Chefs program. It would seem to me that the jobs that they would find after would have to pay enough or people wouldn't be going through those programs to get an eight dollar an hour job. So I thought that there probably were going to be some good paying jobs. Uhm, linked up with the uhm, the arena there would be more jobs for our CUPE people because we were going to tear that down and then have two arenas, so that was, that seemed like a reasonable thing. Uhm, the jobs at the hotel, ah, every uhm, major hotel in this city is a union hotel. Uhm, it seems to me a no-brainer that they'll be in there, I imagine whatever hotel pops up here. So they are not low end, chintzy jobs necessarily. So, those, those were ahm factors that I thought were important. (Casey)

Others with liberal leanings suggested it was a way of positioning Nanaimo to compete with other communities, especially in light of the impending Olympics. For the more liberal council members, this dovetailed well with the province's overall push for growing the tourism industry. Second, beyond the promise of jobs, there were public components to the project such as the museum and civic auditorium, which also justified the expenditures. Because these infrastructure projects were part of the design, it was a way of offsetting the costs that the City perceived it would encounter in the near future, and when taking these facilities into

consideration, the costs did not seem as prohibitive. Third, the influential and unwavering leadership commitment to the concept of a conference centre was consistently present on City Council. Throughout the process that moved the conference centre from the initial concept phase to the design phase, four of the City Councillors rotated through the role as Chair of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC). In the role as Chair, each of these Councillors continued to convey the consistent and persuasive message that the conference centre would be a catalyst for other development and would serve as a means of diversifying Nanaimo's economic base. Each worked to harness and shore up any wavering political will.

Moreover, Council also recognized they needed strong community support for the project if they were going to secure federal and provincial funds for the project. In the past, City Council had a history of split voting on significant projects. Subsequently, a united Council would demonstrate through their strong commitment, the belief that this project was good for the community, with the hope of procuring the vote of residents who were undecided. The federal government in particular, was not prepared to fund a project unless they knew the community was supportive. Importantly, the referendum outcome was the marker gauging public sentiment. This message, conveyed by a Council member with strong ties to both the federal and provincial parties in power suggested this was another reason for Council to remain unified. That they did not receive further funding from the federal Liberals beyond the grant for the museum, and then, much later, 'greening' money<sup>33</sup> from the outset was because the referendum outcome was not as strong as the federal government would have liked. As one civic leader lamented,

One of the reasons we don't have the money, and a very CLEAR reason we didn't get the money until recently was because of the visible public opposition. Because, see if you ask any senior government official, they'll say "Well what we need is we have, one of the things we clearly need in uhm making a contribution to ahh local project is clear evidence of local support. And read between the lines, strong local public non-support means there is a whole bunch of other places where they can put money. (David)

However, this financial setback did not sway Council's decision.

---

<sup>33</sup> When the conference centre was almost built, a \$5 million greening grant was received, and as a result, some of those funds were used to retrofit the building with greening materials/functions just prior to the planned opening.

Most important, Council's unanimity sent a critical message to the international development community. Despite the close referendum outcome, Nanaimo's civic leadership could negotiate rough waters in the community and prevail. That the City's leadership remained united when under pressure from a very organized opposition, was important for those considering development opportunities in the City.

I think it sent, I think it's sent a positive message in a backhanded kind of way because it showed that, that even in the face of huge opposition, ahm the council stood its ground, it didn't back down in the face of that. I think all the way through council's decisions were eight to one ahm so it was a 8 to 1, 8 to 1, 8 to 1. Occasionally it might be a 7 to 2, but council really stood its ground so I have to give them, give them that. And you know, it showed that the, that the business community or the part of the community that understands what the ripple effect of a failure of this magnitude looks like, even the in the world of investment and development that they, they rallied and, and pull together and kept the boat, the boat from sinking. I think, I think that sent a strong message because really easily, it could have crashed and burned. (Hart)

This display of leadership, according to a former provincial politician who strongly and publicly supported the project, "was very much in the vanguard of the philosophy that we need, if you build it, people will come" (Mark).

As affirming and necessary as the collective political will was for some participants, it was equally troubling for others, primarily, but not necessarily only for those opposing the project. Many participants, observing Council's ongoing actions and its continual defensive stance towards the project, believed Council was entrenched in the idea of a conference centre. City Council's solidarity became a barrier to hearing the concerns of the residents, despite what appeared to be a rocky and unsettling relationship with the private partner. Moreover, they believed that because the conference centre was discussed for so long in the community, it had in effect, created tunnel vision among Councillors. Although alternative options had been tabled much earlier, the conference centre, once pursued, became the *only* discussion about how best to revitalize downtown. Further, despite the two previous setbacks, the conference centre remained on the table. For instance, "Most of them on Council *wanted* that conference centre," (Rudy) was a common sentiment expressed by participants on both sides of the debate.

In addition, members of the FPN suggested that if the City was serious about publicly debating the issue, it would have adhered to the more recent trends in referendum protocol where governments, both provincial and federal, provided funding for both "Yes" and "No"

advocates to run campaigns debating the merit and concerns of an issue.<sup>34</sup> As one member of the FPN, familiar with public administrative policy and procedures recalled,

We tried to get them to develop a fair referendum, they weren't interested, not remotely interested. So, really when it comes to process that's really the most important things. They had, they had their own internal process, secretive process with all of the people that matter to them. (Randy)

Perhaps most troubling to many of the participants opposing the conference centre was the legislative error committed by the City. They failed to apply for the referendum, and as a result, the City staff did not follow the Provincial statutes regarding public notification. Technically, this rendered the referendum illegal. The Inspector of Municipalities corrected the error, determining the oversight as a sequencing error. Both the actions of the City in handling the referendum and the Inspector's decision were infuriating for many of the participants. For them, it confirmed the solidarity and meant that they believed City staff's actions were deliberate. While Council as a whole was not in any way responsible for the error incurred by the City, participants viewed the lack of willingness by Council members to open the process to another referendum as an abuse of power. Had the City followed provincial legislation and statutes, public notification would have occurred sooner, thereby extending the referendum time frame. For the opposition, this time may well have made the difference in the community as to whether or not the referendum passed. Time was, for these participants, a significant factor, given the low threshold vote. This technicality could have provided a second chance for the community to either confirm or reconsider the outcome.

*Sandra:* The Municipal Act states that if you want to hold a referendum you have to apply to the province for permission to hold a referendum. It's just like holding a lottery, you got to get a number and then, then what they would've told them was "Yes, you can have your referendum and what's the question? We want to make sure it's worded to fairly", and then they would oversee the uhm, the expenses for both the Yes and No side. During the referendum they appoint someone to oversee it all, and they would have also balked at the 50% benchmark. At that point they would have said "No, no, no the referendums are 60, that's the standard, and what reason do you got to lower that to 50?" You've got to make that case. But instead what Nanaimo did, they went ahead and had

---

<sup>34</sup> The Charlottetown Accord in 1992 and PEI referendum on Confederation Bridge in 1988 were two examples cited by the study participant. However, other examples included Saskatchewan which sought in 1991 direct input from its citizens over legislation for balancing budgets, constitutional amendments, and public funding for abortions. Québec's sovereignty was also brought to the public in 1995 and for British Columbia (see for example, Boyer (1992) for a more comprehensive understanding of referendums and direct democracy in the Canadian context).

their referendum, got their paltry 52%. Then when it was pointed out to them that they had made a clerical error by not getting permission to hold a referendum, they went to the Director of Municipalities and said “Geez we’ve had this referendum and we got 52%, can you rubberstamp it?” And so they gave them retroactive permission to hold a referendum, but without any of the conditions they would have had imposed on them had they got permission first.

*Lisa: And so you think it was intentional?*

*Sandra: I don’t think smart people like [the City Manager] would have overlooked something like that. I think he knew darn well. And he’s really good at going “Oh geez, was I supposed to do that? Oh I’m sorry. Okay, can we have a referendum last week? Thank you.” You know. Come on! We’re talking that much money, nobody bothered picking up the book and saying “Geez, referendum, [pretending to flip through pages of a book], page 27, here we go!” Phone up the Director of Municipalities. Then? And fine, *then* apply to have a referendum.”*

Moreover, participants felt stonewalled when pursuing accountability at the Provincial level. The impact of the political will was observed not merely at the local level, but by their Provincial counterparts. For participants belonging to the FPN, they believed both the Chair of the Conference Centre Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Mayor had used their influence as Liberals at the provincial level to dissuade any recourse that may have been forthcoming.

The City was well aware of the enabling act and they were, and it’s documented in the minutes somewhere of ah, various City hall meetings that they knew about it, and that it had been used before to do this. [The Mayor] is a lawyer and a shrewd one at that and ah so what happened was they have lots of Liberal friends in government and they basically said “Look sorry about this, but we made this mistake. We didn’t announce this referendum and ah, but we think you should approve it.” Because it supposedly met all the criteria for being a legal referendum and, despite the amount of letters and stuff that were written to the provincial government complaining that this process was unfair. It was approved and the referendum was made legal even though it was not. (Todd)

These dimensions highlight the level of comfort displayed by the participants regarding the way unity is interpreted. For some, Council’s unity was a pre-requisite required in the transition of Nanaimo to a post-industrial community. However, for others it represented a philosophical shift in their role. City Council’s priority no longer lay with representing constituents, but one wherein unity was required to push forward a pre-determined agenda.

In summary, three factors worked to shape the repositioning of Nanaimo. Both Nanaimo's external image and its internal resident profiles highlight the barriers present when considering not only revitalization, but repositioning the City more broadly. Equally important in addressing these barriers were strategies to attract lifestyle residents and visitors to the community and remove their dependence from the cyclical impacts of their industrial heritage. These strategies required City Council's leadership to unify and to demonstrate to the business community that they could conduct business with a degree of confidence. This required a number of government interventions, many of which aligned with practices of the private sector that for some participants were necessary, and for others, afforded a degree of risk to the community both in terms of financial and social costs.

## **THEME II: PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES**

Very diverse realities were evident among the participants as they spoke of their ability to contribute to the decision-making process. As noted earlier, Nanaimo has had a long history of divisions and the conference centre process served only to reinforce those divisions. Despite a series of relatively recent projects, which were also steeped in controversy, participants could not remember an issue more divisive. One long-term resident observed, "I cannot remember another issue in this community that has so polarized the community. It really is a story of the Hatfield and McCoy's. If you're not for us, you're against us was City Hall's attitude" (Wendell).

According to participants, the opposition occurred for a number of reasons. While some participants dismissed the perspectives of the opposition to the conference centre outright, lumping them as naysayers or the "the always say no crowd" (Michelle) that were a part of community life, others were more introspective. There were a number of participants who had reflected on the process and determined that some of the issues raised by those in opposition were warranted. Similarly, those opposed to the PNC were not opposed to the broader objective of revitalization. They were not necessarily opposed to the concept of a conference centre as a contributor to revitalization.

Rather, participants' stances reflected how effective and open they determined the decision-making process(es) to be. For those opposing the conference centre, the public was simply denied the opportunity to make an informed decision about significant issues affecting

the future of their community. Information regarding the decision to remove the height cap, or the opportunity to debate the merit of the conference centre was never satisfactorily explained, and therefore, resolved for these participants.

Others however, believed the opposite. For study participants who were actively involved in the downtown organizations and committees committed to revitalizing the core, the decision to remove the height cap was warranted based on the rezoning plan formulated with significant input from committees in the core. Moreover, the conference centre was for these same participants, the result of several brainstorming sessions in which all of the community could participate. Their support for the conference centre came because they believed there was significant community involvement through several complementary processes. With regard to the conference centre, these volunteers believed this facility met the overarching goal of revitalizing the core. Also important for these participants, was recognition that the referendum was but one of three public invitations for the public at large to demonstrate their approval or disapproval. That the public on all three occasions voted in a direction that indicated their support was yet another reason these participants believed the public had been able to voice their opinion.

The way the participants understood and accounted for the decision to build the conference centre is the central issue that emerged in this second core theme, *Participating in Community Consultation and Decision-Making Processes*. Significantly, discussions regarding how and where they participated revealed how participants defined either the limits or the opportunities for representation. In turn, their understanding justified why they supported or resisted the conference centre project.

As noted earlier, four sub-themes add depth to the core theme. The first, *Prioritizing Principles over Projects or Projects over Principles: Setting the Tone for Community Input* provides the background in which the stances, those who supported the conference centre and those who did not, were forged. This theme directs attention to the quality of interaction that took place in the community. *Interpreting the OCP: Whose Perspective is Right?* highlights the importance of the OCP to this process, and how vital interpretation of the OCP was to each of the two primary groups that surfaced. At minimum, it speaks to the level of respect afforded this document by the participants in their desire to adhere to some of its principle tenets. *Defining and Debating the Limits of Public Participation* reflects both representative and direct



democratic principles at work in the community. The participant's interpretation of how and where these principles were or were not effective to enhancing and facilitating dialogue provided understanding of why the participants felt the way they did. The fourth sub-theme, *Shoring up the Mandate: Managing the Message* underscores community organizing that occurred to uphold the direction taken by the City.

### **Prioritizing Projects above Principles: Setting the Tone of Civic Interactions**

Participants had conflicting perspectives about the third conference centre proposal when it emerged that were not expressed with regard to the previous proposals at the Malaspina Hotel site. Instead, the Malaspina site was approved for high-rise development, which several participants suggested the community would welcome in exchange for the resolving the plight of the Malaspina Hotel. For this reason, while it was disturbing to some members of the community, for the most part, it flew under the public's radar as noted by a former *Plan Nanaimo* committee member and founding member of the FNP who spoke of his exchange with a member of the community.

And he came to me and said, [Dennis] "Is there something we can do?" It was the summer time and I said "Oh leave me alone I don't want to be bothered." But then when the Insight one developed, I said, "[Victor] I'm on your side now this is ridiculous." At least I told him, the old Malaspina site had been sitting there as an old hulk on the landscape for the past 10 or 12 years, it was just a shell. It was a symbol of, of you know, sort of the disaster in downtown Nanaimo and it had all this, this symbolism. I said "[Victor] you're losing", I said "The citizens of this town will buy anything; they'll take any proposal just to get that building finished because it is a colossal embarrassment for downtown." So I said "You don't have much hope there." (Dennis)

However, with the public announcement of Insight's application, participants concerned by City Council's consideration of a second high-rise on the waterfront realized the Pacifica project (The Cape Group's development project) was not a one-time deal in the community. In fact, many of the participants acknowledged that it was inconceivable that there would be demand for high-rise development in Nanaimo's core. Yet if Insight's application was approved it would mean Nanaimo's third and fourth high-rise projects would begin to significantly alter Nanaimo's downtown waterfront. Those who were opposed to the conference centre also feared that the approval of the Insight project would set a precedent for high-rise development (initiated most recently with the Pacifica project at the Malaspina Hotel)

in the core and across the City. For participants who were against raising the cap, they wanted to send a clear message to City Council to uphold the height restriction by-law.

All participants suggested the public meeting to approve Insight's project and remove the height cap was one of the most well attended public meetings ever in the community. Given the overwhelming opposition, study participants who formed FPN shortly thereafter, were hopeful that City Council would reject the application because of the number of citizens who did not support the proposed by-law changes. Moreover, these same participants suggested those who spoke in favour of changing the by-law represented the development and real estate communities, and it was obvious to them that self-interest drove their arguments. FPN members believed Council's actions to pass the third and final reading betrayed the public's trust. For these participants, the City's violation of the OCP indicated the lengths it was willing to go accommodate private sector activity.

This meeting stood out in the minds of most of the participants regardless of whether they supported the project or not. It was a significant moment that shaped the tone for the ensuing debate concerning the conference centre in large part because, as many of the participants suggested, City Council came to the meeting with a predetermined decision. In other words, they were there simply to meet local legislative criteria required under the Municipal Act, and not really present in order to hear or address the public's concerns about high-rise development on the waterfront.

Todd, an engineer in the community for approximately 20 years and who sat as part of the original OCP Committee, recounted his frustration that evening. For him, Council violated one of the pillars of the OCP, which called for public consultation and input on by-law changes that would alter significantly the community's waterfront.

And I remember being at the public hearing and [the Mayor] saying you know ahm, in the meeting before the referendum was announced he basically said, you know he said ah, "We are on the edge of an" - how did he phrase it? - he said basically, "We are on the edge of an announcement of the likes of which Nanaimo has never seen in its history." And this change to the OCP is critical and ah it's needed for Nanaimo and blah, blah, blah. And it didn't matter that there are 300 people there who are saying, "No we only want 15 storey buildings downtown." They went right ahead, steamrolled it through. (Todd)

Although not understood at the time by the majority of the public in attendance, the Mayor presaged the conference centre announcement. One downtown leader supportive of Triarc's impending proposal also recalled this moment,

And ahm ... let's see ... how can I put this? [long pause] ... There is, there's a huge political mistake at that meeting because the ahm lead elected official was ahm... was so proud of the fact that this hotel and conference centre deal ah was being struck and it was still in-camera information that ahm ... [pause] what was articulated was quite, quite glib in response to the people's objections to the height restriction. To the, he essentially, I mean the Mayor essentially said "Well, this is all irrelevant because, because wait till you read the newspapers tomorrow" you know. He couldn't tell them that he, that the City had made this deal, but in essence informed those hundreds of people that they were wasting their time at a public hearing because the City had already changed the height restriction. Okay, well you can appreciate how that went over. It was just like "Are you kidding me? Like you're having a public hearing on whether or not we should allow a 24 storey building on our waterfront?", and City Council is sitting up here in front of these hundreds of people telling us that you've already made the decision. (Hart)

Participants who later formed the FPN felt betrayed and duped upon hearing the announcement. They summarized it as a project conceived in secrecy and realized City Council's decision to vote against public sentiment that same evening was because the City could not complete the contract with Triarc without removing the height restriction by-law. For many of these participants, their opposition began as a *principle* issue and not a *project* issue.

Conference centre supporters in attendance that evening suggested the tone and tenor expressed by the City Council and specifically the Mayor led to the formation of the FPN. They believed that not only had City Council misjudged public sentiment, but its actions that evening "pushed people far away" (Casey). Moreover, for many participants, this initial stance set a precedent for things to come, removing any possibility for healthy debate to occur around substantive issues.

Well unfortunately, that's how it began; with this side versus this side. It didn't begin with "Okay, you know if we're going to do this, let's be together and do it right." (Dorothy)

This set the tone for the type of interaction to come, not only in the lead-up to the referendum but throughout the lead-up to the 2005 civic election. Moreover, the venues to facilitate two-way dialogue such as email, the City's website, and at the weekly Council meetings, open houses, and forums appeared to provoke the prevailing attitudes. On the one

hand, those who supported the conference centre suggested these forums were being abused by a select group of individuals in the community, and especially the FPN, which they believed was relentless in their demand for answers. On the other hand, participants also suggested there was a prevailing attitude in the mindset of the City's officials that was patronizing and insulting. As noted by one participant, both stances contributed to the vitriolic environment surrounding the PNC,

My opinion unfortunately ah more often than not would be, would be staff and elected officials' outlook on public process is that, it's a necessary evil and a city would be a really easy place to manage if there weren't any people you know. And having said that, which is quite critical, it's also true that in the municipal environment that public officials and public staff get the shit kicked out of them on a daily basis. If someone pays two bucks in taxes, they think it's their inalienable right to insult and berate somebody that works, works for the public institution. You know "I'm paying your salary so jump through my hoops." It's a difficult environment from both, from both perspectives. So I can see how people can get jaded quickly but it doesn't change the fact that the jadedness is pretty ugly on a massive scale. (Hart)

For participants supporting the conference centre, the crux of the matter really lay with the notion that the FPN were not willing to concede the referendum outcome and the terms negotiated by the City. To their way of thinking, City Council continued to hear delegations, despite no new information upon which to change their minds, or new information that they could convey. Moreover, the process had become fraught with innuendos and misgivings, which they believed were demoralizing and deflating to both elected officials and to the volunteers and not useful or productive to the debate. If anything, the insults would deter politicians and volunteers from coming back to the table, and "putting their shoulder to the wheel" (Mark), doing the hard work of trying to re-build the City's core. The ongoing criticism was a reason the City became increasingly insular about the project. As one civic leader noted,

We got all this feedback about advisory committee, the minutes should've been public, the process should have been public, and maybe they should've been. I don't know the right answers to that, but what I do know is that these are volunteers giving their time and valued information. If we'd made that public, who in their right minds would volunteer for that? And who in their right minds would step forward, "You know I'll be on that committee, and although meeting after meeting where I get shit on and dumped on, ridicule me, the newspaper and from my family and kids," that's just not the way, you can't get volunteers to do that right? So we made the issues that the committee were dealing, were negotiations in camera and we haven't released them, the minutes and nor ah

[long pause] ... And I think that's right decision because these were volunteers, these weren't elected people. They weren't people paid uhm so I don't think it, I think that's above and beyond the call of duty to become a target and I think that's what would've happened. (Raymond)

On the other hand, a number of the participants believed that the spirit of intent to engage the public in a meaningful way had been absent from the beginning of the process. The public meeting and efforts initiated by the City were artificial environments providing the illusion that the City truly desired to engage with the community. Where dialogue occurred, it was viewed by most of the participants as contrived, and they cited the public open houses as examples, which were geared towards selling the conference centre as opposed to debating it. The nature of debate and dialogue that prevailed throughout nearly four years of debate is epitomized the experience of one FPN member who attended the first question-and-answer forum scheduled by the City.

I remember going to the Shaw Cable studio building and ah where they had ah an open forum with [the Mayor] and the whole council was sitting on this stage and they had, they had used the lobby of Shaw, and they were sitting way up high on the stage and it, to me it was, the minute I walked in I thought this is reminiscent the supreme Soviet in the Kremlin [chuckling]. They were so high elevated. And, and then the peons like us we could be on the, way below and ask our little questions and all the while, behind Council on this high ledge there was this neon thing that was flashing: 80, 80, 80, 80 like 80% and it was, it was, it was pretty awful. (Patrick)

The environment and posturing of this meeting sent the message to those opposing the conference centre that the City was not interested in discussing the merit of a conference centre as much as it was about convincing people to vote yes. The mayor confirmed their feelings when after the referendum approved the partnership with Triarc, and the Mayor was quoted as saying, "A win is a win is a win" (Todd, Randy, Patrick). It resonated negatively with those who opposed the proposal. They believed it represented the attitude held by City Council and senior City staff that nothing else mattered except winning.

Subsequently when the project was approved by the public, those who opposed the project felt they were "being ridden roughshod over," (Tyler) and they questioned whether the referendum could adequately represent public opinion. From where they stood, 52%, while a majority, was not a win, anymore than 48% represented a loss. Simply, in their opinion, a vote

this close suggested the community was evenly divided. Having roughly 50% of the voting public against a project was certainly not a show of support. In their estimation, the nearly equal split did not provide a mandate significant enough to proceed on a project of this magnitude.

One local leader pondered the implications of the split vote: “Yes it’s a majority, not disputing that, but when you start talking about a project like this, then you would think we need to put our heads together and review where the hell we went wrong” (Jack). This was why they believed a moment of reflection was needed.

You know a thoughtful mayor, given that result would have said, “This isn’t a good enough. We’ve got to find a better consensus about what we’re doing down here. We won the referendum, yes, we have that money but we should go out and rethink this and try to get more community buy-in.” That’s not what our mayor did. He said, “A win is a win, away we go.” (Randy)

Interactions primarily between the FPN and the City detracted from opportunities for meaningful dialogue to occur and participants on both sides of the debate suggested the other bore culpability for the level of discourse evident throughout the conference centre discussions. Participants suggested the tone and tenor at the public meeting to raise the height cap, set the nature of debate occurring in the community because there were no real opportunities to debate the substantial issues of concern in the community (i.e., first, the raising of the height cap and second, the merit of the conference centre). As a result, an “us versus them” stance surfaced that diminished the quality of interactions thereafter.

### **A Matter of Interpretation: Adhering to OCP Values**

Significantly, most of the participants framed the debate with either explicit or tacit reference to the Official Community Plan (OCP). It is noteworthy that participants who were not in the community when the OCP was drafted or were not active in its development, still spoke of the OCP. All participants inferred the OCP was the guide outlining how re-imagining the community could occur. All participants spoke in favour of downtown revitalization. That they raised the OCP as a reference to how it should occur speaks to its influence and relevance to the community.

However, because the OCP lacked a fine filter through which to assess the kinds of projects that would meet its objectives, divisions surfaced among the participants in the

interpretation of the OCP. Participants who were members of FPN believed the City's approval of a number of amendments violated the spirit of the OCP, most obviously around the waterfront development. For others, high-rise developments could be justified under policies referring to diversification, increased density, and the economic drivers outlined in the plan.

For members of FPN who were interviewed, the City's approval of a series of minor amendments altered zoning significantly in the community. The OCP was defined as a "living document" and was structured so that through appropriate amendment processes, the City could respond and adapt to meet a changing environment. Its flexibility was not, they suggested, a way to exert power and influence as a means to bring about major amendments that ultimately would alter the downtown waterfront. For them, the rider "living document" was a slippery slope through which the City had recently demonstrated its intent to accommodate development-driven projects. In the case of the downtown, it led to the re-zoning of the waterfront on Front Street that would house two high-rises in an area where such developments were previously not allowed.

And that area on the other side, on the east side of Front Street, between Front Street and the water down there ahm, was not identified as a tower development. That tower development was back over in-land over on Chapel Street, that's where the high-rise development, so that was the fundamental shift that they made. Now City Hall will say "Oh well, it's always been sort of a high rise area, but they really fudged the maps and we've got maps to show that they changed that boundary to the waterfront. It was never a waterfront for high-rises; it was set from Front Street west. And so they did a little finagling of the maps on those lines. And now, then they, then they made a huge amendment where they said "Okay there's going to be certain zones of downtown so, so this Chapel Street/Church Street area right there is going to be high-rises. (Dennis)

However, as explained by participants who were a part of the rezoning discussions, the amendments to the OCP to accommodate the high-rises would, in the end, preserve view corridors, particularly in the downtown. A number of these participants, despite their involvement recommending rezoning, were not eager to see development on the waterfront either. However, they believed the demand for waterfront would continue to increase and in order to meet the increasing pressures for waterfront by the development community, they needed to take a proactive stance to protect and promote the community's long-term interests. For them, the 15-storey cap by-law was ineffective in its current form because it did not prevent views from being blocked. One had only to drive down a portion of the waterfront to

see that it only took a three or four storey building to block views of the water when one was downtown. Views were only available as one moved away from the waterfront and up the hill.

With regard to the Insight Development project in particular, under the current by-law, Insight's high-rise profile would have resulted in a wider building unless they built up. If the City allowed for these changes, the building profile could become narrower and less obtrusive. As noted by one City Councillor, they wanted to preserve the view corridors. City Hall's fear was not that they would have "a wall of high-rises on the waterfront" (Casey), but rather the by-law as it stood, permitted rows of 15-storey buildings that could essentially create a wall as well.

In order to prepare for the future, this was the best option. City Council believed that, despite the removal of the cap, they had attached safeguards through this amendment. Shifting the City's zoning boundaries demarcated where high-rise building clusters could occur, which then limited up-zoning to three specific areas in the City. To their thinking, allowing clusters in three downtown areas would still maintain the majority of the view corridors, would meet downtown density goals and reflect what was intended by the height-cap in the OCP. Further, each development coming to the community would still require Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee's (PNAC) consent, the screening body for all applications in which rezoning was required.

### **Debating and Defining the Limits of Community Participation**

Although the Pacifica tower issue raised awareness, and the Insight tower application was the catalyzing event triggering resistance in the community, the conference centre became the focus of an "us" versus "them" debate and brought up questions of participation more broadly. Study participants who favoured the project, suggested this was a pivotal juncture in the history of this story. They believed if the City had facilitated some form of engagement with the public it would have likely stemmed FPN's indignation and the ensuing backlash. These participants believed members of the FPN were stirring doubt among residents without being aware of the groundwork laid that determined how City Council had arrived at its decision to remove the height restrictions. Because the PNC had a high-rise component, it confounded the public's ability to assess the conference centre independent of the high-rise by-law.

Participants who were actively involved in the revitalization efforts in the downtown suggested the public meeting was not the only forum through which the public were speaking.



They pointed out that City Council had taken into account the perspectives of the various committees under the umbrella of the DNP. These committees were established to represent the various aspects of community life as they worked to fulfil the mandate of the downtown plan. Participants, who were a part of these discussions, suggested these committees were alternative community representation processes. Subsequently, the decision of Council at the public meeting in September reflected the input of “months and months of committees’ work” (Paul), and that the public meeting was but one voice informing City Council’s decision. Participants who were a part of this process suggested City Council’s decision reflected this information, something the public could not appreciate. In addition, they argued that Plan Nanaimo Advisory Committee (PNAC) had approved the overall zoning changes in the core, in addition to reviewing and approving Insight’s application, and bore some influence on the City’s decision.

Moreover, many of these same participants believed public meetings were not an effective reading of public sentiment. The nature of public meetings was such that only those who opposed what was being presented usually attended. Basing decisions by who and how many people showed up to public meetings reduced decision-making to a numbers game where often the NIMBY (not in my backyard) effect came into play. As one civil servant suggested, public meetings were a tool to gauge public sentiment, but not *the* indicator of final assessment.

So what happens is you get into this game, and now the neighbourhood says they send out 10,000 emails saying “thou must be there” because they’re going to count numbers, and developers start to import people, bringing all these construction workers in and the likes. It becomes a meaningless process.  
(David)

If anything, public meetings, as a form of representative democracy, posed a conundrum for City Council. On the one hand, if it made a decision contrary to the majority, it appeared City Council was not listening to the public. On the other hand, gearing decisions only according only to public sentiment resulted in reactive and restrictive decisions that were not necessarily representative of the larger value(s) that lay behind the course of action charted.

*David:* The way I explain it is. You have kids yeah?

*Lisa:* Yeah, I do.

*David:* Okay, so the way I explain it is, if my house was a representative democracy, then every night we'd have ice cream three to one. So somebody has to have larger values ...

More often than not, the changes in the community were not popular decisions. City Council in addressing more of the long-term values meant they were “were essentially taking away people’s ice cream, or at least changing the nature of the ice cream” (David). In this case, density through high-rise development was a means to achieve a vibrant downtown while at the same time, a way to achieve a more sustainable community. This, too, fit the goals outlined in the OCP. These factors influenced its decision, and provided the rationale for voting against public sentiment.

Subsequently, those who were part of informing the decision-making process through their committee work framed their decisions in the overriding goals of the OCP, the Main Street report, and the Downtown Reference Plan. It was with these goals in mind that study participants who were part of the rezoning recommendations for towers on the waterfront, provided input to City Council. In turn, City Council amended the by-law, paving the way for tower activity while simultaneously clearing the way for the conference centre. Together, participants who advised City Council believed these separate but complementary and synergistic projects would secure the community’s long-term viability and restore the downtown to a healthier state. According to these same participants, the charge that the City made a decision contrary to public sentiment was misleading. Voting by popularity or representative democracy was but one of several perspectives to consider in the decision to remove the height cap.

However, the conference centre decision-making process was an opportunity for the community to directly determine whether the conference centre would be built. It was direct democracy as opposed to representative democracy. Regardless of how participants felt about the lead up to the referendum, all participants recognized the referendum as defining the decision. Although City Council had made the decision to enter into a contract with Triarc, it was up to the community to decide whether they could proceed. Unlike the issue with the tower development, the community had the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process through direct channels.

When participants were asked how community representation was built into the decision to build the PNC, a number of venues available were described at which community members could either participate or garner information. Participants cited open houses, open mikes at City Council meetings, the City's question/answer website, an assigned City staffer responsible for community feedback, as well as direct correspondence with elected officials and municipal staff as the principal forums to discuss the conference centre. They also spoke about the information distributed through the City's mail campaign to inform the public. Furthermore, representatives of the CCAC made presentations to various community groups, including local unions and the University's student body. For those involved in the decision-making, it demonstrated thoroughness in thought over how and who to inform. It was a "watershed in public participation" (Mark) in both presenting information and soliciting feedback throughout the lead-up to the referendum.

However, as one retired citizen observed, the participation in the open houses and presentations were viewed by some as more mechanical than meaningful. More often than not, these forums were seen as one-sided attempts to bring the community on-board. Discussions were targeted and as a result precluded conversations about the possibility to examine alternative options or even alternative locations.

And ah, usually there'll be a few other people there and you can say "well what do you think of this?" and so forth. It's ah, a ... formality. It doesn't really reach the broad public. You get at sessions like that, may be maybe get a couple hundred people. Usually they're, they're people with prior sort of interests like ourselves. They would be people who are aware of the process, and have some experience with it. And ah, so, you're not reaching out to Joe Blow, who's busy looking at the TV or something. Well, say even with those say couple hundred people who did come out, there will be protagonists and antagonists. You know and of that couple hundred people, and probably out of that the majority would say "Hey, that's a hellish good idea". You know that's often the way it is. And the general public, well ... the general public I think they are often sort of hopeful ... There is a tendency to support improvements. (Art)

Other participants were less charitable in their stance, suggesting the open houses in particular were a charade, designed more to sell the conference centre than debate it. In particular, the citizen-based design process changed the building articulation and form from a tall, all glass building, to a structure of brick that fit with Nanaimo's heritage and historic core. This changes were costly in terms of time and materials, but all participants who were closely

associated with the decision conceded the time and funds expended were worth the changes. They believed the physical changes to the conference centre demonstrated their openness and willingness to hear the public. As one advisory committee member noted, in the end it “caused this to be a better product than it might otherwise have been” (Timothy).

However, other participants were less accepting of their interpretation. They believed the efforts directed towards the broader public were akin to “window dressing” (DM) and provided the illusion of citizen participation, but were more than anything else attempts to placate the public.

*Todd:* You know, there, there was really no attempt at mediation with any changes to the plan. It was “This is the plan,” and they basically fought to proceed and advance with that plan without changes. I don’t think there are any aspects of the project that you see today, that were affected by input from the community except I know that after the referendum was approved ah, and they were in one of the design stages, they had some open houses that they had public input on. I think some of the coloring schemes and things like that, and you know [chuckling] so they could probably say the public had some say in the final design of the building there or what have you.

*Lisa:* *Not anything that you would say is significant?*

*Todd:* No. No substantial, substantial changes. It was the way it was, take it or leave it.

For several participants reflecting critically on the process, it begged the question, “What decision-making process?” (Marty). For them, this part of the process was lost on City Council,

I think, the decision was made to build a centre and then “Oh yeah and we’re going to go out to the public and get their opinion.” But the decision was already made to build the centre, I think before, and the public opinion didn’t really have anything to do with it. And the public isn’t stupid, I mean, they saw that too. And that’s one of the reasons why, I think, it got so ugly. (Dorothy)

At the core of it, it had nothing to do with the conference centre, it was about high-rises; and it was especially about the sense that the City of Nanaimo had complete disregard for public process. That’s what they were angry about. (Hart)

Disregarding public process was a weakness acknowledged by a number of participants who supported the conference centre. Despite all the preparation by the community groups to provide input to the foundational pieces facilitating rejuvenation, the City failed to engage the

public when they understood what the implications of the project would entail (i.e., tax increases, land at Maffeo-Sutton Park and so forth). When asked about the decision-making process, one community leader who strongly supported the project, without mincing words quipped, “The cows are out to pasture, the water has already gone under the bridge, the ship has sailed” (Lewis). He was not alone in his observation. Other participants, also supportive of the project, suggested the City did not properly engage the community before the referendum and this was the reason for the heated debate after the announcement.

Importantly, many of the participants had a sense that real solicitation of opinion over the value of a conference centre did not extend beyond the business community. The Chamber of Commerce’s membership was perceived to be actively involved because a number of their members sat on different boards and committees in the community, and as a result, their influence was perceived as far-reaching and overlapping. Moreover, their influences extended across volunteer organizations such as the Rotary and Lion’s Clubs, and their various social networks. “It was the same actors who are intermingling more or less in these different groups” (Randy). Although the City could claim widespread representation across individual groups, importantly, they were not necessarily talking about a different cross section of people or community groups. One participant, who was not part of the initial decision, and yet was a major stakeholder in the project suggested it was “typical Nanaimo” guided by “who knew who” and “equally important, who you can trust that is going to move in the same direction that you want to move” (Dorothy).

Subsequently, when the City claimed broad-based input in the decision, scepticism surfaced from those who were closely observing the events. One community member who was actively involved in his neighbourhood association suggested too much representation can make for an unproductive process. However, he also suggested that those most impacted should be a part of the process and in this, he believed the City had failed to consider those who should have been a part of that process.

I am for all sorts of citizen involvement, but I think it can ... muddy the process. One of the things, I know our neighbourhood association, was looking at was saying ahm ... if you look at downtown as being a neighbourhood, where was the consultation process for the people who live downtown, call downtown their neighbourhood? Uhm, what did they ... I think if there would have been any place for it, it would have been if we were asked to support say a new neighbourhood association downtown saying, “we want to have a look at this.”

My recollection is that City Council was kind of challenged on that. That and the whole relaxing of high-rises, height of high-rises downtown which was kind of a part of the convention centre, because there was the high-rise hotel component to it. And people were saying, “Our Official Community Plan doesn’t support that. And, and we don’t want that because it blocks views.” And City Council came back, and the people said there has never been a plan done uhm, or a consultative process about those kinds of issues for downtown, and Council seem to come back and say, “Oh yes, it has.” Well my understanding is, “Well no it hasn’t.” They might have approached the Old Quarter Business Association, the downtown business association [NCCA], but I don’t, I’m not aware of any process that ever consulted the residents of the bowl as to how uhm, the building downtown might impact them. So to me that’s one of the other things, that the decision making process didn’t seem to legitimately, couldn’t legitimately say that it had polled residents of even that neighbourhood that would be the most affected. (Larry)

This too, was the conclusion reached by two of the four City Councillors interviewed. They suggested the inherent weakness in the process was limiting consultation and input to a narrow field of stakeholders.

*Casey:* The uh, the uhm, the committees, right? Uhm, what are they called - the conference centre advisory committee. So when ... City Council committees really uhm, are closed committees. The names, they’ll advertise something, they’ll get five ah, positions on this committee to fill or whatever it is, probably do it every three years. So it’s advertised in newspapers, and then people apply. Ah we choose who our, who we want to be our advisor ... [transcript unclear]. This particular committee was entirely dominated by this, ah, I don’t know that there were any sort of just ordinary, plain people who had an interest in what was going on downtown. I, they were all, they were drawn for their perceived expertise in, in business. So I think that is a mistake. That was like the initial mistake. It’s only being advised, only having advisors who are, who think like you and, and then it just went, ah ... there was no initial process – so far as I can determine.

*Lisa: Initial process being?*

*Casey:* Initial process being going to the community saying, “We’re thinking about doing a major infrastructure project. And these are the reasons we want to do it and we want to engage you in, to say – what do you want your downtown, you know, if you had your best ideas, give them to us, what do you want your downtown to look like? What do you think is going to really kick-start the downtown?” Those were, those were missing steps, I think, in the process.

In this Councillor’s opinion, the City had failed to engage the public adequately on two separate occasions. The first was through the recruitment and selection of members for the

CCAC. Members were chosen for their expertise, instead of aiming to achieve good community representation. While the business community represented one legitimate sector included on CCAC, it did not reflect the community in its entirety. Another City Councillor echoed this sentiment, suggesting the CCAC was made of individuals who represented the hospitality and tourism industry who would “feed off” the conference centre. “Now was there an average Joe citizen who worked in the mill or ah was a pan-handler or that? No. So you know so it’s your, your [their] interpretation of what you would call ah, community representation” (Jack).

The second occasion to engage the public was through the FPN. The FPN had formally requested \$10,000 from City Council to hire consultants for independent assessment of the proposal and the contract. Because City Council denied their request, one of the City Councillors interviewed believed they missed an opportunity to dialogue about how the independent analyses may have helped to shape the project in the long run. However, because City Council did not approve this request, this Councillor believed it sent the message that they were not open to hearing any information pertaining to the proposal that may be construed as negative.

However, as noted earlier, participants who were actively involved in various downtown committees suggested public consultation needed to be framed beyond the announcement of the conference centre. For these participants limiting the discussion to only the conference centre negated an overall picture of what happened *prior* to the announcement of the conference centre, as well as what occurred *after* the 2004 referendum vote. For these participants, there were three distinct opportunities for the public to participate in the substantive issue of whether or not to build a conference centre. The first opportunity came out of the 1999 and 2002 civic elections. These were elections in which revitalization was a key platform and set in motion a series of committees and publicly-held sessions that eventually identified the conference centre as the mechanism to spur the downtown towards revitalization. The opportunities to debate the conference centre were open to any citizen in the community who wanted to be involved in the meetings and brainstorming sessions.

I think that you need to pay attention to, if you’re talking if, if, if, you start to focus on the convention centre, you may get the impression that there wasn’t a lot of public process. But in fact ah, as a City we were going through a huge, well-participated public process ah, that was the Downtown Nanaimo

Partnership. Tremendous stakeholder reach, tremendous participation in planning workshops. I can remember ... [transcript unclear], Main Street designs were here and that would've been in 2002 or 2003 ... and I can't remember exactly, going to the Coast Bastion and being in a room that had two or 300 people there talking about different ideas. And this was just one of the things that was talked about at that time. Ah, but it was certainly talked about in that how, you know, what do we do to turn down town around? So I think ahm it would be unfair to say that there wasn't public process in this ah, for anybody who is interested in any way. It would be impossible to imagine that ahm, that ... it didn't ah that this process didn't contribute early on. (Paul)

Further, the 2002 election specifically named a conference centre as the economic development tool through which revitalization would largely be achieved. Again, many of the candidates' and incumbents' campaigns specifically supported a conference centre as the key to downtown revitalization. Their appointment was affirmation to new and returning Councillors that the public wanted them to follow through on the conference centre mandate.

The second opportunity for broadly-based community input was through the 2004 referendum. While the civic elections and various activities downtown gave broad approval for revitalization, all participants acknowledged that *the* decision to proceed with the PNC lay with the referendum outcome. It was the sentinel determining public opinion. Participants supporting the project believed the City had, prior to the vote, outlined the specifics of the project including implications for the homeowner, such as increased taxes, and for the community as a whole, as with the land transfers at Maffeo-Sutton Park. The conference centre supporters believed the referendum went above and beyond what was legally required of them, demonstrating their desire to give the community voice.

I mean that was, that is the furthest of the decision-making that you can ever have. You can have a plebiscite, you can have this, but the referendum, not very many cities hold Referendums. They call counter-petition, we call it. Lots of, lot of cities hold counter-petition, very few ah cities do referendum. And we wanted to do the referendum, because we wanted to make sure that this is what people want. And that decision was already made in November of 2005, ah 2004 when people spoke and said yes that decision, that we want. (Jason)

The 2005 election was the third critical marker determining the public's decision to support the conference centre. All participants noted that it was the single biggest campaign issue for all incumbents and candidates. Those who supported the conference centre suggested because the FPN persisted in their opposition after the referendum, very vocal and heated



discussions continued in the community for the year between the referendum and the 2005 civic election.

Significantly, prior to the election, the City released the cost overruns and subsequent challenges it had incurred with regard to the project. The nature of the proposed hotel/condominium development with the private partner had not flowed smoothly, and there were significant changes from the original proposal. Despite the setbacks and a nearly 40% increase in hard costs (i.e., nearly \$20 million over budget), the voting public returned the same leadership to Council. This was a point driven home on many occasions by proponents of the conference centre. If there was a “second chance” for the community to stop the project, participants who supported the project suggested it would have occurred with this civic election. On the one hand, incumbents’ platforms supported the conference centre, while on the other hand, those entering the political race determined they would curtail the project.

Conference centre supporters believed the FPN ran a slate in the 2005 election. When the voting public reinstated the majority of the Councillors, it was vindication as much as it was affirmation over the direction charted. According to elected officials, because of the uncertainty surrounding the project, they stopped the project at a noncommittal point in the build. If the community returned the incumbents, they could proceed with the build. However, if the community voted in those who would have stopped the project, they could fill the hole intended for the foundation.

The participants who supported the project suggested the community wanted the project to proceed in spite of the setbacks and cost overruns. One senior City staff member recalled the significance of this election by using the analogy of a flight plan. There is a critical moment when the decision to either rotate or abort a flight upon take-off must be made, and so too, this election was symbolic of committing to the conference centre. In much the same way, this election represented a critical juncture because the vote was symbolic of the public’s desire and commitment to proceed. The conference centre site had been prepared and it was up to the community to determine whether the hole was backfilled or if the contractor poured footings.

*David:* Council has thrown the throttles. They are now in the cockpit saying flaps up, wheels up etc., on any of those various decisions Council could, the public could have said to Council “We don’t want the flaps up. We don’t want ... the specific issue is, we’re not going to give you fuel”. That’s the referendum. But uhm, you know, on the various public meetings, the drop ins, the issues on, on design and components, and ah, the design review meetings are all open to

the public if they want to be there, so uhm, when the expropriation bylaws come forward they're open. So there is a million decision-making points that the public is informing. I mean the involvement, the key one for sure, is ah, well there's two. I actually think there was two referendums. There is the official referendum for borrowing, and then there is a very, very heated and vocal public discussion for months and months and months prior to the election resulting in a clear majority of council members, who were supporting the conference centre getting passed. So, in my world that, that's a more significant mandate.

*Lisa: Does that reflect then the public's general satisfaction with Council by re-electing them?*

*David:* I have to think so. Uhm, because that's the ultimate test in a democracy so not only is, there's clear choices, not only are there are a number of council members running on, running and that they are, they are on the plane. "I'm on the plane" and getting support but there's a whole gamut of council candidates running opposed to it who don't get elected. So I think at the end of the election ... uhm, either 7-2 or 8-1. There were a preponderance of council members to support the project.

*Lisa: This in your mind is really a vote of confidence for going ahead?*

*David:* Well not only a vote of confidence, but it would take a majority of council members to be elected to, I mean we could stop at any time, but we have a long and involved public process of ah . . . huge long and very embittered election campaign, we have all of those election meetings. The public votes in enough council members that say "were going to proceed with this issue". They could have equally voted in enough council members that said, they weren't going to, or were going to change it. That didn't happen.

Supporters of the conference centre, and especially those who were responsible for implementing the decision, framed the mandate to proceed in the broader principles of direct and representative democracy. In this case, 52% of the voting public approved the referendum, which all of the supporters argued was the most democratic process available. Although these same participants would have preferred a stronger mandate from the community, in the end it made little difference to the outcome for two reasons. First, as City staff explained in their interviews, their job was to implement what the public decided by majority, regardless of how narrow the margins were. In addition, staff indicated that community referendums rarely returned a strong mandate especially where capital projects were concerned. They rationalized the vote suggesting that there were a number of reasons represented in a "no" vote, and in this case, 48% who voted no may have voted no for a whole host of reasons. For example, they

may have voted “no” to avoid tax increases, or to the development at Maffeo-Sutton Park, but their “no” vote might not have necessarily represented a vote against the conference centre.

Moreover, the 1999, 2002, and 2005 elections were representative of democratic channels that first gave broad affirmation to downtown revitalization, and subsequently affirmed that one of the mechanisms for achieving revitalization was through the development of a conference centre. The results of the last of these elections were seen as support for this specific project even with budget increases and structural changes. Further, in this last election the public voiced their preference by returning eight Council members who supported the project. Moreover, the public had not elected any of the incumbents publicly endorsed by FPN. Supporters suggested Nanaimo’s voting public could not be any clearer. Subsequently, the majority of the City’s civic officials and staff interviewed interpreted this as a firm commitment to proceed and for some of these same supporters, this compensated for the close vote in the referendum.

### **Shoring up the Mandate: Managing the Message**

All of the participants suggested important agents in this story were the Yes Committee and the *Invest in Yes* Campaign. Moreover, most of them suggested the intervention of the *Invest in Yes* campaign was likely the reason that the City secured a Yes vote from the referendum. Many supporters of the conference centre were active volunteers who, through various downtown committees, were examining ways of improving the downtown and stemming urban decay. Like most residents, many of these participants had speculated over the buzz of an impending announcement circulating in the media and in the everyday interactions downtown. However, despite the familiarity with the City’s core, and the connections with the City because of their volunteer roles, many of these participants were also surprised to hear of the scope of the project and the details of the public-private partnership with Triarc when they were announced.

Equally important to their volunteer role in the community, many of the individuals interviewed were prominent local business owners or community leaders. As both volunteers and those who had a financial stake in the community, they were looking to move the community forward and away from the negative image associated with Nanaimo. When the announcement came for the proposal in September 2004, it was welcomed, yet not without reservations. While many of these participants also expressed some reservation over the changes to Maffeo-Sutton Park, they believed the future of the community was dependent upon

the compromise brokered. That the park was going to be increased 20% in size was a trade-off for the towers that were going to be bordering the edge of the park.

The genesis of the Yes Committee, much like that of FPN, was reactionary. However, their goal was two-fold. First, they believed they needed to serve as a counter-point to offset the message of the FPN. Many of these participants recalled the high-rise meeting that beget FPN's existence and to some extent their own. They described it as a significant political *faux pas* because the mayor's latent referral of the impending announcement confused the issue of high-rises with the conference centre.

*Lisa: When did you become aware of the huge wave of discontent?*

*Hart: Immediately. Immediately, like that, that night at the Coast Bastion Inn, it was just like O-h m-y G-o-d, O---h, m---y G---o---d, O----h m----y G----o----d you know [a realization that it was blown]. I remember sitting there listening to the mayor speak at a public meeting and I'm going "Please tell me you didn't just say that, Oh my – you've got to be kidding. Oh my God." It was, it was a schmazel. And so that whole thing was a, that was a dong and brick. It was awful. It was awful. And so we knew we had a big problem right then and there.*

According to the Yes Committee members interviewed, one of their key concerns was that the FPN was fusing the decision to remove the high-rise cap with the announcement of conference centre. Subsequently, FPN was conveying the message that the City had acted in a "cloak and dagger" fashion as well as in a heavy-handed way to push an agenda to which there had been little community input. The Yes Committee understood that the City could not discuss the project with Triarc until the negotiations were complete. They believed the City's actions, such as negotiating a building higher than 15 storeys and purchasing land for the development through a representative, were reasonable and necessary parts of the business negotiations that could not be made public prior to the formal announcement.

Members who became part of the Yes Committee realized that the aftermath of the high-rise meeting would result in strong opposition. However, shortly thereafter they came to realize FPN's increasing coverage and lobbying efforts would jeopardize public approval for the project. Because many of the Yes Committee members believed the project aligned with the Downtown Reference Plan and that the City's actions were consistent with that document, something needed to be done.

I think some of the opposition was founded on incorrect information and that could've been corrected early in the process which would've allowed maybe a more rational debate on it as opposed to the polarized acrimonious debate that took place. And that really was the foundation for the Yes Nanaimo group.<sup>35</sup> Those of us that, that watched this starting to unfold in the fall realized it, it needed some help. I mean there needed to be somebody out there that was prepared to, to stand up and champion the benefits of, of this process. So we in fact started Yes Nanaimo as a means of getting, ah getting the positive information out there and selling the deal if you will to try and, and, and sway those people who are maybe sitting on the fence. (Martin)

The positive message as they saw it was that the conference centre was an investment in the downtown, but equally important, an investment in the community's future. Generally, the participants interviewed recognized the role that tourism was playing in Central Vancouver Island, believing it was, if not the major growth industry, certainly one of the major growth industries. That the City was going to build a conference centre was, to their thinking, a tangible marker signalling its intentions that tourism would be an economic driver in Nanaimo.

Interviews with members of this committee suggest they feared this message was getting lost in the rancour and emotional turmoil that had surfaced in the public debates, and their fear was that these issues would cloud the legitimacy of the project. If the City had intervened to correct their concerns early in the referendum lead-up, it would have helped to diffuse the dichotomous stances. Because the City was under increasing scrutiny by the FPN, the Yes Committee members were puzzled and to some degree frustrated that in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the City assumed a neutral position under the guise of letting the community decide.

Well I think ah the City ... I guess in hindsight the City had no mechanism, and has no desire to market a project. Ahm for, for whatever reason and by, being in business, I don't understand that. If you're going to do something you should market right? It just didn't make sense to me that they would ah, on the one hand be trying to get this thing done, and on the other hand, be standing on the fence saying "Well we'll let the public decide." Right? [chuckling]. (Bernard)

For this group of participants, it was a pretence they believed the City could ill afford as the referendum drew closer. This group felt the City's hands-off stance came at a very crucial stage, and in large part was part of reason the FPN was gaining a foothold in the community.

---

<sup>35</sup> The Yes Nanaimo Group referred to by this study participant is the Yes Committee

Participants suggested that the comfortable margin by which they thought the vote would pass eroded because of the City's desire to remain non-partisan, despite the FPN's constant critique.

Moreover, some members of this group believed certain members of Council could not speak accurately or necessarily intelligently to the community about the project's details. They were, according to some of these participants, not getting the job done. They believed these factors, coupled with the Mayor and some members of Council's air of enmity (which was interpreted by the public as demeaning and devaluing), undermined the hard work largely done through the previous committee work in the core to get to this point.

In short, the City had handled the conflict poorly. As one participant suggested, the Yes Committee became the unofficial representative for the City, which the City desperately needed. From both a communications and an attitudinal standpoint, these participants believed that apart from the solidarity shown by City Council, little else was done to convince the public of this project's merit.

There was no counterpoint, there was no engagement, and what engagement there was, was, you know took the form of the mayor berating you know Friends of Plan Nanaimo on, on televised council meetings you know. So it was just this ugly, ugly name-calling, misinformation thing, with, with not even a scrap of attempt from the City to, to address it or change the messaging or counterpoint the letters to the editor, or even to engage with people at a respectful basis. (Hart)

Moreover, because the project involved the community's waterfront, both in terms of blocking the views and giving away land, it had become a very public and emotional argument. They believed the only way to overcome the growing unease of the public was if they mounted a strong marketing campaign focused on the conference centre. For them, this was not empty and optimistic rhetoric. They were prepared to invest significantly on a personal level with both time and finances to make it happen.

I'll never forget, [one community leader] said ah, "If we're going to do anything we need to have some money to do something with. You know depending on what we do - if we want phones manned, we want advertising you know - you just can't, you've got to have money. So I want everybody, I'm going to go around the table, and I want everybody to commit something." So [he] went around the table boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. The second guy, I'm not going to mention any names, he donated \$10,000 and that set the tone for the meeting from then on. So we thought we might get about \$40,000 and we got around \$150,000 that morning and then more came in after that. So we were

well funded yeah. Because there was strong support, not only from the downtown business community, but the entire, you know all the north end businesses came on side, all the car dealerships came on side and ah all the engineering firms came on side, the advertising firms, the software companies, everybody came on side. They could tell it was that important. (Clinton)

The Yes Committee understood they straddled the fine line between the perception of bias (i.e., that they would personally benefit) and what they believed were altruistic motives. In reality, for many of them, the benefits that would accrue were not going to be there for them personally, but for future generations or so they hoped. It was the fruition of a plan that had been in the works for a decade or better.

So that's the role the Yes committee found themselves in; was trying to promote this and you can't help beca-- [stopping midway through word], you know who all members of the Yes committee are going to be: developers, business people, those people who are in, in ah public institutions that are free to talk and see the bright future ahead. You know it's going to be people who are perceived as being ah out, benefiting from the end result. And I think that's why we ended up with this great divide in the City is because you know it's . . . the suspicious ones amongst the rest of the, of the community say "Well those guys are on favour of it because they're going to make money from it" and so that's the reason they're in favour of it. What they forget is most people are in favour of it because it's going to create jobs in the future which will benefit everybody in the community. (Milt)

For others, the Yes Committee was comprised of the local "boosters." Framing the conference centre in the rising tide discourse, which purported new money, new jobs, and new infrastructure in the community, was a way of deflecting their underlying motive of self-interest. For the most part, participants who conceived of this group as boosters were referring primarily to the business, development and real estate communities. However, they noted that other strong proponents included other local leaders such as the president of the local university, local bankers, editors of the local papers, along with Tourism Nanaimo and the museum. The latter two entities stood to benefit directly from the project, while arguments could be made for the indirect connection to other local leaders. Importantly, these community boosters were regarded as synonymous with the local Chamber of Commerce, an active and powerful agent in the *Invest in Yes* campaign, and in the community more broadly.

Of primary concern to those who approached the project critically, was that local boosters failed to provide any empirical referents beyond the vague rhetoric of: "It's a good

deal. It brings money into Nanaimo. It will help to revitalize the downtown. Good idea” (Dennis). Moreover, these participants suggested an alliance existed between the City and the Yes Committee, despite the claims of being separate entities. The Downtown Nanaimo Partnership, which had helped to broker the Yes Committee was, in their opinion, vital to the “Yes” vote. The *Invest in Yes* campaign’s highly visible support and efforts helped hold the FPN’s cogent momentum in abeyance.

The Yes Committee always had to . . . represent themselves as if we’re totally separate apart from Council and staff. “We just think this is a good idea”. But on the other hand Council and staff desperately needed them to get out there in the community and sell this idea. (Dorothy)

Members of the Yes Committee suggested the overarching goal of revitalization was getting lost with the FPN’s resolve to continually question and pull apart the details of the contract. In turn, they suggested the FPN’s actions raised questions about the City’s abilities and motives in putting forward this proposal. In light of this, many of them felt compelled to act because they did not believe Nanaimo’s residents would realize the long-term benefits to the community. The determination of the FPN to stop the project, coupled with the City’s silence, largely compelled them to action. Moreover, that the media continued to print the repetitive arguments of the FPN fortified FPN’s credibility in the community. This too, was worrisome for the Yes Committee.

In summary this theme, *Participating in Community Consultation and Decision-Making Processes*, yielded four sub-themes indicative of the participant’s perceptions of their ability to participate and consult in the decision-making process. The first sub-theme captured the question of whether the City had prioritized the redevelopment project in the core over the guiding principles for participation in the community’s official plan. This was a matter of how participants interpreted the OCP. Participants who felt the process was closed believed the City’s had disregarded key principles established in the OCP and did so at the public’s expense. According to participants with this perspective, broad-based citizen input would have upheld the sanctity of the waterfront and the City’s unparalleled view-scapes, and would not have allowed for private development that, for all intent and purposes, was inside the public park. Because of this, participants debated and defined the limits of public participation differently.



To the contrary, participants who believed the process had been thorough and inclusive did so because downtown revitalization had been identified as a community priority, and that policy changes reflected this overall goal. Focussing only on the conference centre decision-making process obscured the larger process of which it was a part. Moreover, the voting public had upheld the goal of revitalization through three civic elections, and more specifically had, on two occasions, voted to proceed with the conference centre. However, because the FPN focussed only on the conference centre process, the Yes Committee formed to counter their message. They were determined to remind the community that a vote in favour of the conference centre was a vote for revitalization and the community's future. Regardless of the stance of each of these groups, the media played a role in provoking the divide and this is the final theme examined in this chapter.

### **THEME III: PROVOKING THE DIVIDE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE LOCAL PRESS**

This local story is particularly compelling because of the insights it provides in regards to the role of the media. Most participants saw the role of Nanaimo's media role as problematic and they voluntarily expressed their disappointment, regardless of which side of the debate they supported. The majority questioned the ability of the local papers to be an unbiased and accurate platform for democratic debate, yet for decidedly different reasons. The local media coverage was found wanting by most participants who felt generic principles of ethical journalism, such as credibility and integrity, were not being exercised in the accounts of the debate.

Media coverage was characterized as exhibiting "tabloid fibre" (Walter). Participants on the Yes side suggested that the media allowed excessive hyperbole and repetitive messaging by the No side letter writing campaign, which resulted in a weak mandate to proceed with the conference centre. Perpetuating discord, as opposed to furthering dialogue was seen as the media's mandate. ". . . but of course the media, all types of media these days want to show a horserace. They want to give as much credibility to one extreme position as to another end of the spectrum so that there is some kind of controversy" (Graham). Sensationalism put it "over the top" (Milt).

The media's emphasis on the conference centre debate either drew readers to or drove them from the newspapers. "People were absolutely reading the paper everyday" (Paul), to "I don't even read the local papers anymore" (Milt) were typical responses. In their view, the

papers had deteriorated in quality and accuracy, and the papers were accused of being on par with the *National Enquirer*. The sheer volume of the opinion pieces, many of which were overlapping in content and therefore repetitive, were included in the papers, not because they had something of value to add to the debate, but to reinforce the controversy. As a forum for rebuttal, the opinion content *became* the daily news. This perceived domination of the opinion pieces subjugated the role of hard news, “hard news played a secondary role” (Frank), and demonstrated the media’s irresponsibility by “neglecting their job to point out the big picture” (Walter).

Moreover, the media were not perceived as credible sources for engaging the public in a discursive manner, or as capable of opening up the discussion beyond perpetuating the mounting us-versus-them stances. As one participant noted, “The papers have been on board since day one. I would suggest that all of them failed to conduct a proper investigative report on the Centre” (Marty).

The pre-occupation with opinion blurred the lines between what was viewed as news and what was viewed as entertainment. According to participants who supported the conference centre, the over-exposure of opinion pieces served to distort or misrepresent the facts. Importantly and perhaps most significantly, participants who were in favour of the conference centre felt the emphasis on the controversy legitimized the No side support, subsequently heightening their merit and authority in the eyes of the reading public. In their view, the relatively small No minority loomed large simply because they were given a consistent voice through their Letters to the Editor. The attention given to the FPN via the media became a form of clout that otherwise would not have existed.

And as it is with any vote or any election, those in support are always less vocal than those against. Well this was extremely obvious in this case . . . I know a lot of people on both sides of the, of the issue and there were far more people in favour than there was against and it was the same 20, 30, 40 people who showed up at every meeting who were against. But it was a different 10, 20, 30 Yes people who showed up every meeting kind of thing, right? So you know, but the No’s were a force - that always sells paper before the Yes does so the No’s got a voice all the time.” (Michelle)

The FPN acknowledged their letter campaign as effective,

By the way, the letters to the editor ah were really making the City angry ah, we heard about that through back channels, because they were having a

tremendous, we were having all kinds of people writing great letters and they were just knocking holes right left and centre in the City's arguments. And the City would have, keep their friends and writing letters so you got a chance to knock down their arguments through these letters that were in there, and we you know, that was probably ah a huge part of our success in getting close to toppling them just through letter writing. (Randy)

Participants on both sides of the issue expressed concern and frustration because the repetitive messaging in the media suggested to them that little new information was being introduced. Moreover, both the "Yes" and the No" sides felt like the media favoured the other. The extended treatment of the conference centre debate resulted in content with a tone that was regarded as circular, repetitive and monotonous, and prompted some to label these outlets with such derogatory names as the "The Daily Snooze" and "Shit Disturbers" (Randy). More importantly, repetitive messaging, or "beating it to death" (Milt) served no purpose for the public at large.

While both sides agreed the papers were not credible, it was for different reasons. Not surprisingly, the No supporters accused media sources of bias that differed from the overemphasis stressed by participants who supported the conference centre. Instead, No supporters felt the local press did "the minimal allowable in the democratic process" (Randy). During the lead up to the referendum, the media were perceived to be "absolutely key to controlling the information that was released out of this project" (Todd), suggesting an active role on the media's part to determine what message would be portrayed and how. For example, a number of No supporters felt the media "effectively neutered people's letters" (Todd) and as a result, believed the public at large were denied critical information that they felt served as a foundation on which to make an informed decision.

The Daily News maintained a blacklist. They, they maintained a blacklist of what I think were 10 people who could write 10,000 letters to the editor, none of them would ever get published. And, it was stated to [FPN member] that he was on that list; that he could write as much as he wanted, it was not going to happen. And [FPN member] did of important stuff to say so he was stifled, not only with his own personal views but quite often he would write on behalf of the Friends of Plan Nanaimo. And so when the knowledge of the blacklist came ah, he really blew the lid and it ended, ended up in a complaint to the Press Council of BC. (Patrick)

Similarly, when the FPN invited guest speakers to the community to speak on three different occasions, their view of the media coverage, was that it was scant at best and failed to communicate the substance of the speaker's message. Given the high degree of interest and coverage around the conference centre, this seemed to be contradictory of the media's actions. For those voting no and particularly for members of the FPN, the media exercised both subtle and subversive forms of power. First, suspending ethical journalism meant the media failed to investigate and record fair and unbiased accounts, something that may have been lost on the reading public. Second, and because of this, the media subjugated their readers to only one perspective, which many of the study participants who voted no believed was unwarranted. Equally galling to the No side's sensibilities was the overt abuse of power embodied in the Yes Committee, perceived as both a form of moral and functional negligence. Although it was comprised largely of high profile business leaders, the Managing Editor of the *Nanaimo Daily News* also served on the Yes Committee, "... and very stridently so" (Dennis). Using his position to prime the community in favour of the conference centre nullified any pretence of objectivity. For example, his final editorial prior to the referendum, entitled, "Into the future now, not later", insinuated that those who are "going to base their vote on ill will" are looking at the glass as half empty as noted in his editorial, "opportunity is on the table" (*Nanaimo Daily News*, November 18, 2004).

Consequently, for the "No" side, the media were perceived as taking their cues from either the City or the business community. The media's slant signalled to the No participants that the media had a pre-determined mindset that was massaged by businesses in the community in order to ensure their financial well-being. An important consideration not lost on a number of No participants was that the favouritism shown was because the media's financial success was dependent on the business community.

They gave a lot more ink to the Yes side. But their bread and butter is in ads. Those ads are placed by businesses. Most of the business community was inside. Because they see it as a chance to, you know build their customer base. (Sandra)

The "No" side believed the media's first priority was not with informing the public by providing a well-reasoned or sound report, but rather to ensure its own longevity. Critiquing the business community was akin to biting the hands that fed them. For "No" supporters, the media could not extricate themselves from the relations governing them.

For these participants, the press coverage continually characterized the No supporters as “naysayers”, rather than as concerned citizens wanting to support the principles established in the OCP. They impeded progress in the community. For them, the media failed to delineate between their voice as “no” as opposed to a voice that intended to inform or to “know”. “It’s not that we’re anti-development, we just don’t like this kind of development” (Dennis). In a sense, the FPN felt they were stereo-typed by the media and rendered invisible at the same time. As one person noted, “we were shunned, and couldn’t get our information out there, apart from being seen as naysayers” (Patrick).

The media also played a gate-keeping role, which filtered not whether information was accurate, but the kinds of information they presented. In this, the No supporters felt the media compromised their ability to play an effective role. For them, responsible journalism had been abandoned as they failed to provide a well-balanced account from all perspectives. In the same way, the Yes side felt that too much emphasis was placed on the No side opinion, and as a result, not only gained the public’s sympathy, but lost sight of the City’s goal, which was to rejuvenate the downtown core.

### **REFLECTING ON THEIR STORIES**

This chapter’s title, *Resisting Progress or Resisting Process?*, conveys the fundamental dispute for the participants of this study. It captures not only how participants felt about repositioning Nanaimo and why, but the processes undertaken in order to transcend the community’s image as a coal town. Four key actors surfaced in the stories of the participants. The FPN, as one of the actors, disagreed with this specific project because they believed the private sector extracted too much from the community. Among their concerns was the seemingly ongoing contract revisions put forward by the private partner. However, most disturbing for these participants was they believed the City, the second actor in this story, compromised two key communal values protected through the City’s official community plan (OCP) during these negotiations. According to the participants, the level of risk attached to the decision was unprecedented in the community, extracting too high a cost both socially and financially. Overextending the community’s finances meant that other community services may be compromised as the local government began to shift their priorities towards a more post-industrial profile.

To the contrary, the Yes Committee, the third actor and those associated with its campaign *Invest in Yes*, believed the City was investing in the future, and taking a step towards providing high-level infrastructure amenities that demonstrated some of first steps towards ensuring Nanaimo was desirable as a place to relocate for lifestyle or work. Moreover, these same participants believed the City was upholding the OCP mandate to protect the City's largely pristine water views. Re-writing the by-laws would protect the view corridors by restricting high-rise clustering to certain areas, something the 15 storey cap did not achieve. At the same time high-rise development would help reach density which was identified as a key component for revitalization. Moreover, adding parkland at Maffeo-Sutton Park was also in keeping with the OCP's environmental and greening priorities. This rationale provided the impetus to organize and provide a counter-argument to the FPN. In large part, they felt that despite the solidarity shown by City Council for the project, the City was inadequately equipped, as well as unprepared to champion this specific project. In essence, they stepped in, shoring up the message that this project was an investment in the future. It was but one of the first steps ensuring Nanaimo was able to compete with other communities. The Yes Committee felt confident of the direction charted by City Council because they believed that on several occasions there was open dialogue and discussion that warranted consideration beyond simply the referendum vote. The broader revitalization discussions cultivated several opportunities for community participation that extended community consultation processes beyond the interactions between the public and the City in the lead-up to the referendum. These earlier community-planning discussions qualified and defined the type of project most appropriate to accomplish the task of rejuvenating the core. Moreover, they felt this message was getting lost in the tone and tenor of the public discourse that began when the City introduced an amendment to the high-rise by-law.

Latent divisions are evident in this community, and were buttressed through the role of the media. Nearly all of the participants, regardless of their stance suggested the media played a negligent role, failing to provide objective and accurate accounts detailing the project. As the fourth actor in this community's story, the media were seen by the participants as bearing some culpability in determining the unsatisfactory outcome of both perspectives, and in perpetuating the divide that existed in the community. For those who supported the project, the media's focus centred on opinion and not the news. For those opposed, the media failed to investigate

thoroughly and to communicate the implications for the community. In other words, failing to provide both sides of the story rendered the media untrustworthy and they were viewed as principally focused on protecting their own financial interests.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The views of the participants played an important role in highlighting the acrimony and the reasons that the community story unfolded as it did. Nonetheless, in order to further our understanding as an academic community, and mine as a scholar, it is necessary to step away from the participants' insights and take a step closer to the theoretical roots provided at the outset of this thesis. Returning to the theoretical foundations that initiated my intrigue will provide perspective about what occurred in Nanaimo and why. This then is the focal point of the next chapter.

**CHAPTER FOCUS**

This study recounts the efforts of Nanaimo's decision-making community to re-vitalize its downtown and through these efforts re-energize the local economy and provide a new economic direction for the community. Specifically, this study illuminates how and why a conference centre came to be the centrepiece of a local economic development framework. It also considers the broader political and economic conditions that secured a tourism-oriented project. As a reminder, I also wanted to determine how power relations played out through the social networks and community relations where tourism was identified as a key component of economic growth.

This chapter returns to employ several key concepts introduced in Chapter Two as a way of framing my understanding of what occurred in the events surrounding the decision-making process for the Port of Nanaimo Centre. Foucault's notions of governmentality, apparatuses of the state and techniques of the state provide the theoretical foundation framing my observations. Through these concepts we see how power was enacted and resisted. Apparatuses and techniques used in the community highlight the mechanisms employed to embed a tourism mandate as local hegemony.

Upon reflection, this chapter is best structured in two separate sections. The first section of this chapter addresses the two time periods framing the study. The first ten-year time frame, from 1993 to 2003, highlights the ways in which the community was *conditioned*, and therefore cemented a tourism mandate. Events, actors, and organizations which were instrumental in making it part of the local economic discourse are highlighted. While neo-liberalism as a broader ideology also worked to condition the community, this period demonstrates the importance of social relations and networks in determining micro-level decisions. The second period best exemplifies the public debate that surfaced and is much shorter in duration. It coincides roughly with the public announcement of the City's intention to build a conference centre at the second site in September 2004 and ends with the November 2005 election. It is here that I convey how messages were constituted, framed, and legitimized in order to support the particular agendas and stances of the various actors, as well as they way



they positioned themselves in the debate and in relation to each other. In turn, we see a year of resistance and reinforcement. In the case of the Friends of Plan Nanaimo (FPN), it was resistance to embedding a particular way of thinking about how revitalization should occur. Through them, we see how the prevailing rationale of the conference centre was made vulnerable. In the actions of the Yes Committee, we see to the workings of governmentality surface again, but this time as a response to further the original mandate.

The second section of this chapter is significantly shorter and is brought to a close with the conclusions drawn from this study, its limitations as well as potential projects that piqued my interest when studying this case.

## **SUMMARY OF EVENTS**

### **1993 TO 2003: A DECADE OF CONDITIONING**

The period from 1993 to 2003 represents the most active in the community's history for moving a tourism mandate forward. A number of different conditioning agents shaped this period. Events, individuals, and local organizations were instrumental in defining growth and development. Collectively, these efforts positioned tourism as the key means through which to diversify the local economy, revitalize the core, and secure the community's future. These three consistent messages had three implications. First, they guided decisions about the kinds of development considered; second, they legitimized an ambitious conference centre project; and third, they rationalized its importance. These banner-like messages overshadowed concerns about the conference centre and the concern that communal values were compromised through its development. In large part, this decade represents a season of *conditioning*, built on repositioning, and reimagining the City to work within a tourism mandate. The most tangible representation of repositioning the community was the conference centre. However, the most tangible representation of its consequences was removing the height cap. Together these developments reveal the story of how and through whom power was at work through this decade.

### **Conditioning via Broader Influences**

The broader context is an important consideration for understanding conditioning of the community. In 1990, Canada, and by extension British Columbia, was well steeped in neo-liberal economic policy, reinforced to varying degrees by the governments holding office.

More specifically, neo-liberal manifestations in British Columbia articulated the dual functions described by Peck and Tickell (2002) as “roll back” and “roll out.”<sup>36</sup> Senior governments in British Columbia introduced strong policies directed towards community-level development that stressed self-sufficiency and entrepreneurialism. This mandate was rooted in the neo-liberal ideological shift that began in the 1970s. The ensuing decades saw increasing pressure put on the province’s resource-base as they attempted to respond and adapt. This pressure weakened the province’s resource-based position and at the same time gave impetus to the expansion of the economic base to tap other economic generators. Specifically, tourism surfaced as a key generator and policies at the provincial level reflected market-oriented principles that coincided with the government’s desire to capture the unfilled potential of the tourism industry. The dual emphasis on tourism and neo-liberal practices most clearly took hold at the beginning of the millennium with the British Columbia Liberal Party (BCLP).

Neo-liberal influences are evident in the policies put forward by Nanaimo City Council’s two-pronged approach to attract and maintain a skilled workforce, while at the same time promote tourism-related development. Amenities and infrastructure projects geared to increasing the local quality of life would, at the same time, appeal to visitors. These local policy decisions mirror more broadly Marchak’s (1991) assertion that a service economy was replacing the industrial economy. More specifically, these local policies were in harmony with the provincial mandate to grow the economy through the export<sup>37</sup> of tourism. In particular, the BCLP’s explicit neo-liberal economic policy and promotion of tourism development projects massaged the kind of local growth desired, constituted, and legitimized. These messages cultivated local development soil. Tourism was not only considered a viable option for local economic development, but one that the government and local business community were prepared to support, creating environments conducive to attracting capital, labour, and consumers.

---

<sup>36</sup> Peck and Tickell (2002) define rollback as “the active destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist institutions”, while roll out is defined as “the purposeful construction and consolidation of neo-liberalized state forms, modes of governance and regulatory relations” (p. 34). The earliest ripples of neo-liberalism were evident in the Social Credit Party who held office from the mid 1970s, and principally thereafter until the 1990s. They implemented both roll out and rollback policies, most evident in their resource-based policy, whereas the NDP government through the 1990s, attempted to mitigate state cut backs. Neo-liberal policy of the Liberal Party at the turn of the century was decidedly roll out.

<sup>37</sup> Tourism is considered for export in much the same way as the forestry industry because while it occurs in the province, the money generated is new money into the economy.

These broader influences were pressing down or were “at work” at the beginning and throughout discussions regarding how best to revitalize the community. The kinds of projects and policies implemented in Nanaimo suggest the City desired to insulate Nanaimo from the broader government rollbacks, while at the same time, position them to respond to roll outs that would help achieve economic stability supported by other levels of government. Moreover, also evident in the discourse was rising tide lifts all boats, or trickle-down logic, also an indicator that neo-liberal ideology was taking root.

These were among the broader influences accounting for a rationale oriented towards tourism production in Nanaimo. At the same time, the development of community involvement into the City’s policy activities had its own distinct dynamic and rationale, which were at work to secure a tourism mandate locally.

### **Local Conditioning**

Several mechanisms can be traced to see how conditioning unfolded in Nanaimo. The first indicators of conditioning the community were the highly participatory *Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo* processes that produced the community’s well-received Official Community Plan (OCP). This document set the overall trajectory for the kinds of growth and development desired in the community and it fashioned specific urban objectives for revitalization in the City’s core. These processes cannot be underestimated because through them residents granted broad-based approval to particular kinds of revitalizing strategies (e.g., development of heritage, culture and tourist themes). In other words, the community determined tourism was beneficial for enhancing the community’s economic base. *Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo* shaped the OCP document and changed the way the City looked at tourism and revitalization, moving it past beautification programmes towards an economic diversification function. This philosophical shift began a more intensive period of conditioning which significantly shifted the community’s foundations.

A second but related set of activities, linked to the OCP’s revitalizing mandate, initiated different kinds of relationships between businesses in the downtown and dramatically extended their power base in the community. A co-operative environment was fostered among businesses, and between businesses and the City. Business organizations in the core no longer acted as separate entities, competing against each other, or against the City. To the contrary, they worked and moved as an organic whole. As a result, power was both amplified and made

more productive through their collective efforts. Where they worked against each other previously, they now harnessed that same energy towards restructuring the downtown.

A powerful business coalition resulted with direct access to the City and vice versa. The relationship was mutually reinforcing. The City could yoke the power of business (as evidenced later through the Yes Committee) while at the same time, businesses had an open door through which to lobby the local government (as evidenced most notably through the relationship with the DNP and its partners COF and EDG). Importantly, the business community produced strong policy documents and in so doing had the greatest influence in the formation and direction of the City's economic policies.

Two observations come from assessing the interactions between businesses, and business to the City. First, most of this activity occurred "behind the scenes," away from the consciousness of the public, and the collective organizing resulted in a tightly knit and committed group of businesses which collectively had a powerful influence in the community that the broader public did not anticipate. Second, while the conditioning was at once directed at the City, it also came through the City. This is especially evident when tracing the movements of Councillor Rispin who was readily recognized for championing the revitalizing concept by way of a conference centre, and later by Councillor Cantelon who reified the third conference centre project.

Moreover, the City's stance reflects a neo-liberal mandate at work. In particular, the newly acquired power attained with the *Community Charter* came with freedoms, but also with the cost of endowing its own autonomy. Economic policies fostering self-reliance were put in place for the betterment of all, without necessarily reflecting the collective will of the City's constituents. In varying degrees it reflected executive power at work, as opposed to representational power.

The City's stance was reinforced through the business community as several influential business leaders surfaced in numerous organizations. Their "reach" extended laterally, while at the same time extending vertically towards the City. Throughout this 10-year period, strong community leaders consistently carried the message of revitalization, and eventually the message of the conference centre, as a key function of revitalization. The subtle change in ethos and City management within Nanaimo was an important development.

Importantly, most of these developments had occurred outside the general public's awareness and even interest, but they eventually materialized in a number of guises. In particular, the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership (DNP) was the outcome of co-ordinating business and the City, and as such, became the flagship and representative authority of businesses in the core. As the face and voice of business in the downtown, the DNP presented a united front to the community in supporting the conference centre. Subsequently, they effectively silenced the small portion of the business community who did not support the conference centre project.

In addition, the formation of the DNP spawned, though did not necessarily initiate, secondary activities or second tier functions wherein organizations were linked to "educate" the public. This, too, served a conditioning function. The reinforcing role of *Nanaimo Now* was comprised of Tourism Nanaimo, the Chamber of Commerce, Nanaimo Port Authority, the DNP, Royal Bank, and these entities served to sell or market Nanaimo to local residents as well as to the outside world. Their slogan, "Nanaimo is the most desirable, liveable, small City in North America" became the mantra among the business community, and one it wished the community at large to adopt. The primary, overt carrier of this message was the media, but the message was also carried through its member organizations and promoted through its membership.

During this decade, each of these functions – community processes, co-ordinating business mandates, individual influence, and the media – represented dynamic and influential relations in the community. One of the virtues of Foucault's analysis is to take these relationships one step further asking what purpose they served? In what ways did the actions demonstrated shape, guide, manage and regulate conduct in the community? How vital were they in determining a tourism trajectory? These questions are examined in more detail in the ensuing discussion of their role in cementing a tourism mandate.

#### **CEMENTING A TOURISM MANDATE**

Foucault suggested techniques, agents, and apparatuses are aspects of governmentality necessary for cementing a political rationality. These terms are employed here not so much to argue that a specific political rationale was at work (e.g., neo-liberalism), but rather to demonstrate how they operated to cement tourism as the most salient aspect of the community's new economic foundation. Nanaimo's participatory processes, the commitment

of key individuals, alongside powerful structures such as the local growth coalition and the media represent technologies of government. Techniques, agents, and apparatuses are a complex assembly of diverse mechanisms that together over a ten year period, regulated the decisions and actions of individuals, groups, and organizations in the community. What follows is a detailed discussion of each of these mechanisms' role in cementing a tourism mandate.

### **Techniques of the State?**

#### **The Role of Participatory Processes in Validating a Tourism Mandate**

As noted in the literature review, public involvement in decision-making entails residents determining their own goals for development through a meaningful process. Their collective voice is heard and translated into community planning. Certainly, the two intensive and extensive community processes within a short period provide an indication of how important community planning was at the onset of the 1990s in Nanaimo. Given the context in which planning occurred in the past (e.g., driven by nepotism, domination, and reactive planning), these inclusive processes signalled a new threshold for co-operation between residents and a new form of governance between the civic leadership and the residents. While not probed, in retrospect, it was likely one of the first times in the community when there was an attempt to reach across the North/South divide, breaking down the power held through the socio-political traditions of the boss/labour relations.

By all indications, power was shared in these processes, marking a vital achievement in community consultation. Members of the community developed and agreed on revitalization and growth as community goals. At some level, it represented an opening up of space between civic authorities and civic society, which had been closed since the community's inception. Local participation in these processes gave rise to a number of community benefits such as empowerment, building social capital, and indigenous forms of knowledge. Nanaimoites self-mobilised and took ownership of their future, establishing new community roots economically, psychologically, socially, and politically. These processes initiated awareness in the community about the need to be autonomous and self-reliant. Moreover, they reflected the community's ability to work together towards this end.

*Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo*, as practices in community involvement, established political continuity both upward and downward between Nanaimo's local

government and its residents. Nanaimo's local government had created a space where the community had capacity to act and replace the idea of a sovereign government, or ruling from above, with mechanisms through which the community determined their own values and practices. These processes serve as examples where citizens inserted themselves to govern. This reflects Foucault (1991a) broader intention of government whereby government has meaning as "conduct of the conduct." Governing, defined in the broadest sense, was intended "to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons" (Gordon, 1991, p. 2).

However, recall Foucault's (1991a) motivation in developing the notion of governmentality. It was to make practice the nucleus of investigation. In his analysis of neo-liberalism, he notes that its most obvious "rule of law" is with the workings of a market economy. Moreover, how it plays out is through state intervention in which the state's vocation is to "further the game of enterprise as a pervasive style of conduct, diffusing the enterprise-form throughout the social fabric" (Gordon, 1991, p. 42). In essence, the way a market economy is accomplished is by redefining the social as a form of the economic (Gordon, 1991). Coupling Foucault's observation of neo-liberalism (1980, 1991a) with his work on power gives rise to a somewhat different reading and opens up the possibility that participatory processes reflect a discursive shift mirroring changes in the nature of the state. The ubiquitous nature of power means a subject, or in this case community, can come into being only as a construct of a regime or power/knowledge.

Might it be possible that these processes serve to place greater emphasis on the individual's civic obligation to temper the impacts of government, and therefore further embed the art of government? Might they be a response to the more fluid and increasing minimal differences between the state and the market? Are they indicative of the paradigmatic shift towards a neo-liberal framework, what Foucault would likely term economic sovereignty, and what Gramsci would suggest as an embedding of the hegemonic?

A powerful actor, agent or institution is one that, in the particular circumstances obtaining at a given moment, is able to successfully enrol and mobilise persons, procedures and artefacts in the pursuit of its goals. Powers are stabilized in the lasting networks only to the extent that the mechanisms of enrolment in various more or less persistent forms ... stabilise networks partly because they act as potent resources in the local composition of forces. (Rose & Miller, 1992, p. 184)

With this in mind, *Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo* may well represent alternative “techniques” or “rationalities” of government that stimulated agency while simultaneously placing restrictions on their freedoms. If we recall the social context in which Nanaimo was operating at that time, it was coming out of a hard-hitting recession that necessitated the reconfiguring of its resource-based economy, while at the same time feeling the impacts of government cutbacks. That the community exercised responsible self-government and autonomy is not surprising. However, it may come as a revelation that it did so within a framework (both discourse and actions) that emphasized and reinforced neo-liberal economic rationality.

Within this fuller picture, then, the possibility also remains that we see the community as the non-state actor developing autonomy and resistance in order to control the broader influences of the state, while at the same time working within it. Put differently, the possibility exists that these processes served as a *response* to neo-liberalism.

### **Agent of the State? Individual Actions Validating Tourism**

There were a number of key community leaders who were instrumental in moving the Port of Nanaimo Centre forward. However, among all of the residents who played key roles, City Councillor Doug Rispin stood out as the key catalyst in making the conference centre a reality. Councillor Rispin was described by those interviewed, as a Councillor possessing “catalytic leadership”, meaning he held significant influence among the elected officials. He is the only private citizen honoured in the naming of the rooms<sup>38</sup> in the Port of Nanaimo Centre. Unfortunately, this study could not explore his motivations, nonetheless examining Councillor Rispin’s actions through the work of Gramsci and Foucault, suggest theoretical connections are plausible. While the story of Nanaimo primarily reflects networks and the inherent social power that resides through them, Councillor Rispin’s actions demonstrate how an individual’s actions can precede, initiate, influence, and weave through the collective. Evidence of his influence is apparent at the most critical junctures in the City’s tourism-oriented trajectory and his leadership and influence crossed several community organizations and committees.

---

<sup>38</sup> With the exception of the Shaw Auditorium and the Doug Rispin Room (Council Boardroom), naming of the rooms reflect geographical locations in and around the Nanaimo. This was intentional in order to raise awareness of the places to visit in and around Nanaimo.



In the individual actions of Councillor Rispin we can glean insights into Gramsci's theory of hegemony and of a dominant ideology penetrating the community. In this story, the hegemonic operates at two distinct levels. If we recall from the theoretical foundations for this study, hegemony represents domination at the level of ideas. Indeed, Femia (1975) asserts that consciousness is never autonomous: "the politician in action is a creator, an awakener, ... but he neither creates out of nothing nor does he move in the emptiness of his wishes and dreams. His action is grounded in factual reality" (Gramsci, 1971 in Femia, 1975, p. 36).

In 1999, Councillor Rispin was running for his fourth consecutive, three-year Council appointment. The focal point of his campaign centred on raising the profile of arts and culture in the downtown, in addition to making Nanaimo's downtown home to a conference centre. At that point, he had served as City Council representative to Tourism Nanaimo for nearly a decade. By the end of his 12-year tenure, he had served on 14 Council committees. Much of the committee work was instrumental to revitalizing the core and bringing tourism-oriented projects to fruition. If not directly related, some of these committees played a supportive role and shared similar interests (e.g., Parks and Recreation Commission, Regional District Board).

Councillor Rispin's initial leadership behind the conference centre suggests he believed tourism could significantly contribute to Nanaimo's economic base and he worked to refashion Nanaimo's economic development policies to this end. In addition to serving on Tourism Nanaimo, evidence of his partiality towards a tourism mandate is noted with his strong support for The Port Theatre while he was Chair of the Community Opportunity Fund.<sup>39</sup> This is one of the first major projects where the local discourse links arts and culture, economic diversification, and tourism.

Gramsci (1971) suggests forming the hegemonic requires both intellectual and moral consent in the governing of others. Simply, the course of action charted is believed to be in the interest of all and this implies agency is important to the hegemonic process. Through Councillor Rispin we see hegemony enacted locally. However the hegemonic order of both provincial and federal governments likely had some bearing on how he believed economic reform in Nanaimo was best implemented.

Councillor Rispin was elected to Council at a time when initial efforts to revitalize the core proved ineffective (e.g., lighting and streetscape improvements). Throughout his tenure,

---

<sup>39</sup> The Port Theatre project was the focal point of much of the City Council's discussions between 1994 and 1997.

he saw the downtown decline, yet he was also part of two planning processes linking tourism to the community at large. Moreover, throughout the first decade of his tenure, the City initiated several capital projects complementary to a tourism economic growth framework. Park acquisitions, walkways, and bike paths were discussed by City Council in terms of their contribution to beautifying the community and providing recreational opportunities for local residents and its visitors. Private expenditures noted in the City Council minutes reinforced the economic benefits accompanying tourism. For example, a surge in tourism activity was mentioned in the City Council minutes as directly attributed to the Great Canadian Casino. These activities were percolating as positive indicators for the direction charted by the City.

Many of these factors shaped Councillor Rispin's social context. Moreover, his external appointment to Tourism Nanaimo and knowledge of tourism's potential contribution to local economies were reflected in several of the participant's interviews. His office and influence gave him authority to speak *to* Council, and *from* Council into the community about the nature of revitalization. His influence was particularly effective because it crossed many influential networks in the community. In both Gramscian and Foucauldian terms, consciousness plays an important role in charting direction, recognizing the decisions made and the actions taken are not independent of the social world of which one is a part. In much the same way that Gramsci suggested social power is a product of the environment, Foucault (1982) suggests the role of the individual cannot be divorced from his or her social world and the power therein.

Councillor Rispin, although credited with bringing the conference centre to the forefront, was not solely responsible. He was, however, a consistent thread who promoted the conference centre up until his passing in June 2004. As Foucault's work emphasizes, the individual is a subject *through whom* and *upon whom* power is exercised. This continuity between being an influencer and being influenced allowed Councillor Rispin to assume a pastoral role (Foucault, 1979) in the community. Simply, he possessed individualizing power while at the same time, we recognize his capacity to act was shaped by his social context. As Rose and Miller note, "Personal autonomy is not the antithesis of political power, but a key term in its exercise, the more so because most individuals are not merely subjects of power but play a part in its operation" (1992, p. 174).

Significantly, the cultivation of his actions and ideas were reinforced through a strong business coalition that was also working behind the scenes. Through their actions, we see how

both subtle and overt forms of power were organized and transmitted through the networks and alliances present in Nanaimo. This is examined in more detail below.

### **Apparatuses of Transmission?**

#### **Nanaimo's Business Coalition and the Media in Promoting Tourism**

Apparatuses defined here are the mechanisms used to deploy a way of reasoning which helped to regulate and promote specific ways of thinking and acting in the community. In this regard, both Nanaimo's business community and the media were key instruments cementing a tourism mandate. While the media played a key role once the announcement of the conference centre was made, they were also the medium the business community engaged to ready the residents and "educate" them about the importance of tourism, prior to the announcement of the conference centre. The following discussion analyses the role first of Nanaimo's business coalition, and then second, the role of the local media and their contributions in constructing and diffusing the importance of tourism to the community.

#### *Nanaimo's Business Coalition*

The influence of individual leaders in the community notwithstanding, the formation and gelling of the local business coalition had a constant presence in morphing the conference centre from a concept to an eventual reality. In particular, the DNP reflected a governance model fusing the private and public sectors initiated through the standardized Main Street approach. The relationship undertaken elevated the degree of influence the business community had in the City, and formally linked individual organizational efforts. These were more than just informal relationships.

The DNP reflects in broad strokes the principle of Molotch's (1976) growth machine theory. The crux of Molotch's argument emphasizes the hegemonic hold of business constituents over local politics. What contributed to their successful mobilization was similar to what Logan and Molotch (1987) determined elsewhere: that financial and social homogeneity and an "array of organizations long in place" (p. 135) were required. This is more in keeping with the work of Cox and Mair's (1988) position who argued local dependency between local government and local businesses shape the kind of growth desired.

The social homogeneity among the business community in Nanaimo translated into social power. Power was exercised within the community and spread across the most

influential business circles. This dovetails nicely with Foucault's (1982) perspective that power works across constitutional boundaries and is fluid. But it also encourages a consideration of the work of Cox (1981) whose analysis of Gramsci's hegemony argued power, as much as it is fluid, is also structural. Stability of a direction is the result of a manufactured compatibility between ideas, institutions, and material capabilities (Cox, 1981). Structure, then, is the outcome of these three components. When the City and the business coalition became partners, they mobilized and married local political and economic power (e.g., the material capabilities), and created a new institution through which to focus, direct, and push a strong revitalizing mandate that could make things happen. The partnership meant they did not have to depend on the incremental growth that was occurring, but rather could try and manipulate the rate of revitalization and therefore speed up the embedding of a consumptive model.

Moreover, the relationship established expectations of local government. They were to conform to the standards and ideas put forward by Main Street, which meant taking steps demonstrating Nanaimo "means business." "Priming the pump" is indicative of the kinds of behaviour expected of the City. Inducements such as flexible development rules (e.g., height-cap, and cost development charges) were, in a sense, marketing tools used by the City to attract investment.

Neo-liberal political rationality produces governance criteria along the same lines, that is, criteria of productivity and profitability, with the consequence that governance talk increasingly becomes market speak, businesspersons replace lawyers as the governing class in liberal democracies, and business norms replace juridical principles. (Brown, 2006, p. 694)

Moreover, one of the primary thrusts of DNP (as set out by the Main Street principles) was self-reliance. Outside levels of government could not be counted on to provide funding, which in part necessitated the relationship. This implied that local leaders had the *right* and *obligation* to enact changes in order to lead, and did so on recommendations made by the DNP. In so doing, they overlooked the will of the people as prescribed through the OCP. This is, according to Brown (1991), evidence that neo-liberalism is at work: "democratic principles and rule of law are neither guides nor serious constraints, but rather tools or obstacles, a phenomenon Foucault formulated concisely as the "tacticalization" (p. 95) The DNP, though highly democratic in its structure, was a new democratic process directing the City's constitutional power. The City, while taking a hands-on approach in administratively

supporting the DNP, was to a large degree able to take a hands-off approach to governing the details of what revitalization looked like. The relationship was the formation of a new political rationality.

As political rationalities, governmentalities are to be analysed as practices of the “formulation and justification of idealized schemata for representing reality, analyzing it and rectifying it” – as a kind of intellectual machinery or apparatus for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political programming. (Rose & Miller, 1992 in Rose, 1996, p. 42).

### *The Media*

As noted earlier, the media also played a validating role in promoting the conference centre. Their stance changed from early conference centre discussions in 1999 when the tone of the *Daily News* and the *Nanaimo News Bulletin* were initially cautious. The media’s intent in 1999 focused primarily on reading the communal pulse, and conveying the social narrative of its readers to determine their overall receptivity to the idea of a conference centre (e.g., *You Make the Call*). News accounts consisted of verbatim statements from community leaders connecting the conference centre to the tourism discourse that was by this point well established in civic leadership circles. Because discussions about the conference centre were exploratory, the conference centre was not especially newsworthy.

Around the same time the City announced its intentions to pursue a conference centre, the business community (EDG and Tourism Nanaimo) initiated weekly columns promoting tourism, economic growth, and Nanaimo as a desirable community in which to visit and live. These messages promoted a new economy for the community of which tourism would play a significant role. With the announcement of the Port of Nanaimo Centre in September 2004, the media content differed significantly. Coverage was extensive and the media’s stance was intentional, meaning that they fashioned their messages in accordance with the message of the business community.

The relationship between EDG and the *Nanaimo Daily News* was especially powerful. The column centred on conveying the importance of the economic drivers EDG had identified to underwrite a new economy for Nanaimo. This message spanned four years. Moreover, the business community openly acknowledged a strong relationship with the media. Under the editorial leadership at the *Nanaimo Daily News*, EDG was able to use the media as a platform

to promote their strategy. “The supportive business climate created by the local media is essential in achieving EDG’s Community Economic Development Strategy and the goal of ensuring a positive attitude about Nanaimo among the local population. . . One key partner in prosperity is the Nanaimo Daily News” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, December 17).

The final year EDG’s column ran coincided with the debate leading up to referendum, reinforcing the merit of the conference centre in the midst of an unprecedented number of letters to the Editor debating the issue. In the period lasting between early conference centre discussions and dialogue occurring in the lead-up to the referendum, it was clear the local citizenry had heard the message of EDG and Tourism Nanaimo. Published letters of support reinforced the link between tourism, the conference centre, and the community’s future. For example, the rhetoric of making Nanaimo a destination was noted by one newly established business owner in the core, who suggested the “project would go a long way towards putting Nanaimo on the map and making it a destination” and putting “heads in beds” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, Oct. 21).

Furthermore, prior to the referendum, the *Nanaimo Daily News’s* editorials were instrumental in sending both subtle and overt messages to the public about how to view the project, “We have not hidden our support for the City’s request to borrow because we don’t view it as cost, but rather an investment, a direct investment in Nanaimo’s current and future growth (*Daily News*, 2004, November 16). Moreover, some messages were subliminal. They praised the Yes Committee, while casting doubt on the veracity of who residents understood to be the FPN. The inherent vagueness spoke volumes: “We extend our Well Done to a few individuals, and at least one organization, who have been the brunt of scornful attacks by an extreme few in the community” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, November 17). Finally, they positioned the vote as an all or nothing “glass half full or half empty” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, November 18), while at the same time implying they possessed the facts upon which to draw conclusions, coaching the community to follow their lead. The editorials possessed an air of authority or paternalism – having reviewed all relevant information, they were best suited to determine the best course of action for the community. For example, FPN’s alternative proposal was incomplete, and therefore, not tenable: “What isn’t understood at all, with their concept, is how is it paid for and how long will it take? Way, way too long in our opinion” (*Nanaimo Daily News*, 2004, November 18).

Finally, three days before the referendum vote, the *Nanaimo Daily News* announced it would no longer provide “‘news’ and ‘opinion’” coverage two days prior to the referendum. The paper could not guarantee time would permit for opposing views to be published. This was a crucial time in the community in light of the increasing concerns surfacing over the private partner, and moreover given that the FPN was gaining momentum. In effect they absolved themselves of any obligation to report what may have been damning to the Yes vote.

The role of the City’s only daily newspaper as a strong proponent suggests that the kinds of messages they supported and produced primed the community for a particular response and a way of thinking. Entman (2007) notes that “priming” is a way of raising the salience or apparent magnitude of certain ideas, and in turn, “activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way” (p. 164). At a minimum, news coverage of an issue often means it has some degree of importance and therefore places emphasis on the issue to be evaluated (Greenburg, 2000). The following Editorial titled “Because it’s the Right Move” appeared nearly three months after the referendum, summarizing the message they had carried throughout the critical referendum period.

One would think that after a couple dozen editorials the reasoning would be understood. We support the city’s vision because: We believe once all the smoke clears, the entire proposal will be a huge boon to Nanaimo, in a much improved downtown core, new businesses, new jobs and good jobs at that, a major visitor draw, both for business and pleasure, and give Nanaimo the chance to be a dominant player on the Island. (*Nanaimo Daily News*, February 10, 2005)

Discussions in the literature regarding media suggest citizens shape their choices based on information and as a result, the media play a vital role informing and defining current events. Equally important, print media represent a “field of discursive constructions” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 37), and hence, are the conduit through which information and ideas are exchanged within a democratic society, particularly with regard to politics and events. Their role is to assist citizen integration into a community where their participation is required in establishing a healthy democracy (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001; Schoenbach & Lauf, 2002).

The degree to which this occurred in Nanaimo is debatable. Coverage of the conference centre was extensive. However, noticeably absent from the Editorials were commentaries that

addressed the community's concerns of development bordering Maffeo-Sutton Park and the concerns expressed over the high-rise developments. In essence they limited *and* defined the field of engagement, positioning the conference centre within considerations of a moral economy (rising tide and trickle down discourse) and focussed the debate within these parameters. In other words, they tailored democratic debate. They were shaping – or at least by failing to acknowledge these aspects – influencing what *was* to be thought about and what was *not* to be thought about. To this end, they were in effect “silencing” the concerns that were surfacing among the public.

This runs contrary to the role media are assumed to play. The underlying premise is that media operate with some degree of integrity or ethical standard. Journalistic credibility is closely linked to notions of balance and neutrality, considered pillars of responsible journalism (Williams & Caprini, 2000). It is the media's role to distinguish entertainment from news, delineate the difference between opinion and news, and filter through the issues to determine what is relevant to convey to the public. Their role is one of gatekeeper, sorting and sifting relevant information for the public.

However, concern exists among scholars and journalists alike as to the media's ability to *fully* engage these principles. This is especially a concern if newspapers are oriented towards economic imperatives, and in the process, forfeit their social responsibility. For scholars, the most pressing critique (Entman, 1989; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 1997) is over-representation of specific interests resulting in an inordinate influence over media content. Similarly, journalists argue an essential qualification of good journalism is credibility. Independence from commercial pressures is one way the public can have confidence that reporting is accurate and fair, and not driven by a specific agenda (Overholser, 2000).

In this regard, the media business is distinct from other business forms. Bogart (1996) warns, “Concentration in other industries may lead to market power, oligopolistic pricing and restrictive trade practices. In the media business, it can change the country's values, ideas and politics and perhaps even the national character” (p. 15). The concern is precipitated by “seismic shifts” (Miller, 2002, p. 105) affecting the media landscape. Cycles of mergers and acquisitions are increasing, which reduces the number of controlling interests into the hands of very few mega media conglomerates. The consequence, as Kumar (2001) understands it, is that



“instead of creating an ‘open marketplace of ideas’, the media over-represent the interests of the elites” (p. 285).

Understandably, the concern that media production under a new mandate has the potential to influence readers and audiences has spawned strong debates about media impact. This is well understood and nicely captured by Entman (2007) when referring to Cohen’s (1963) often quoted statement, “the media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, in Entman, 2007, p. 165). At the heart of the matter, he argues, is Cohen’s proclamation that “what to think” and “what to think about” are inextricably linked. They are a process: the former invokes people’s acceptance or favour, while the latter refers to the deliberations they ponder or “think about” in drawing conclusions. In other words, “short of physical coercion, all influence over ‘what people think’ derives from telling them ‘what to think about’,” therefore, “if the media are really stunningly successful in telling people what to think about, they must also exert significant influence over what they think” (Cohen, in Entman, 2007, p. 165). In Nanaimo, this was keenly felt by participants in the community whose goal was not to hinder development, but advocate for better development. The media conveyed the FPN in particular as the enduring naysayers. To this end, concerns surface with regard to the media’s ability to exert undue influence in framing issues and in type-casting its residents.

The media are active partners in giving both voice and meaning to specific issues as they arise in the public sphere. While the media do have an obligation to search out and report the truth (Jackson, 1999), truth is now subject to enterprise acuity that necessitates determining what is of interest to the reading public. Media analysis, at a very fundamental level, should take into consideration how media operate to complement the overarching meta-narratives favouring capitalistic and consumer-oriented models of neo-liberalism. While the press have always possessed an unprecedented amount of power in determining which issues are deemed most prominent and relevant, neo-liberal values have exerted pressure, that results in bringing a different kind of bias to the table. Understandably, concern surfaces regarding the media’s ability to exert undue influence in framing issues in the community, and particularly when strong support is demonstrated by a select group on which the livelihood of the media depends. Who affirms a particular discourse is as important as the discourse that is being legitimized.

For that reason, the connection between who supports the media (in this case, the business community and the City) cannot be separated from the message framed. Media are framed by the forces that come to bear on them, while at the same time, it is framing messages to complement the objectives of the broader context. It is the conditioning *of* media and the conditioning *by* media that needs further consideration. It is important to recognize that both occur simultaneously. Undoubtedly, it is a hegemonic force that should be accounted for in the story of Nanaimo's convention centre.

While the broader structural forces were important and had some bearing on the conditioning which occurred, a more important consideration were the actions and direction asserted by the local forces to direct development. A very active role was played by the City's local business coalition with most of the organizing taking place outside the realm of public interest. Because there was a very specific goal set (e.g., the conference centre), it gave impetus to networking formally with other like-minded individuals and organizations who shared similar visions. These actions gave local power its own structure that was more influential to embedding a local tourism framework and perhaps even ideology. For the most part, although tourism had entered into the public domain through the media, the City's residents were largely surprised by the City's ambitious project. Subsequently, the way in which different community residents interpreted the decision was based on their perceptions, values, and agendas. This suggests Nanaimo's tourism mandate was not as securely set as what some decision-makers had hoped.

In summary, governmentality suggests power is dispersed in society through a number of mechanisms, which I identified in this section as agent, techniques, and apparatuses. In Nanaimo, we saw through the participatory processes how power was essentially shared. Nonetheless, I suggested that as much as these processes were opportunities to open space between the community and the local polity, that they were also a response to the broader influences of neo-liberal rationality. Second, through the actions of Councillor Rispin, we saw how an individual's action and commitment (both intellectual and moral) serve as powerful mediums through which to unite ideas and yield influence; "such thought becomes governmental to the extent that it seeks to render itself technical, to insert itself into the world by "realizing" itself as a *practice*" (Rose, 1996, p.41, italics in original). Third, the ideas became a hegemonic project through two apparatuses of transmission, namely the DNP and the

media. In particular, they played a complementary role to each other, which allowed the influence of the business community to reach the wider public and therefore begin the conditioning process long before the conference centre was realized.

With this understanding of power at work, we can now direct our attention to examining how the hegemonic project was made vulnerable. Power, for as much as it appeared centralized in Nanaimo's local government, was also dispersed through the community. Other networks and power relations emerged to resist and reinforce the direction charted. Here we see power's fluid nature between citizen groups as they actively engaged the community throughout the lead-up to the referendum. This is the focal point of the following section.

### **2004 TO 2005: A YEAR OF RESISTING AND REINFORCING**

If the decade from 1993 to 2003 was one of conditioning the community, the year that followed was one of resistance and reinforcement. Resistance played out through the organizing efforts of the FPN, while the Yes Committee and the media reinforced the decisions made by the City. The very public debate over the high-rise cap was one of the first public indicators triggering questions from concerned residents about local power relations and the community dynamics. The public meeting to raise the height cap was a window into understanding that Nanaimo's residents differed in terms of interests, views, and level of interaction about the kinds of development under consideration in the community. Despite their overall affirmation for tourism development as a way of transitioning Nanaimo's economy, the nature of the collective image between the City and the business community was not the same image held by the community. Fissures evolved between members of the community and the City and the business community over implications, and it was the FPN who took a lead role in challenging the City.

The FPN's goal was to intervene and interrupt the direction initiated by the City with the conference centre proposal. Their name reflected their desire to uphold what they felt were the principles of the OCP. Upholding these principles framed their resistance to the City's decisions. The City's decision to amend the ceiling cap left Nanaimo's waterfront vulnerable to high-rise development. Moreover, the announcement of the conference centre reinforced this observation, but it also gave rise to their charge that the City had failed to engage the public in meaningful dialogue. Both of these projects had significant implications for Nanaimo's residents. The decision to amend the by-law allowing high-rises up to 24 storeys also meant the

City could move forward with Triarc. In turn, this spawned a series of other development considerations, principally the high-rises at the border of Maffeo-Sutton Park. The City's near simultaneous decisions raised significant concern, but also their determination to affect local government actions.

The crux of the matter for the FPN was that the City was not accountable and forthcoming to the public, but was instead concerned with furthering the interests of the private sector. The conference centre announcement followed on the heels of the amended by-law and prompted the FPN to believe the City shaped recent policies in non-public domains and in covert ways. The principles of representational democracy allowed City Council to make decisions on the community's behalf, without public consultation. This power, while given by the residents, left them with little recourse. The issue was not the conference centre *per se*, but it was symbolic of the power exercised by the City.

As outlined in Foucault's (1991a) genealogical approach, community involvement is an effective means of social regulation. As active citizens, the FPN interfaced with the political realm holding "City Council's feet to the fire" (Ricker, 2005, p.11 quoting Stone) meant they were challenging the more centralized and unified power established through the City and DNP. They were, in effect, resisting the expressions of hegemony asserted through the DNP and City relations. The decision of several members to enter the political realm in the 2005 election was not, according to FPN members, a "slate" to overthrow the local polity. Rather, obtaining a seat on City Council was a mechanism through which they could press for the decentralized control called for in the OCP. For the FPN, their resistance lie not with the conference centre project, but rather the re-institution of a new version of the Old Boys' Club.

In order to challenge the City's policies and Machiavellian-like determinations, the FPN directed their attention to the public sphere in their attempt to influence public opinion to vote against the project in the referendum. As noted initially the FPN positioned their message within the principles entrenched in the OCP, and framed the City's announcement as a covert operation at the expense of the public. Moreover, as knowledge detailing the contract surfaced, they used this information to build a case against the legitimacy of the conference centre to be financially viable. This message raised questions about the City's ability to negotiate in the public's best interest. The increasing demands by the City's private partner gave FPN a platform to position Triarc as external to the community with no vested interest in the

community's long-term economic health. FPN also used local history to shape their argument and the importance of both the Civic Arena and the Foundry to the community's foundations. Further, they positioned their message on the inherent value of Maffeo-Sutton Park, suggesting this appreciation was lost on decision-makers who simply believed they were allowing condos in an area currently designated as a parking lot. Finally, the FPN brought in "objective" outside experts to challenge the City's rationale, and they countered the City's proposal with one that would continue to support incremental development in the core. This message was couched in language of what was sustainable and affordable for the residents. Intervention and resistance took on an educating function. FPN also positioned themselves as concerned citizens as opposed to the business community which was protecting its own interests. The business community, by contrast, were civic boosters without foundation to their arguments.

That these messages were gaining a foothold was not lost on the City's local business coalition who mounted a counter-resistance campaign entitled *Invest in Yes*. They too legitimized their arguments in a principled debate, returning to the initial banner messages: diversification of the local economy, revitalization of the core, and securing the community's future. Using much of the same rhetoric as Margaret Thatcher's discourse in the 1980s, they invoked "TINA". In other words, *there is no alternative*. They framed the conference centre as an investment and a marketing tool that would provide jobs and create jobs, which would result in benefits for all members of the community. Moreover, they appealed to the taxpaying community suggesting taxes were going to increase regardless of whether they approved this project or not. If the community did not approve the conference centre, the City would increase taxes to continue subsidising the core. However, if they supported the project, quite aside from the conference centre, they would see other public infrastructure projects realized (i.e., new council chambers, parking and the museum). Finally, they positioned the message as one that would see Nanaimo able to compete with other communities. This too was part of the all or nothing message. If Nanaimo was not prepared to make a significant investment towards putting itself on the map, it would continue to fall behind other more aggressive communities that were successfully reinventing themselves.

The *Invest in Yes* campaign reflected the DNP and Nanaimo's business community. Like the FPN, they too, defined themselves as active citizens. Several of these community members had been involved in community life, and the revitalizing efforts in the core for an

extended time frame. They believed they had actively engaged participatory democratic principles which led to policy initiatives that, over time, amounted to a substantial programme of reform for the downtown. Importantly, what had effected change was their engagement in discussing, deciding, proposing and planning. They took the principles outlined in the OCP from their embryonic state to a programme that would work. The Yes committee could support the project because problems with the core were being dealt with through the DNP.

The DNP and the Yes Committee were domains of intervention, constructed to overcome first the problems in the downtown, and second, reinforce threats to the practices of government. According to Foucault (1991a) their actions reflect the art of government. It was not a matter of sovereignty and ruling over that the DNP and the City were invoking. Rather, it was about the efficient management of “men and things” (p. 93); of “taking away people’s ice cream” as noted by one participant, to act in the “service of those governed” (p. 96) for the betterment of all.

... with government it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics – to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved. (Foucault, 1991a, p. 95).

They were encouragers of greater self-reliance, and to this end, the FPN were a threat to the community’s autonomy and future viability. Importantly, greater-self reliance, through revitalizing efforts defined their citizenship. Shoring up the mandate of the City was an act of “government through community” (Rose, 1996b, p. 332), meaning simply that the Yes Committee were cultivating the allegiance established with the City. Importantly, the City could utilize that alliance when they positioned themselves as neutral.

Quite to the contrary, the FPN were for the Yes Committee, the local and vocal naysayers and the small minority in the community who opposed most development. In this view, the FPN’s most telling contributions were in the constant ways in which they continued to resist democratic representation that was City Council. More often than not, these were the same members in the community who opposed development projects in the past and would likely be the force of resistance in the future. They were in their own right a local institution that finally had a name. With regard to the conference centre specifically, FPN’s argument was not steeped in an intellectual debate that would warrant investigation, but rather in their desire

to keep Nanaimo much as it was. They were the NIMBY crowd (not in my backyard), whose interests were narrowly defined.

Through the actions of both the FPN and the Yes Committee we are privy to the way in which two groups were trying to reshape the conduct of the conduct. On the one hand, the FPN were *resisting* what they believed was the overt domination by City Council, and *reinstate* the conduct of the conduct set out in the OCP. On the other hand, the Yes Committee was *reinforcing* the governance model put forward through the DNP and the City. The institution of the DNP meant stabilization for the downtown. In both the work of the FPN and the Yes Committee, despite very different conclusions, we see the positive role played by power.

When Foucault introduced the notion of governmentality, he argued that individuals or groups faced with a range of possibilities assess information differently. In turn this offers the possibility of perceiving situations very differently, “a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized” (Foucault, 1982, p. 221). Both the FPN and the Yes Committees’ actions demonstrate the ways “a human being turns him – or herself – into a subject” (1982, p. 208). In the case the Yes Committee, as already mentioned, their citizenship was defined by self-reliance and strategies that would accomplish this goal, and decentralized power. The FPN defined their citizenship as protectors of the City’s OCP, and against the encroachment of business into the local polity and against centralized power of the City and DNP.

Each of these positions reflected different ways of understanding the conference centre project, and the level of information possessed over the details of this specific project. Equally important, the dichotomous stances reveal each groups’ understanding, interpretation and beliefs of the role conference centres can play in meeting local economic development goals. On some level, the degree of resistance and counter resistant activities occurring in the community is encouraging as it represents an active citizenry who desired to speak into the way their community is governed.

## **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS**

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this examination of Nanaimo, and pondering this case extends those conclusions in two realms. One realm pertains to the research itself and the importance of reflexive exploration as a researcher. Given its role in learning, this realm is

given extended consideration in Chapter 7. Engaging my motivations and actions is a way of making reflexivity an integral practice within the research itself.

A second realm, and the focus of the discussion below, considers the understandings that have been gained both for theory and for practice, components essential to a critical constructionist perspective. Addressed in detail in this summary conclusion are the implications for the way practitioners and academics alike engage and think about participatory processes, governance and democracy, and how we conceptualize and engage these concepts within research and practice in community development planning and practices. Having summarized the two key periods in Nanaimo, I now turn my attention to those aspects that are relevant to academia and to practice more broadly.

Four main conclusions can be drawn from this case. First, conditioning of the community worked to embed the normalization of a tourism-oriented discourse. Thus, while communities may retain a fairly high degree of autonomy in determining the direction charted, the broader political-economic environment exerts imperceptible, but significant influence on the nature and extent of decision-making in community. Second, consideration of the quality of governance in the community is necessary. Governance has the ability to enhance, detract from, or direct communal discussions. Foucault's governance can be understood as a mechanism of resistance to institutional or bureaucratic planning, or it can be deployed as counter-resistance measures mitigating the objections of those deemed inconsequential, but threatening nevertheless to a prescribed outcome. In the latter instance, governance is seen as a way of homogenizing and totalising citizens for the productive capacity required of neo-liberalism. Third, there needs to be a greater understanding of the nature of democracy within participatory processes. Moreover, framing these discussions with linkages to political and economic realities espousing neo-liberal ideology must be considered. Finally, this case demonstrates that well-intentioned individuals on both sides of an issue exist in communities regardless of their community status as elite or marginalized and both can be portrayed as the "Other". Each of these four conclusions are discussed more thoroughly below.

*Conditioning of the community worked to embed a normalizing tourism-oriented discourse.*

The complementary nature of embedding tourism within neo-liberalism provided a double-barrelled influence that served to articulate both the *meaning* (i.e., the kind of project undertaken) and the *approach* (i.e., the way of operating) to community development. This



influence provided the conditioners that stood external to the community, but nonetheless were directed at the community. Indeed, both federal and provincial governments exercised their power through the withdrawal of funds and the kinds of policies they promoted. In particular, British Columbia's challenged forestry sector and the BCLP's focus on tourism policies and adoption of neo-liberal principles were at work influencing the decisions in Nanaimo. These factors underscored the role historical forces played in directing local governments towards the kinds of economic development projects deemed viable and enduring. It was against this backdrop that Nanaimo's decision-makers first developed their own policies and strategies.

While the broader context cannot be separated from the process, we should not over-emphasise its role because to do so would dismiss the importance of individuals and organizations in determining a specific path for the community and its ability to shape policy locally. Individual and collective agents worked hard to cement tourism discourse in the community. The governance structure of the DNP in particular created a strong local business coalition that ultimately determined not only the viability of the conference centre, but the nature of economic reform and development chosen in the community. This observation supports Cox and Mair's (1988) assertion that local community businesses work together to protect their own long-term viability in communities upon which they are dependent. Further, the way in which actors in the community responded to key policy decisions (e.g., raising the height-cap) was determined in large part by the networks in which they participated and their role within them.

Similar findings to these are evident in the work of Bramwell (2006), who recognized the fundamental importance of structural forces, but rejected the wholesale argument that community tourism policy is determined exclusively by such forces. This view does not undermine, but rather supports Foucault's (1982) suggestion that in order to understand power, we "must study the total structure of actions brought to bear" (p. 220) on the responses of those in positions of lesser power and their struggles and equivocations that reflect their desire to avoid a prescribed outcome.

In addition, this case also suggests that despite the community's support of a tourism trajectory, the initial planning processes were not effective mechanisms to uphold community values. The first *Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo* documents, which reflected the community's visioning exercises, required a finer mesh for interpretation. While the OCP was

a fairly detailed plan, it still contained enough ambiguity to allow members of the community to subject it to interpretation and revisions, while still enabled them to work within its parameters. To prevent these kinds of liberties, the polity should continually evaluate their initiatives against the broader public's wishes. The convening stages for decision-making, as Jamal and Getz (2000) suggest, should not be under-estimated and careful consideration be given to how and which community members are chosen for this exercise. Concrete objectives for examining the nature and quality of governance are discussed below.

*Democracy is interpreted differently in the community and closer examination on the question of democracy within participatory processes is necessary.*

The call in the literature for more participatory practices assumes that underscoring its return is a more democratic approach to decision-making. The democratic ideal, founded in an egalitarian ethic, promotes the neutralizing of power and the privileging of knowledge. In theory, the workings of power are suspended to produce more consensual participatory processes, and invites empowerment of alternative discourses, forms of reasoning, and value systems. Nonetheless, as has been demonstrated in previous research in community tourism development settings (e.g., Blackstock, 2005; Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Hall, 1994; Jamal & Getz, 1995), bringing about these processes has been a challenge of participatory practices. Subsequently, scholars examining power in process, including tourism scholars, continue to wrestle with how real participation might actually be achieved, and how the transformation of social relations and power necessary for egalitarianism might occur. The critique remains that insufficient attention is paid to the practical context of power relations in engaging political and power-laden interests. Alongside critical investigations of community power relations, the Nanaimo case highlights the value of interactions that were clearly problematic, yet which also instilled tensions that would not dissipate.

As this case illustrates, a more careful consideration of democracy's myriad of interpretations at work within a community that contribute to these tensions is necessary. Indeed, the question of the *kind of democracy engaged and at work* should be examined. This question, although relatively straight-forward, has implications for evaluating the real effectiveness of inclusiveness in a participatory process, and therefore, for interpreting its meaning and ultimately, success. Moreover, this question should be considered in relation to

the kind of governance at work in the community. In other words, *what role does democracy play in embedding or resisting neo-liberal ideology?*

Nanaimo's City Council and some members of the community felt the decision-making process was highly participatory and guided by the ideals of representative democracy. Nonetheless, also evident within these civic decision-making leadership networks were liberal democratic principles that complement neo-liberal aims and ideals. Foucault's (1991a) stance is that the role of bureaucratic systems under liberal democratic governance is to maintain and accumulate power. By contrast, the FPN resisted these ideals and instead embraced radical democratic principles as a form of resistance, in the hope of having City Council take a more tempered deliberative and socially democratic approach. Moreover, both *Plan Nanaimo* and *Imagine Nanaimo* were processes of deliberative democracy, designed to elicit inclusive debates, reflective of participatory democratic ideals.

Few empirical studies have critically examined the elasticity of the term "democracy" nor fully recognized the level of complexity inherent to this process. However, there are elements of critical engagement concerning democracy found in works such as that by Purcell (2001) who suggests democracy as unquestioned reason, that it is hegemonic. In this regard, democracy's desirability is rarely questioned. There is a need to open the discussions on democracy, especially as it aligns with participatory processes. Indeed, debate on governance opens up a vibrant line of research in which participatory process, democracy, neo-liberalism, and governance are all deeply intertwined.

The kind of democracy presently operating in communities requires clearer articulation by the academic community in order to provide descriptive accounts of its nature and understanding within and by community, and to explore which form of democracy embeds or resists techniques and regulations of governance. Much of the literature on democracy within the tourism literature rarely questions its appeal, and yet this case demonstrates that different notions of democracy existed in the community that either contributed to rationalizing the City's actions or resisting them.

To the extent that participatory processes are able to advocate effectively the broadly-based interests will help determine the ability of the community to offset neo-liberal's tendency to emphasize the positive influence of capital and to privilege private sector interests over public interest decisions (Purcell, 2001). While the decisions made may or may not destabilize

neo-liberal aims, what is certain is that processes in which decisions suit personal agendas and not the preferred ends of the community further embeds neo-liberal ideology.

There is, then, a need for a more sustained, critical evaluation on the question of democracy and how its form influences participatory processes. Such a critique must begin with questions on the nature of democracy and on whether neo-liberalism fosters specific kinds of democracy. Moreover, has democracy become an unquestioned value that is embedded within our techniques of regulation and governance? While it was beyond the scope of this investigation to examine in detail the many traditions of democracy, suffice it to say that a myriad of traditions exist from which to evaluate, rationalize, or complement the political milieu. Further, the particular tradition embraced has an impact on the success (or lack thereof) of achieving movement on Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation or Rocha's (1977) Ladder of Empowerment.

*Careful consideration to the nature and quality of governance in the community is necessary, as governance has the ability to enhance or detract from communal discussions.*

Governance does not necessarily disengage from the broader political and power-laden interests that beset participation, but instead can reinforce structural norms. As this case demonstrates, the decision-making process surrounding the PNC did not operate independent of the institutional and political legacies that not only set the boundaries of deliberation, but shaped the nature and capacity of community interactions. The prior history of engagement in the community, which was divided by interests, also reinforced the style of communication used and reflected a local political culture steeped in an adversarial political legacy.

Governance that encourages participatory practices of collaboration and creates an environment where all claims can be heard, respected and valued, must be fostered. Aspects of this form of governance occurred in early initiatives such as the *Imagine Nanaimo* and *Plan Nanaimo* forums, but once the bureaucratic institution where established norms governed entered the process, these aspects were largely rejected. Governance must be more than implementation "at whim," but maintain ties to civic engagement and notions associated with civil society. Other scholars examining governance issues, such as Putnam (1995), note that the quality of governance is encoded within longstanding traditions of the absence or presence of civic engagement. For example, Putnam noted elements of civic engagement should include voter turnout and newspaper readership. These are indicators of a successful region and both

were noted as deficiencies within this case. Putnam further underscores the importance of taking civic engagement into account by suggesting “networks of organized reciprocity and civic solidarity, far from being an epiphenomenon of socioeconomic modernization” (p. 71) are necessary components.

At a very pragmatic level, decision-makers exploring an expanded role for tourism development must move their mindset from knowing what is right and “selling” a programme to one that embraces the complexity of political, social, and economic interests in determining a course of action. This call is not unique as both practitioners and academics have previously expressed the need for this shift in the literature (see for example, Blackstock, 2005; Crouch, 2001; Crowley, 2001; Jamal & Getz, 1995, 2000; Lowes, 2002). However, several issues arise when trying to shift the mindset. First, just as important as determining *who* in the community are the relevant experts, is determining what are the definitions of expertise and the criteria to be used in their assessments. Second, consideration needs to be given to fostering relationships among community members who are considered experts so that they can co-operatively share their expertise. Such relationships would generate deliberations focused on understanding and respecting differences, and ultimately lead to discussions and exercises that overcome them. Both solidarity and dissent should be valued in these discussions, and marked contrasts should not develop into intractable and incommensurable positions. Indeed, exploring the ways various actors and experts interact and seek influence regarding their views on development can assist in building trust. By fostering civilized engagement, vitriolic interactions, such as that noted in this case by one participant, “that there was civic engagement, but there was certainly nothing civil about it”, could be deterred

Discussions of governance, operating within the political framework of neo-liberalism, should also reflect on the way in which citizens tend to be regarded solely as populations of production. For example, the Yes Committee was a far more effective format for communal persuasion. The Committee effectively complemented traditional government structures such as the bureaucratic organizations housed within local government that served as a means of normalizing and embedding. The work of the Yes Committee revealed the strong link that exists between the notion of governmentality and performance. As noted earlier, Foucault’s (1991a) genealogical account of governing explored the complex relations between people and systems of government. He observed that the establishment of an ensemble of mechanisms

contributed to the maintenance and accumulation of power. Moreover, he noted that power is most effective when it is most subtle in its application.

Political-epistemological solidarities formed in Nanaimo that determined the relevant stakeholders and experts in the community. In particular, the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership (DNP) and its constituent associations invoked aspects of “pastoral power” (Foucault, 1977), and in turn, became the inadvertent creators and preservers of productivity and power in everyday life. They played a facilitating role as guardians of the civic government that increasingly espoused performance-based objectives and sought to position public choice within an “all or nothing” discourse. Their role superseded the public interest, which held an element of “inefficiency”, but was nevertheless positioned discourse around community values. In seeking the performative of Nanaimo, the DNP sought to establish conformity within the community by reinforcing the message of increasing the welfare of all, normalized through consistent, but multiple avenues of messaging.

Moreover, this case also raises questions concerning the structures within which power operates. Both formal and informal structures were evident. While we understand power to be fluid and its nature can be unveiled, there remains elements of power housed within informal structures that remain hidden and are therefore unknowable. For example, several residents suggested power resided with the City Manager, but the organization of the political structure indicates the City Manager is directed by Council, and whose job is only to implement the direction set out by City Council. Nonetheless, his informal influence on Council members, the business community, and the development and real estate communities cannot be dismissed. In general, there is no way of tracing or linking the informal power relations that exist in a community.

*Critical tourism scholars should strive to be more transparent within their reflexive practices.*

The critical approach seeks to reveal where power operates and in particular draws attention to whose interests are represented, to the ways in which power is exercised, and to the influence of ideology in the research context and the research itself (Tribe, 2007). This broad mandate has produced a relatively simplified dichotomous stance concerning power relations within communities, which tends to situate those without power as being “Othered”. However, deep reflexive practice within this research project causes me to caution critical scholars against such as militant stance. Rather, in exploring the contested and multiple nature of

community life, we must create a space to consider the productive and fruitful nature of power relations in communities. This space should be positioned alongside our desire to understand how and where knowledge/power relations produce hegemonic ideals and relations.

For the most part, the critical emphasis has examined issues of social inequality, the global/local nexus, embodiment and performances, lifestyle, and cultural practices in the research context. Less emphasis has focussed on positionality, perspective and reflection, and the emotional dynamics of research specifically. I advocate more transparency within our reflexive practice. An example of this struggle within the research process is described in the chapter that follows.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

One of the objectives of this study was to assess the broader forces influencing the decision-making process and the redevelopment of the downtown core. In order to infer stronger macro/meso/micro linkages, extension of the analysis to the documents concerning the local context could have coincided with the significant political shift at the federal level, at a minimum beginning around 1980. Furthermore, this study could have been enhanced by a systematic assessment of provincial documents to assist in drawing more conclusive linkages to the community and provided a more complete picture. For example, regional development plans, which were encouraged by the provincial government, were not examined, yet the Nanaimo Regional District has a fairly strong policy document emphasizing tourism. It may have allowed a glimpse into the precise path from the provincial to the local context.

Another limitation of this study was the narrow range of community residents interviewed. Participants were primarily chosen because of their knowledge, interest and involvement in the conference centre story. While this yielded rich data about the details and the struggle that followed, interviewing a broader selection of community residents may have helped to provide perspective as to the importance of this story in the community. My awareness of this came through an informal encounter with a local resident who still believed the conference centre was yet to be built on the first site proposed.

Time and distance were also considerations in this project. I did not revisit the community after the interviews had been completed. Returning to the City could have been helpful in several regards. As my insights grew, a further probing of City Council minutes that extended further back than 1993 might have revealed other events and people instrumental in

the eventual outcome. In addition, documents came to light that could not be accessed or were no longer in circulation. For example, the tourism study first commissioned which the Community Opportunity Fund used to provide conference centre rationale to City Council, might have been held in the City's archives.

### **SNAPSHOTS FOR ANOTHER TIME: FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

While much has been discovered by probing in-depth the nature of the social networks and power relations at work in Nanaimo's decision making process, my research reinforces the early emerging work within tourism studies which suggests the study of process, outcomes and impacts of tourism on local policy remains a worthwhile and fruitful endeavour. Continuing to study nature of social networks in communities through a case study approach will in time provide an opportunity for cross-case analysis from which we may glean further insights. While a single case offers much by the way of depth, comparisons among communities may provide an even fuller understanding of the continuities, patterns and rationales that serve to establish tourism as an economic framework within communities.

More specific to this project, but alluded to by the study participants was the relationship between the City of Nanaimo and its private partner, Triarc. While not explored in this study, Triarc's missed contract deadlines and the changes of management in several of its subsidiaries likely played a part in Nanaimo's story. Triarc's participation was, without question, a concern to all participants who were following the details of the project closely.<sup>40</sup> The rocky relationship with Triarc and its successors continued to fuel the debate with those who stood in opposition to the conference centre from the outset. It is one of the reasons why some residents expressed uncertainty or remorse during casual conversations. Moreover, it was certainly the reason why at least three study participants who voted "yes" indicated they would no longer do so. Moreover, one of the study participant's acknowledgement of the "lousy marriage" raises some questions about the movement of private-public-partnerships (3Ps) as a mechanism for developing community tourism infrastructure projects.

A very brief foray into the literature indicates that private-public-partnerships across Canada and elsewhere have increasingly been used in planning processes. Their primary benefit is that they are thought to marry the efficiency and effectiveness of the private sector

---

<sup>40</sup> At the time of writing, nearly two years after the conference centre has opened, a hotel, which was touted as significant to the conference centre's success, has yet to be built.



with the regulatory functions of government to meet public sector requirements and demands. Risk is spread between the private and public sectors and proponents of collaborative project planning suggest co-operation between different levels of government and the private sector creates a “win-win” scenario for all participants in the partnership. Moreover, according to Siemiatycki (2006), 3Ps have retained credibility among a number of influential scholars and critics. This indicates that it is a practice well on its way to being normalized (Siemiatycki, 2006).

At first glance, in the case of Nanaimo, the relationship between the City and Triarc was fraught with ongoing tensions. The most blatant criticisms were levelled at the political motivations of some of the decision-makers, the considerable fiscal burden to residents, a lack of transparency in the process, and the unequal power distribution in which Triarc had the upper hand. These observations raised questions about whether the philosophical foundations – the profit-driven interests of the private sector and the welfare-driven interests of the community – can ever reconcile the contradictory expectations of either party. At whose expense do concessions occur? This is an especially relevant question in light of the neo-liberal influence in which a tourism model fits particular well for communities seeking ways of capitalizing on their environment (i.e., communities using a tourism model to commodify their spaces). It seems that such relationships add another layer of pressure on the community’s ability to retain a degree of autonomy even with a particular project that it may have chosen.

A final area of potentially rich research that emerged from this project is an examination of the internal workings of the resistance and counter-resistance movements in the community. How did the relations within the FPN shape its image in the community, and more importantly influence the kinds of interactions that occurred with the decision-makers? As I moved through the interviews and had the opportunity to observe the interactions of members in a community meeting, my sense was that the FPN, over time, lacked a degree of cohesiveness. The public meeting I attended was to discuss its future role in the community. This did not appear to be the case for the Yes Committee members. These observations caused me to reflect on the enabling and constraining features of relationships; to understand more fully how power is shared and exercised within community groups, and then transmitted in the community, particularly in groups whose purpose is resistance. Did the way the relationships within the group have a bearing on determining its social influence in the community?

The tensions observed within the relationships of this research project caused me to reflect at a more personal level on the apprehensions I experienced in the everyday practice of conducting my research. Reflecting on the nature of relationships within the community gave rise to the final chapter wherein the more salient moments of my reflexive practices are shared.

**CHAPTER FOCUS**

Surfacing in the work of a number of scholars writing about their journaling experiences is the idea that journaling captures an experience, expresses emotion, and records moments of learning and insights. My journaling experience reflected all of these aspects. The overarching goal in talking about one's presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions (Mruck & Breuer, 2003) is to make visible the constructed nature of our impressions; in essence, it is a time for critical reflection of self in the process (Foley, 2002; St. Louis & Calabrese Barton, 2002). I have a heightened appreciation for the research process, recognizing through this project how intellectual and emotive acts are neither static, necessarily complementary, cooperative or tidy. The sub-title of this section, explained in more detail below, captures how I experienced the research process as affective and unsettling, which despite formal closure, still leaves some fissures in both intellectual and emotional domains not yet fully reconciled. That said, the journal I kept was a cathartic and introspective space.

In order to best provide some insight into my journaling experience, and what I've learned as a result, I've drawn on some of the key features of Boud (2001). Boud's work, primarily in the area of adult education, suggests three occasions appropriate for reflection: *reflection in anticipation of events*, *reflection in the midst of action*, and *reflection after the events*. My first occasion represents the preparation of this project, but it can also serve as a space of clarity for thinking about future research projects. The second occasion I interpreted as similar to being in the thick of things, of data collection and analysis. It was through this process that there are moments of noticing and then subsequently intervening to assist in "righting" oneself. The final occasion is a post-script, a stepping back as I contemplate the entirety of the research journey. Again, this is a process that is circular. Presenting what I have learned through these three distinct phases, however, reinforces the centrality of reflective practice throughout the research process. In addition to providing structure to the discussion, I would be remiss not to mention Marcus's (1998) *Ethnography through thick and thin*, highlighted in the work Douglas Foley (2002). This foundation was helpful in thinking about ways to present my reflections as much as possible in a concise and orderly fashion.

This section of my thesis, while by no means exhaustive, culls some of the more raw moments of the journaling experience that, through constant recording and reflecting, constituted a conscious effort to address my lived research experience in some form. Consistent with my critical lens, the following discussion is presented as an occasion for critical self-reflection. To me, it represents another opportunity to open dialogue for learning between myself and my readers, yet another opportunity for growth as a novice researcher. One final note – the extensive use of my journal excerpts in this section continues the critical spirit of making the invisible visible, hopeful for achieving critical consciousness of one’s own labour. The journal is original, full of my spelling errors, and I chose to keep it that way, if for no other reason than to see me “at work” in the research process.

## **THE FIRST OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION**

### **Reflection in Anticipation of the Next Research Journey**

The literature on reflective practice places importance on journaling the data collection and analysis phase of the research process. However, it occurred to me as I revisited my proposal within weeks of finishing the research project, that I felt a new level of confidence and maturity since that initial writing. I realized in that moment that I had grown as a scholar. I regretted not having journalled through the research design to map my evolving understanding of the critical constructionist lens and any associated methodological considerations that came through these illuminations. Doing so at this stage may have helped to clarify my research aims and approaches as I explored and grappled with questions about what I could know and how I might come to know it, as well as my relationship to what could be known (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

### *Privileging Aspects of the Research Process*

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. I wonder now why I didn’t journal all aspects of the research process? Why did I think it only important in the data collection and analysis phase? Did I miss something along the way, was that something expected of me? That’s part of the frustration with a qualitative work - my silent cynical rant that everything’s grey, nothings black and white, and not just grey but various shades of grey depending who you’re talking to - no concrete rules per se. There is much frustration in that, yet I have also experienced satisfaction when something fits or resonates with who I am. And this too, while the rant, is also the beauty of qualitative work, that one can work and shape one’s box. (Reflective Journal, 15/01/2010)

This omission led me to ponder how and why I privileged the data collection and the analysis phases of this project over struggles of who I was/am and will become as I continue to grow and mature. Despite Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) suggestion that the first phase of the research process is about the researcher as a multi-cultural subject, establishing my position as a critical qualitative researcher, was not as deeply rooted at the time of writing my proposal. Much like qualitative inquiry is characterized by constant diversity and conflict, or data collection and analysis is neither linear nor neat, so too, the process of understanding the relationship between attributes and congruencies within our chosen paradigm (ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises) is also at times riddled with uncertainty, confusion and overlap.

Gubrium and Holstein's (2002) metaphor that the pendulum of qualitative inquiry is constantly in motion clearing new space for growth of the field, is also a relevant metaphor for the individual researcher. Charting how my voice changed through the process would have added a degree of transparency to the process. For me in particular, this would have been helpful as I struggled with the residual effects of presuming to know reality and notions of truth and objectivity.

My incomplete, personal, culturally/historically-defined, and continually evolving voice raises methodological considerations. For example, can the time spent in the community and the relationships I built inspire the level of trust required to see transformative activity take place upon completion of this project as Freire (2006) advocated? I wonder whether the interview guide, while intended as a conversation, truly reflected a dialogical exchange wherein trust is defined as a necessary component. Was the time spent in the community enough to provide a foundation to engage in critical thinking among all of the participants in the dialogue?

There were, in essence, two journeys of knowing occurring in this research process. One story was my own, my growth and my understanding of self as a researcher. The second was my understanding of the research I was undertaking in regard to the conference centre. How might the growing awareness of who I am as a researcher been a source of encouragement and empowerment if I had harnessed the power of self-reflection earlier? How might this, in turn, influenced on the story I was seeking? Might I have exercised more

freedom and license in the research process knowing my growth or might it have served to unravel who I thought I was?

## **THE SECOND OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION**

### **Moments of Noticing and Intervening while Collecting and Analysing Data**

Boud (2001) suggests noticing, intervening, and reflection-in-action are aspects that contribute to the learning coming from any form of engagement. He defines “noticing” as our awareness of what is happening around us, in tune with both the external and internal features of the experience. “Intervening” refers to actions we take to change situations in which we find ourselves. These activities are not necessarily evident to others but reflect introspective *in situ* moments, and together they are the third consideration of learning. This final aspect, “reflection-in-action” is incomplete without noticing and intervening, as all work together to facilitate interpretation of events and the effects of one’s interventions. In the discussion that follows, I work chronologically through a series of reflections that collectively represent the more salient moments of noticing, intervening, and reflection-in-action.

### *Recruiting and Privileging Participants*

For the most part, I was pleased at how well I was able to recruit participants for this study. Both of the individuals with whom I made initial contact possessed credibility and catalytic influence in the community among their respective peers. The personal contact I made with them during my first trip to Vancouver Island was invaluable. Permission to use their names in the introductory call helped to mitigate the cold call approach in working from a distance.

Once I began interviewing, however, I wondered how well purposive and snowball sampling worked because of the cohesiveness that existed at either end of the polarized perspectives. As I interviewed a number of participants sequentially who shared the same viewpoint, I wondered if these individuals were recommended for their ability to speak to specific issues. In other words, were some of the participants I interviewed recommended by others for their ability to fill in the gaps, or because they had a specific interest and possessed detailed understanding of some aspect they wanted presented? I wrote early in the process,

This is now my 7<sup>th</sup> interview and perhaps the best way to explain my overall impression thus far, is that if each of those participants were strings on a guitar, they all play a different note. In other words, each highlighted different aspects of the process, and placed emphasis in different areas; yet the themes are there,

running through, each brought to the fore. This I don't think was intentional or planned, but perhaps is part of each individual's impetus to become involved. (Post Interview Reflection File, 17/04/2008)

However, I found myself unable to shake the feeling that I might have missed those persons who fell between or were less committed to one of the emerging polarized positions. Thus I sought out neighbourhood representatives as a way of adding to my understanding of the broader community in this story. All of these participants (on both sides) suggested concerns over increased taxes in the community. I was aware through background reading that Nanaimo's economic profile was below provincial standards and I began to wonder if in the process of selecting participants who they could speak to this issue was at the same time a way of privileging certain populations in the community. For the most part, many of my participants were highly educated, possessing attributes of what Odendahl and Shaw (2002) call the "elite"<sup>41</sup>. How might my understanding of the community's story have been shaped because of who was given voice in this research process? For example, might aspects of community identity be reinforced or seen differently from the perspective of those not possessing elitist attributes? In other words, how might this story have been shaped if I would have interviewed a cross section of Nanaimo's working class, or those living on lower incomes?

So I'm out for my intentional evening walk, and I came across a man and we began to chat about the community. If one went by appearances, he didn't fit the profile of my participants and I raise that because I wonder if I'm missing something. We were standing in front of the Malaspina hotel, and as we chatted, I deliberately drew attention to the changes to the old Malaspina. And he quipped, "Yes, that's going to be our new conference centre with a hotel and condo's on top." Well that was clearly wrong. But how off-base and out of touch can one be? If this is such a big issue in the community wouldn't everyone know that? How come he didn't know? Did he not care to? Could he not know because of some limitation and if that is the case, what does that say about the community's process. ... What does it say about who I have given voice to in this process? About whose story will be told through me? (Reflective Journal, 25/04/2008)

---

<sup>41</sup> Odendahl and Shaw (2002) define the elite as individuals and groups who occupy top echelons of society. They generally possess more knowledge, money, and status and assume higher positions than others assume in the population. I have loosely adopted their definition here. The elite in Nanaimo refer to individuals in the community who possessed attributes of education, status by way of occupation, or status and affirmation among the City's other elite.

Despite this awareness, I made no further connection with individuals in the community who may have added another dimension or “instrument” to this story. This is one of the limitations.

*My Baggage: Privileging “Truth” over Understanding*

We account for bias within qualitative research by maintaining transparency of who we are, by the assumptions we make about the nature of our relationships and outcomes of the interactions with our participants, and by the conceptual tools and strategies we use for analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Situating self in the research and the assumptions we bring to the research process serves as a first step in critical self-reflection, and is the first occasion of reflection (Boud, 2001). I have come to realize that there are several layers of self that cannot necessarily all be accounted for “up front,” and as a result, all bias cannot be rendered visible upfront.

The series of excerpts below reinforce the importance of journaling for self-critique. I came to this project with values, history, assumptions and initial interpretations and understandings from the literature, all of which were central to how I was viewing the process from the outset. I came to the interview phase of my study with subconscious biases that were more than just the culmination of either my subjectivity or positionality, but emerged as I began to position myself in the debate. This was revealed in different ways throughout the data collection phase. The first excerpt is from the early days when I was analysing the newspapers:

I find myself getting angry as I am reading some of the letters. Not so much from the public but from those in places of power/authority and the exposure and misinformation that goes along with it. For example, Robert Hutchins, mayor of Ladysmith writes “... resurgence of tourism initiatives Island-wide, working towards an ideal of new opportunities and *clean* industry”, November 4, 2004. My initial reaction is to write him, listing all the research that points to the contrary. Ignorance in leadership ticks me off.

Again, and further along in the same journal entry, I write,

There are some key points that are being raised and in this process, I have realized some frustration in not being able to articulate the overall ‘feeling’ that is not articulated outright but seems to be hovering over a good deal of the letters to the editors from those citizens objecting to the NNC. And then you see that the citizens themselves are able to articulate well – and it just takes one to represent what many are implying but haven’t outright articulated – the moment one articulates it, then all of a sudden so much of what is not said, but ‘out there’ is crystallized. It is in these moments that we have tangible verbal articulation occurring. The collective voice in these moments becomes crystal clear. For example, Don Graham Nov. 4, 2004 writes: Amongst the cons are



some clear thinking writers with specific points. The likes of Annie McPherson, Joe Ives, and Brenie Waatainen, to name a few, raise important points which the pros drown out by raising the volume on the rah rahs, instead of debating them”. Bingo!!! Pro sentiments increased instead of the facts, and this is the gnawing vagueness I couldn’t articulate but bothered me when reading the pro letters. For example, Bill Robinson (Nov 5, 2004) writes: I’m confident that there will be an even bigger majority whose chests will swell with pride when anyone mentions the NNC, a huge project that I predict will be seen to have been surprisingly affordable” (Reflective Journal, 28/01/2008)

Later in my journey as I began the interviews, my bias is evident still through the language I invoke. Words such as “destroyed” and “killed” demonstrate this bias. Increasingly I became aware that I was not seeking *truth*, but *understanding*. The rhetoric is toned down and I no longer desire to defend a particular stance.

As I reflect on the interview, I feel a great sadness that within one’s community, you have well caring, well skilled individuals who are prepared to commit their time and energy to contribute to the community, and how easily, that can be destroyed. \_\_\_\_\_ has no passion left for his community – this community that has been his home since he graduated from engineering at SFU/UBC(?), 20 years ago. It is my impression that it was not the community as a whole; the apathy he understands, or can justify – busy families earning a living and that sort of thing. Rather, it was the actions of a very few, and perhaps not even their actions, but the attitudes, that killed his desire to remain a contributing member of this particular community. (Post Interview Reflection File, 16/04/2008)

Yet further along in the research process I begin to recognize the bias,

I came to this process completely biased; I see that now. And the first interviews did nothing to dispel that. Second, that now in having interviewed from the other side, the again well intentioned – with or without thought, but I would think certainly with ignorance in the sense of the implications from my perspective (i.e.: the infringement of what drives our thinking along those lines). But also, then you meet people like \_\_\_\_\_ and increasingly the questions that surface are why ‘hell bent’ on this. Was it because they were too far down the line – committed – and had to follow through? Or were they too far down the line – invested emotionally – that they no longer could see objectively? And the ‘hope’ of community members – the equating of holding my nose and voting yes, the spoiling of the ballot ... there are such mixed messages in that. Yet Nanaimo has been ‘waiting’ to be birthed, needing a change. A desperation in making this happen. (Post Interview Reflection File, 08/05/2008)

Towards the end of the interview process, there is recognition not only of the bias, but its importance as a methodological consideration when I suggest that it shaped how I interviewed.

I was struck again during this interview the number of committed people in this community that volunteer. How to harness all of the potential; imagine if they were working together, as opposed to each other? It struck me during this interview, how perspective is really key, and I found myself feeling ‘relief’ for some of the people I met because they are decent, and caring about their community as well.

[further in the same entry] And I wondered too, as I was speaking to him, and now – those who were on the “no” side, did they volunteer in the community prior to this? And I harken back to the frustration of \_\_\_\_\_ and the development ‘next door’ that engaged his attention. Reactive based on a negative experience versus proactive about saving the community.

[further in the same entry] So what does one do with the accumulative knowledge that one gains as one goes along. It is impossible to have that not impact how I interview.

[further in the same entry] There is a place for tourism in the community – and in this community how it completely makes sense – the critical theory aspect that makes me challenge the now newer conventional wisdom about the ‘evil’ of the development community. (Post Interview File, 16/05/2008)

As I reflected on my journal, I questioned if my bias was reinforced through three distinct but interconnected actions. First, had my extensive reading of the inequities existing in decision-making elsewhere subconsciously produced my understanding of what occurred in Nanaimo? How was I influenced by the objective of the writers, when “each reading, each interpretation inevitably indeterminately arises from the dialectical tension between the text (in whatever form, written, spoken, culture, action) and the reader’s (interpreter’s) situated, historically (biographically) conditioned horizon” (Roth, 2002, cited in Day, 2002, p. 4)? Alternatively, is it possible that while rendering the multiple and contested nature of community life we have at the same time initiated a new discursive regime and historical text? Does this new discursive regime serve as the basis and justification for new conventional wisdoms and knowledge claims, that are somewhat camouflaged within the interpretive paradigm? Is it possible in the construction of knowledge that we have at the same time “othered” or sterilized the humanity attached to the decision-makers, in an attempt to raise

questions of who else should be considered in decision-making processes? Did I “other” the elite in this process?

Foley (2002), when reflecting on and articulating the middle ground between confessional and theoretical reflexivity, suggests Marcus’ (1998) understanding is helpful in this regard. In order to produce a local account of knowledge, we must pay attention to how the practices and discourses of our discipline/field affect what and how we write. We must be reflexive epistemologically and qualify our work as approximate, subject to reform and debate, but must also “practice a systematic, disciplined abductive process of theory development within and against the discursive traditions of a discipline(s)” (Marcus, p. 477). How have the heuristic tools I employed, such as Gramsci’s notion of hegemony and Foucault’s governmentality conditioned me to “other” or marginalize, not in the traditional sense of the word, but to privilege through actions and attitudes? What role did the academic-knowledge-production process, despite epistemological understanding of the production of truth claims, aid in this process? How did my reading intersect with who I was and how I grew up, sensitive to those who had suffered unjustly?

I leave these questions unanswered, in large part because I continue to contemplate them. Regardless, they serve as markers for ongoing reflective practice, the critiquing of self in the research process, and as a form of self-consciousness-raising. Perhaps more accurately, they continue to occupy my thoughts, and remain part of the intellectual fissures still unresolved.

Upon reflection, my introduction to the conference centre and the events that unfolded came through a highly involved member of the FPN. This introduction, while helpful, served to “set” the direction that I would take with regard to some context specific readings. I see now that this also served to skew my perspective. For example, how have the contextual documents, such as FPN’s book provided in the early stages shaped my understanding of what occurred? I privileged this information as neutral, and did not critically assess how these documents positioned and framed perspectives that did not align with theirs.

There is one further consideration as I came to be aware of my bias. The interview schedule was arranged so that the first eight interviews took place with participants who resisted the project. The order of the interviews, I realize in hindsight also played into this bias. The uninterrupted series of sequential and reinforcing perspectives further embedded my bias,

until such time that I began to be informed from a different perspective (those who supported the project). If I had been introduced to those who had a different perspective earlier, it may have helped to open the discussion about what others felt were important considerations in the process, which in turn could have then enhanced the questions asked in the subsequent interviews. Moreover, it may have served to help me see the bias earlier, which may have also changed the nature of how I interviewed.

*Positioned by Others: How to Address Assumptions?*

When I began working on this project, I did not realize the level of tension in the community around this project. After two weeks of interviews, I became aware of a number of aspects that I had not previously considered. For example, I had arranged to use office space at the local university and discovered the university was not necessarily perceived as neutral space. This was something I could have anticipated. The chair of one of the departments on campus spearheaded resistance to the project and a number of professors also supported that stance. When I positioned myself as a student researcher; an outsider to the community, but with a distant level of affinity and familiarity, and as neutral or at least indifferent to the project outcome, I had not considered that my position would not necessarily be taken at face value by my participants. In other words, I did not consider that my pursuit of knowledge would be questioned, or that others may perceive that I had an alternative motive.

However, during the interview process, on the one hand I encountered participants who viewed me with suspicion because I was an academic. On the other hand, other participants viewed me as someone who would deliver some form of retribution because I was an academic. Those who viewed me with reservation likely did so because a number of highly educated individuals and “university-types” had resisted the project and they questioned whether I was one of them. For some who resisted the project, my ability to sift through all of the “evidence” would qualify me to make a judgement call about the project and permit me to point to the gaps, inconsistencies, and the lack of transparency surrounding the project. This tension caused me to reflect more critically and deeply about positioning that I had not previously considered.

Perhaps naively, I assumed that positioning myself as I did would somehow provide immunity from any other interpretation of who I was and how I was received. Experiencing this tension raised two methodological considerations. First, the way in which I was positioned

by others, in addition to the bias I was forming, created a tension that worked its way into the interview process – I began to relate to participants differently depending on my level of comfort with them. Given that the interviews were a key feature of this research, and I was the main instrument of the data collection, how did my level of comfort or discomfort determine what I explored with each of the participants? In turn, how did I influence the nature and quality of the interviews? My connection to the participants is reflected in the entry below as I did not experience the same degree of openness to either myself or my study with some of the participants:

I was not looking forward to this interview. I have ‘sensed’ from the first time I met \_\_\_\_\_, that he was ‘indifferent’ at best to my study, and if he and \_\_\_\_\_ roles were reversed, I’m not sure I would have the level of co-operation, and I think the interview reflected that. I was uncomfortable and the whole time I just wanted out of there. (Post Interview File, 06/05/2008)

I struggled with the negative “vibes” and my desire to conclude this interview. In contrast, the following interview that lasted close to two hours and turned into a social evening, was experienced very differently.

This has been one of my most meaningful and enjoyable interviews. Here is a community member, no vested interest in terms of employment. I think he is a little more informed of ‘process’ and therefore slightly more introspective about those kinds of things. And too understanding with sensitivity as to how this community works. A number of things stand about this interview for me. Perhaps first, how as a researcher that I don’t really want to separate the person out of the information, and too, that I can be who I am. (Post Interview File, 02/05/2008)

The connection (or lack thereof) to my participants through this process was not a consideration I anticipated during the design phase. Yet, the degree of comfort – largely because of how I interpreted the relational space as either distant/closed or warm/open to further probing and exploration – likely impacted the richness of the data collected, and as a result, the analysis of the data. Because I felt uncomfortable to probe and perceived cynicism about my work, I did not clarify things that I should have, nor did I ask all of the questions I asked in other interviews. During data analysis, I realized that the lack of probing stunted particularly interesting areas, on which I perhaps should have reflected more. For example, the participant with whom I was not comfortable commented on the tensions with the private

partner. Had I followed this thread, the interview may have provided more insight and understanding into the complexity of public private partnerships and how this relationship binds/enhances decision-making process.

#### *Complementary Practices: Data Collection and Analysis*

Upon returning home from Vancouver Island, I began transcribing the interviews. My focus while I was there was on collecting data, and in hindsight, I believe it would have been much more beneficial to begin the transcribing process while on site. The preliminary analysis may have been helpful to support or qualify my developing interpretations. To some degree, my post interview file helped to fill this gap. Nonetheless, it was evident to me as I began transcribing that there were aspects of this story that with some more thought, could have been probed.

As I was transcribing, I had “ah ha” moments that may have helped to fill out the interview guide or provide another avenue of probing. For example, it was only in hindsight that I began to realize the centrality of the community organizing that had taken place prior to the actual decision to build the conference centre. Coding and analysing a few interviews initially may have helped to explore the potential relationships between my theoretical concepts and what was emerging in the early stages of data collection. Despite this omission, because of the number of interviews and the relatively intense back-to-back interview schedule, I was able to discern a number of recurring patterns, such as the high-rise issue that was raised by a number of the participants.

In addition, transcribing one or more of the interviews while on site may have helped to clarify where I found the interview guide limiting or stifling. Despite feeling some frustration about the ability of my guide to elicit richer data, transcribing and coding earlier may have helped to clarify where it fell short. In addition, it may have given me the confidence to be more flexible and confident initially to alter the guide up front.

I realize I have some angst about my interviews – I’m not sure my questions are adequate – getting at the heart of the matter – and yet that’s not quite adequate. I feel somewhat ‘hand tied’ I guess. (Reflective Journal, 28/04/2008)

#### *Exposing “Behind the Scenes”*

One final methodological challenge occurred while collecting data. It became evident there were many individuals and groups working to shape Nanaimo’s future. However, the business

conducted behind closed doors (e.g., the in-camera meetings and informal meetings) did not allow for hidden powers that had steered and influenced the process to come to the fore. Hence, the question arises as to whether one can truly bring to light and follow the decisions that shape outcomes, and in this case, assess either the conference centre dealings or that which happens casually in the community and among the key “movers and shakers”. For example, one participant casually observed, “these guys go for lunch all the time” (Dorothy), with the implication that the outcome may have been created in a vacuum for which there was no official paper trail. In the case of the in-camera minutes, the actions of those who were actively involved in shaping their environment, were not and will not be subject to scrutiny. It is a double-edged sword, as one participant pointed out, in that concealing the minutes is a way of protecting their citizens, but it is also a way of concealing the degree of influence and power that either individuals or groups may have over process.

### **THE THIRD OCCASION FOR CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION**

#### **Picturing my Journey as a Way of Returning and Re-Evaluating the Experience**

##### *Picturing My Journey*

Boud (2001) suggests the final occasion for reflection occurs after the event, when the immediate pressure of acting in real time passes. Returning to the experience and attending to feelings and re-evaluation of the experience serve as opportunities for learning. While in the midst of this project, I found myself admiring a hammered tin looped arrow hanging above the desk of one of my participants. In casual conversation, I commented on the wall hanging and my participant said it reminded him of his job. It had captured my attention for the very same reason. It represented the research process to me. While linear to some degree, there were moments that were indeed loops, in that I did not know which end was up, or whether I was facing in the right direction. Now, on this side of the bulk of the research process, I still likely have a few loops to pass through. They are presented next, although for the most part, I see the arrow head, confident about the direction headed.

##### *To Whom am I Responsible? Maintaining Dialogue*

One of the many questions I continue to ponder is: to whom am I responsible in the process? On the surface this question was relatively straightforward. I owe my academic

community and I owe my participants an opportunity for dialogue around the findings of this project. In the beginning stages of my research, I had strong convictions concerning the need to follow through with my participants in a meaningful way. The relationships I formed with some members of the community are a way of keeping the door open for dialogue. However, they have continued to accompany me on this journey and I find it has created mixed emotions over what to present. Contemplating what I reflect in the findings is a way of both protecting and silencing. Which is the better option? I think back to my initial days in the community and the weight of expectation placed on me by some participants.

I felt too in the meeting that my presence was ‘awaited’ anticipated with HOPE. That I represented for this group a saviour who was going to have their voice heard. One lady at the end of the meeting said to me “do something good for us” and another elderly gentlemen who had lived in Nanaimo for 70 years said I know you; you’re the lady from out east. (17/04/2008).

The choices I make to include, exclude, and present as I do reflect my values to always honour as best I can the humanity of the project. The research presented here is a way of opening up discussions for the public as opposed to offending and injuring the individual. These reflections were important in shaping my motivation to pay close attention to the narratives of my participants, but also to the background information. The background information detailed and accounted for the complexity of how and why community organizing occurred to around the decision to build the conference centre, and without it, my interpretation of this story would have been decidedly different.

My commitment remains to the principles of Freire’s (2006) consciousness-raising through dialogue. Yet when I began to realize how polemical and dialectical and fraught with dissension the process was and how personal the debate had turned, it created tension and doubt in my mind about my ability as an outsider to this community. Can I ultimately fully understand the complex expressions of community, decision-making, and interpretations of process that were surfacing about how best to rejuvenate Nanaimo? Were there ways that I could have done a better job of incorporating their voices? Is there still room for something that reflects a lifting of ignorance in the community decision-makers around this process? Who will listen? What of the stories *not* told? I think of Rosenblatt’s (2002) work on reflection and representation and what he writes resonates still with me:



I am not uncomfortable that my interviewing approaches and ways of working with interview material are related to modernist research approaches because I think they help me to get at something like truth, and I still want to learn something like truth. I still think it is possible to be ignorant or wrong, and I want to be less ignorant and no longer wrong. I do my interview research because I think I can get closer to whatever is “right” by hearing what people have to say. I know I could do interviews simply to learn what people say – to do research on storytelling – but I still think what I hear in interviews gives me more than mere stories. (p. 894)

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Throughout the discussion I have addressed several issues faced in researching the decision-making process surrounding the Port of Nanaimo Centre. I tackled the tension I faced between my role as a researcher and the relational space created with the participants, recognizing my bias, its changing nature, and my changing nature as a result. In turn, this has prompted me to display a transparency and, I would suggest, a vulnerability called for by critical scholars who argue for a more realistic portrayal of self as multi-constructed and conflicted. The goal in doing so was two-fold. First, and foremost, for my participants, I acknowledge that I came to this process as a learner and that my story presented here is neither omniscient nor detached. Heretofore, I also admit there were aspects of this very rich community story that could not be explored here, but perhaps those aspects will serve as future projects and part of an overall research programme.

Second, for the academy, my hope is that the degree of openness I have practised in this final chapter will serve as a source of encouragement for other new scholars who also struggle with finding one’s identity and realising it is always evolving and never quite fixed (Foley, 2002, p. 273). This, too, is part of an organic social science as practiced by Freire (2006). I close by reflecting a little more closely on his words, equally appropriate for all of us who participated in this project.

People, as beings “in a situation”, find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their own “situationality” to the extent that they are challenged by to act upon it. Human beings *are* because they are in a situation. And they *will be more* the more they not only reflect upon their existence, but critically act upon it (Freire, 2006, p. 109).

## REFERENCES

- Abercrombie, N., & Turner, B.S. (1978). The dominant ideology thesis. *British Journal of Sociology*, 29(2), 149-170.
- Adorno, T.W., & Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Dialectic of enlightenment*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- Agger, B. (1991). Critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism: Their sociological relevance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17, 105-131.
- Aldrich, R., Zwi, A.B., & Short, S. (2007). Advance Australia fair: Social democratic and conservative politicians' discourse concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples and their health 1972-2001. *Social Science & Medicine*, 64, 125-137.
- Allen, J. (2004). The whereabouts of power: Politics, government and space. *Geografiska Annaler*, 86B (1), 19-32.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Angen, M.J. (2000). Evaluating interpretive inquiry: Reviewing the validity debate and opening dialogue. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3), 378-395.
- Arnstein, S.R. (1969). Ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- Ashworth, G.J., & Tunbridge, J.E. (2004). Whose tourist-historic city? Localizing the global and globalizing the local. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 210-222). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ateljevic, I., Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (2007). Editor's introduction: Promoting an academy of hope in tourism enquiry. In I. Ateljevic, A. Pritchard, & N. Morgan (Eds.), *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies* (pp. 1-8). London: Elsevier.
- AWA Spaxman Consulting Ltd. (1993, August). *A concept plan for downtown Nanaimo*. Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- Babbie, E. (2001). *The practice of social research* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Baines, D. (2006). If you could change one thing: Social service workers and restructuring. *Australian Social Work*, 59(1), 20-34.
- Ball, T., & Dagger, R. (2004). *Political ideologies and the democratic ideal*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.

- Barber, B. (2004). *Strong democracy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Barman, J. (1996). *The west beyond the west: A history of British Columbia*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Barron, R. (2000, March 17). Reach for tourism potential. McCarthy. *Nanaimo Daily News*. p. A1
- Barron, R. (2004, September 11). High-rise condo vote passes 8-1. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Barron, R. (2004, September 14). DNP head favours ‘bold move’ by city. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Barron, R. (2004, September 18). Centre committee chairman outlines plan’s long history: downtown revitalization project. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Barron, R. (2004, October 8). Cantelon says plan best bet: Core’s tax base deteriorating, proposal offers best solution. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1
- Barron, R. (2004, October 19). New committee mobilizes in support of city core plan. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Barron, R. (2004, October 21). ...downtown hotel says project will put ‘more heads in beds’: Port Theatre Museum Commercial St. Port Place Proposed Centre Gordon St. Terminal Ave. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Barron, R. (2004, November 22). “A win is a win”: Invest in Yes. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Barron, R. (2005, February 23). Core book store owner fighting expropriation. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Barron, R. (2008, April 2). Madill in financial trouble, Major employer feels pressure from long downturn in B.C.’s shaky forestry industry. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1
- Barron, R. (2008, December 5). Harmac runs lean and mean; layoffs not in the offing, 200 at work. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A7.
- Barron, R. (2008, April 2). Madill in financial trouble; major employer feels pressure from long downturn in B.C.’s shaky forest industry. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Barron, R. (2008, November 7). Smiles abound at Harmac grand re-opening; minister says Nanaimo pulp mill serves as a model. *Victoria Times Colonist*, p. B5.

- Barron, R. (2008, December 5). Harmac runs lean and mean; layoffs not in the offing, 200 at work. *Harbour City Star*, p. A7.
- Barry, A., Osborne, T., & Rose, N. (Eds.). (1996). *Foucault and political reason*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bazeley, P. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- BC Stats. (2001). *Nanaimo: A provincial electoral district located in British Columbia*. [PED30]. Retrieved September 24, 2008, from [http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/PED\\_30.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/PED_30.pdf)
- BC Stats. (2004). *2001 census profile of British Columbia regions: Nanaimo Regional District*. [geo 59021000] Retrieved September 12, 2008, from <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/profiles/59021000.pdf>
- BC Stats. (2008). *British Columbia provincial electoral district profile for Nanaimo*. [PED34]. Retrieved September 12, 2008, from [http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/peds/Nanaimo\\_BC.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/peds/Nanaimo_BC.pdf).
- Beeson, M., & Firth, A. (1998). Neoliberalism as a political rationality: Australian public policy since the 1980s. *Journal of Sociology*, 34(3), 215-231.
- Belsky, J. (2004). The politics of community ecotourism. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 273-291). London: Routledge.
- Benington, J., & Geddes, M. (1992). Local economic development in the 1980s and 1990s: Retrospect and prospect. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 6(4), 454-463.
- Bennett, A., & Elman, C. (2006). Qualitative research: Recent developments in case study methods. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9, 455-476.
- Bennett, N. (1999, January 25) Group pens revitalizing plan for city. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A3.
- Bennett, N. (1999, August 18). Facility will boost tourism. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A3.
- Bennett, N. (1999, August 19). Victoria conference centre a boon: Capital gives no operating subsidy to convention centre. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Bennett, T. (1981). *Politics, ideology and popular culture*. Milton Keynes: The Open University Press.
- Betancur, J. (2005). Gentrification before gentrification? A Natalie P. Vorhees Centre for neighbourhood and community improvement. White Paper. Retrieved September 10,

2007 from [www.uic.edu/cuppa/voorheesctr/Publications/Gentrification%20before%20Gentrification.pdf](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/voorheesctr/Publications/Gentrification%20before%20Gentrification.pdf).

- Betcherman, G. (1996). Globalization, labour markets and public policy. In R. Boyer & D. Drache (Eds.), *States against markets: The limits of globalization*. (pp. 250-269). London: Routledge.
- Bianchi, R.V. (2002). Towards a new political economy of tourism. In R. Sharpley & D. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 265-299). Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Bianchi, R.V. (2003). Place and power in tourism development: Tracing the complex articulations of community and locality. *Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 1(1), 13-32.
- Bisch, R.L. (2005). Appendix B: Observations on the Nanaimo convention centre – hotel proposal. In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and future: critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* (pp. 211-214). Nanaimo, BC: Impact Visual Communications.
- Blackstock, K. (2005). A critical look at community based tourism. *Community Development Journal*, 40(1), 39-49.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: Key topics in sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blythe, D.M., & Marson, D.B. (1999, March). *Good practices in citizen-centred service*. (Canadian Centre for Management Development Citizen-Centred Service Network). Retrieved September 17, 2008, from [www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/pbp/pub/pdfs/P88\\_e.pdf](http://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/pbp/pub/pdfs/P88_e.pdf)
- Bond, D. (2002). *How B.C. went from a have to a have-not province*. Retrieved April 22, 2009, from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com>.
- Botes, L., & van Rensburg, D. (2000). Community participation in development: Nine plagues and twelve commandments. *Community Development Journal*, 35(1), 41-58.
- Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 9-17.
- Bowen, L. (2002). *Boss whistle: The coal miners of Vancouver Island remember* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Nanaimo, BC: Rocky Point Books and Nanaimo and District Museum Society.
- Boyer, J.P. (1992). *The people's mandate: Referendums and a more democratic Canada*. Louiseville, QC: Gagne Printing.

- Bradford, N. (2004). Global flows and local places: The cities agenda. In G.B. Doern (Ed.), *How Ottawa spends, 2004-2005: Mandate change and continuity in the Paul Martin era* (pp. 70-88). Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Brady, H.E., & Collier, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bramwell, B. (2004) Partnerships, participation, and social science research in tourism planning. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism*. (pp. 541-554). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2000). *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Bramwell, B., & Sharman, A. (1999). Collaboration in tourism policymaking. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), 392-415.
- British Columbia. (1988). Assembly of the Legislative. Debate [Hansard Report]. Legislative Session, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, 34<sup>th</sup> Parliament.
- Britton, S. (1991) Tourism, capital, and place: Towards a critical geography of tourism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9, 451-478.
- Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy [Electronic version]. *Theory and Event*, 7(1). Retrieved January 4, 2007 from [muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/journals/tae/toc/archive.html#7.1](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/journals/tae/toc/archive.html#7.1).
- Brown, W. (2006). American nightmare: Neoliberalism, neoconservatism, and de-democratization. *Political Theory*, 34(6), 690-714.
- Brown, P., & Lauder, H. (2001). *Capitalism and social progress*. New York: Palgrave.
- Bryson, J.M., & Crosby, B.C. (1992). *Leadership for the common good: Tackling public problems in a shared-power world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Burchell, G. (1991). Peculiar interests: civil society and governing 'the system of natural liberty'. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 119-150). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Burchell, G. (1996). Liberal government and techniques of the self. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (pp. 19-36). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Burchell, G., Gordon, C., & Miller, P. (Eds.). (1991). *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

- Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2008 from <http://www.bia.bc.ca/index.php>.
- Caffyn, A., & Jobbins, G. (2003). Governance capacity and stakeholder interactions in the development and management of coastal tourism: Examples from Morocco and Tunisia. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 11*(2&3), 224-245.
- Caledon Institute of Social Policy. (2002). A new era in British Columbia: A profile of budget cuts across social programs. July, 2002. [ISBN 1-55382-023-1] Retrieved November 8, 2008, from <http://www.caledoninst.org>.
- Calhoun, C. (2000). Social theory and the public sphere. In B.S. Turner (Ed.), *The Blackwell companion to social theory* (pp. 505-544). Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Cameron, G. (2006). Naturalism and ideology: Towards a phenomenology of political discourse. *Thesis Eleven, 87*, 7-18.
- Carpentier, N., & Cammaerts, B. (2006). Hegemony, democracy, agonism and journalism: An interview with Chantal Mouffe. *Journalism Studies, 7*(6), 964-975.
- Carroll, W.K. (1992). Social movements and counter-hegemony: Canadian contexts and social theories. In W.K. Carroll (Ed.), *Organizing dissent: Contemporary social movements in theory and practice: Studies in the politics of counter-hegemony* (pp. 3-38). Toronto, ON: Garamond Press.
- Carroll, W.K. (2005). The NDP regime in British Columbia, 1991-2001: A post-mortem. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 42*(2), 167-196.
- Carroll, W.K. (2006). Hegemony and counter-hegemony in a global field. *Studies in Social Justice, 1*(1), 36-66.
- Carroll, W.K., & Ratner, R.S. (2005). The NDP regime in British Columbia, 1991-2002: A post-mortem, *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 42*(2): 167-196.
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of network society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Castells, M. (2000). End of millennium. Volume I: *The rise of the network society*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructionist methods. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 509-256). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications.

- Cheong, S.M., & Miller, M.L. (2000). Power and tourism: A Foucauldian observation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), 371-390.
- Church, A. (2004). Local and regional tourism policy and power. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 555-568). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- City of Nanaimo. (1982, December). *Official community plan*. [Designation Bylaw 1982 No. 2525]. Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (1984, August). *Downtown design guidelines*. Unpublished document, Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (1996, July). *Official community plan* [Bylaw no. 6000]. Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (2002, April). *Nanaimo downtown plan* [Reference Document, OCP by-law No. 6000.038]. Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (2004, September). *New Nanaimo Centre question and answer guide*. Unpublished document, Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (2005, November). *New Nanaimo Centre question and answer guide*. Unpublished document, Nanaimo, BC: Author.
- City of Nanaimo. (2007). *Working towards a new community plan for the city of Nanaimo*. Retrieved September 6, 2007, from [www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site\\_Structure/Development\\_Services/Planning\\_and\\_Development/Community\\_Planning/PlanNanaimoWorkingPaper.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site_Structure/Development_Services/Planning_and_Development/Community_Planning/PlanNanaimoWorkingPaper.pdf).
- City of Nanaimo, Economic Development Office. (2008, May). *Community profile*. Retrieved Sept. 13, 2008, from [www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Economic~Development/Business~Services/CommunityProfile.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Economic~Development/Business~Services/CommunityProfile.pdf).
- CivicInfo BC. (2001). *BC government commits to submitting Community Charter by 2002*. CivicInfo, July 25, 2001. <http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/302n.asp?newsid=349>.
- Coben, D. (1998). Revisiting Gramsci. In M. Webber & K. Bezanson (Eds.), *Rethinking society in the 21st century: Critical readings in sociology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 29-31). Toronto: Canadian's Scholars Press:
- Coleman, S., & Crang, M. (2002). Grounded tourist, travelling theory. In S. Coleman & M. Crang (Eds.), *Tourism: Between place and performance* (pp. 1-20). New York: Berghahn Books.



- Coombe, R.J. (2007). The work of rights at the limits of governmentality. *Anthropologica*, 49(2), 284-287.
- Corcoran, P.B., Walker, K.E., & Wals, A.E.J. (2004). Case studies, make-your-case studies, and case stories: A critique of case-study methodology in sustainability in higher education. *Environmental Education Research*, 10(1), 7-21.
- Cordery, W. (2009, September 9). \$22-million dock could bring huge ships to city; floating facility will be built by 2011. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Cox, R.W. (1981). Social forces, states and world orders: Beyond international relations theory. *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, 10(2), 126-154.
- Cox, R.W. (1987). *Production, power and world order: Social forces in the making of history*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cox, K.R., & Mair, A. (1988). Locality and community in the politics of local economic development. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 78(2), 307-325.
- Cox, K.R., & Mair, A. (1991). From localised social structures to localities as agents. *Environment and Planning A*, 23(2) 197-213.
- Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W., & Miller, J. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 1-128.
- Critchley, S. (2004). Is there a normative deficit in the theory of hegemony? In S. Critchley & O. Marchart (Eds.), *Laclau: A critical reader* (pp. 113-123). London: Routledge.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crouch, D. (2000). Places around us: Embodied lay geographies in leisure and tourism. *Leisure Studies*, 19(2), 63-76.
- Crowley, G.J. (2001). Regime structure and the politics of issue definition: Urban development in Pittsburgh, past and present. In R. Hutchison (Series Ed.) & K.F. Gotham (Vol. Ed.), *Research in Urban Sociology: Vol. 6. Critical perspectives on urban development* (pp 147-172). Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Daines, D. (2006). Forum: Quantitative indicators. "Whose needs are being served?" Quantitative metrics and the reshaping of social services. *Studies in Political Economy*, 77(Spring) 195-209.

- Day, D. (1997). Citizen participation in the planning process: An essentially contested concept? *Journal of Planning Literature*, 11(3), 421-434.
- Day, E. (2002). Me, my\*self and I: Personal and professional re-constructions in ethnographic research. *Forum Qualitative Social Research Sozialforschung*, 3(3). Retrieved, February 20 2010 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index/php.fqs/viewArticle/824>.
- Dean, M. (1996). Foucault, government and the enfolding of authority. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason* (pp. 209-230). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dean, M. (1999). *Governmentality*. London: Sage Publications.
- Deetz, S., & Mumby, D.K. (1990). Power, discourse, and the workplace: Reclaiming the critical tradition. In J.A. Anderson (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 13* (pp. 18-47). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- de Kadt, E. (1979). *Tourism: Passport to development? Perspectives on the social and cultural effects of tourism in developing countries*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- de Leeuw, R. (2005). Appendix C: New Nanaimo Centre project: Risk assessment. In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and future: Critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* (pp. 215-220). Nanaimo, BC: Impact Visual Communications.
- de Vries, P. (2005). Critiquing governmentality: The social construction of participation and accountability in the Atlantic zone of Costa Rica. *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology*, 45, 94-111.
- Dempster, B. (2001). Some reflections on civics and civil society as grounding for urban environmental management. *Environments*, 29(1), 123-142.
- Denzin, N.K. (2000). The practices and politics of interpretation. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 897-922). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S., (2000). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-29). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Din, K.H. (1996). Tourism development: Still in search of a more equitable mode of local involvement. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2, 273-281.

- Dinham, A. (2005). Empowered or over-powered? The real experiences of local participation in the UK's new deal for communities. *Community Development Journal*, 40(3), 301-312.
- Dooley, L.M. (2002). Case study research and theory building. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 4(3), 335-354.
- Dunae, P. (n.d.). *Nanaimo in the 1890s*. Retrieved June, 18, 2008 from Vancouver Island University, Department of History Web site: <http://www.mala.ca/history/nanaimo/index.htm>
- Dupuis, S.L. (1999). Naked truths: Towards a reflexive methodology in leisure research. *Leisure Sciences*, 21, 43-64.
- Edon, L., & Molot, M.A. (1993). Canada's national policies: Reflections on 25 years. *Canadian Public Policy – Analyse de Politiques*, XIX: 3, 232-251.
- Eeckhout, B. (2001). The “disneyfication” of Times Square: Back to the future? In K.F. Gotham (Ed.), *Critical perspectives on urban redevelopment. Research in Urban Sociology, Volume 6* (pp. 379-428). Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Ellis, C., & Berger, L. (2002). Their story/my story/our story: Including the researcher's experience in the interview process. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context & method* (pp. 849-876). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Everett, J., & Jamal, T.B. (2004). Multistakeholder collaboration as symbolic marketplace and pedagogic practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(1), 57-78.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992a). *Critical language awareness*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992b). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 133-168.
- Fairclough, N. (1995a). *Media discourse*. London: Arnold.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2005). Critical discourse analysis in transdisciplinary research. In R. Wodak & P. Chilton (Eds.), *A new agenda in (critical) discourse analysis: Theory methodology and interdisciplinarity* (pp. 53-70). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins North America.

- Fallon, L.D., & Kriwoken, L.K. (2003). Community involvement in tourism infrastructure – the case of the Strahan Visitor Centre, Tasmania. *Tourism Management*, 24, 289-308.
- Feagan, J.R., Orum, A., & Sjoberg, G. (Eds.). (1991). *A case for case study*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Feagan, J.R., & Parker, R. (1990). *Building American cities: The urban real estate game* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Femia, J. (1975). Hegemony and consciousness in the thought of Antonio Gramsci. *Political Studies*, 23, 29-48.
- Fontana, A. (2002). Postmodern trends in interviewing. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 161-176). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fine, M., Weis, L., Weesen, S. & Wong, L. (2000). For whom? Qualitative research, representations, and social responsibilities. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp.107-132). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245.
- Foley, D.E. (2002). Critical ethnography: The reflexive turn. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(2), 469-490.
- Forester, J. (1993). *Critical theory, public policy and planning practice*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1979). ‘Omnes et singulatim’: Towards a criticism of ‘political reason’ in *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values II*, (Ed.). Sterling McMurrin, Utah October 10 and 16<sup>th</sup> 1979. Retrieved January 15, 2007, from <http://akbar.marlboro.edu/~megmott/bodyweb/foucault81.pdf>.
- Foucault, M., (1980). Two lectures. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings* (pp. 78-208 ). Brighton, UK: Harvester.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 208-226). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Foucault, M. (1991a). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87-104). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991b). Politics and the study of discourse. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 53-72). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991c). Questions of Method. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 73-86). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fowler, R. (1996). On critical linguistics. In C.R. Caldas-Coulthard & M.Coulthard (Eds.), *Text and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 3-14). London: Routledge.
- Fox, C., & Miller, H. (1995). *Postmodern public administration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Franklin, A., & Crag, M. (2001). The trouble with tourism and travel theory? *Tourism Studies*, 1(1): 5-22.
- Frenkel, S., & Walton, J. (2000). Bavarian Leavenworth and the symbolic economy of a theme town. *The Geographical Review*, 90(4), 559-584.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2006). *Pedagogy of the oppressed: 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition*. New York: Continuum.
- Frontier Charticle. (2002, September 1). The west's biggest provincial government. *Frontier Centre for Public Policy*. Retrieved November 14, 2008, from <http://www.fcpp.org/publication.php/187>.
- Gabriel, C., & MacDonald, L. (2004). Of borders and business: Canadian corporate proposals for North American "deep integration". *Studies in Political Economy*, 74, 79-100.
- Garcea, J. & Lange, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Municipal reform in Canada: Reconfiguration, re-empowerment, and rebalancing*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Garrison, R.M., & Massam, B.H. (2001). Changing governments and changing environmental policies in Ontario: a discourse analysis. *Local Environment*, 6(3), 327-349.
- Gerring, J. (2007). *Case study research. Principles and practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Gergen, M.M., & Gergen, K.J. (2000). Qualitative inquiry: Tensions and transformations. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (pp. 1025-1046). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *Consequences of modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way: The renewal of social democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gill, A. (2000). From growth machine to growth management: The dynamics of resort development in Whistler, British Columbia. *Environment and Planning A*. Vol. 32: 1083-1103.
- Gill, A. (2004). Tourism communities and growth management. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 569-583). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gillham, O. (2002). *The limitless city: A primer on the urban sprawl debate*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Godfrey, P. (2004, November 16). Good deal for Nanaimo: An opportunity to directly participate in the city's future. [Editorial]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A6.
- Godfrey, P. (2004, November 17). Only one sour note. [Editorial]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A6.
- Godfrey, P. (2004, November 18). Into the future now, not later. [Editorial]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A6.
- Godfrey, P. (2005, February 10). Because it's the right move. [Editorial]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A6.
- Goldsworthy, D. (1988). Thinking politically about development. *Development and Change*, 19, 505-530.
- Goodson, L., & Phillimore, J. (2004). The inquiry paradigm into qualitative tourism research. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies* (pp. 30-45). London: Routledge.
- Gordon, C. (1991). Government rationality: An introduction. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect* (pp. 1-43). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gotham, K.F. (1999). Political opportunity, community identity, and the emergence of a anti-local expressway movement. *Social Problems*, 46(3), 332-354.

- Gotham, K.F. (2002). Marketing Mardi Gras: Commodification, spectacle, and the political economy of tourism in New Orleans. *Urban Studies*, 39(10), 1735-1756.
- Gotham, K.F. (2005). Theorizing urban spectacles: Festivals, tourism and transformation of urban space. *City*, 9(2), 225-246.
- Gotham, K.F., Shefner, J., & Brumley, K. (2001). Abstract space, social space, and the redevelopment of public housing. In R. Hutchison (Series Ed.) & K.F. Gotham (Vol. Ed.), *Research in urban sociology: Vol. 6. Critical perspectives on urban development* (pp. 313-336). Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence, Wishart.
- Grant Thornton Management Consultants. (1999, July). *Convention centre feasibility study* [No. 111, File 49-3131]. Vancouver, BC: Prepared for City of Nanaimo. Author
- Grant Thornton Management Consultants. (2001, May). *Conference centre feasibility study supplement* [File 49-3131]. Vancouver, BC: Prepared for City of Nanaimo. Author.
- Grant Thornton Management Consultants. (2004, September). *Market feasibility study proposed Vancouver Island conference centre* [File 49-3131]. Vancouver, BC: Prepared for City of Nanaimo. Author.
- Griffen, M. (2002). From cultural imperialism to transnational commercialization: Shifting paradigms in international media studies. *Global Media Journal*, 1(1). Retrieved September 9, 2007, from <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/OldSiteBackup/SubmittedDocuments/archivedpapers/fall2002/griffin.htm>
- Green, E. (1990). Capitalism, patriarchy and ideologies of leisure. In E. Green, S. Hebron, & D. Woodward (Eds.), *Women's leisure, what leisure?* (pp. 27-37). London: Macmillan.
- Gruneau, R. (2002). Forward. In M.D. Lowes, *Indy Dreams and Urban Nightmares* (pp. ix-xii). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Guba, E.G. (1987). *The paradigm dialog*. London: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E.G., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). Paradigmatic controversies and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 255-286). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gubrium, J.F., & Holstein, J.A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. London: Sage Publications.

- Gunn, B. (1999, February 24). Report sets new strategy. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A1.
- Gursoy, D., Jurowski, C., & Uysal, M. (2002). Resident attitudes: A structural modelling approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(1), 79-105.
- Habermas, J. (1994). Three normative models of democracy. *Constellations* 1(1), 1-10.
- Hage, M, Leroy, P., & Willems, E. (2005). Participatory approaches in governance and in knowledge production: What makes the difference? *International Sociology Association Conference*, July 6-7. France. Retrieved October 1, 2007 from, <http://www.ru.nl/contents/pages/23531/marseille.pdf>.
- Hall, C.M. (1994). *Tourism and politics: Policy, power and place*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hall, C.M. (2000a). *Tourism planning: Policies, processes and relationships*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.
- Hall, C.M. (2000b). Rethinking collaboration and partnership: A public policy perspective. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability* (pp. 143-158). Clevedon Hall: Channel View Publications.
- Hall, C.M. (2004). Reflexivity and tourism research: situating myself and/with others. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 137-155). London: Routledge.
- Hall, C.M., & Jenkins, J.M. (1995). *Tourism and public policy*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, C.M., & Jenkins, J. (2004). Tourism and public policy. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 525-541). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hall, C.M., & McArthur, S. (1998) *Integrated heritage management. Principles and practice*. London: Stationery Office.
- Hall, P. (1992a). The movement from Keynesianism to monetarism: institutional analysis and British economic policy in the 1970s. In S. Steinmo, K. Thelen & F. Longstreth (Eds.), *Structuring politics: Historical Institutionalism in comparative analysis* (pp. 90-113). Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Hall, P. (1992b). *Urban and regional planning* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hamann, K., & Wilson, B.M. (2001). Surviving the political consequences of neoliberal policies. *Contemporary Politics*, 7(2), 129-147.



- Hamilton, G., & Barron, R. (2008, May 6). Failed deal puts 500 jobs in peril at Harmac mill. Forest industry workers face layoff as after \$225-million sale falls through. *Victoria Times Colonist*, p. A1.
- Hansen, K.N. (1998). Identifying facets of democratic administration: The empirical referents of discourse. *Administration & Society*, 30(4), 443-461.
- Harp, J. (1994). Culture, the state and tourism: State policy initiatives in Canada, 1984-1992. *Culture and policy*, 6(1). No. 17. Available on-line <http://www.gu.edu.acu>.
- Hartwick, E., & Peet, R. (2003). Neoliberalism and nature: The case of the WTO. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 590, 188-211.
- Harvey, D. (1973). *Social justice and the city*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography*, 71(1), 3-17.
- Harvey, D. (2006a). Neo-liberalism as creative destruction. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 88(2), 145-158.
- Harvey, D. (2006b). Space as a keyword. In N. Castree & D. Gregory (Eds.), *David Harvey: A critical reader*. (pp. 275-290). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hayward, T. (2006). Ecological citizenship: Justice, rights and the virtue of resourcefulness. *Environmental Politics*, 15(3), 435- 446.
- Heelas, P., & Morris, P. (1992). *The values of the enterprise culture: The moral debate*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Held, D., & McGrew, A. (2007). Globalization and the liberal democratic state. *Government and Opposition*, 28(2), 261-288.
- Hemingway, J.L. (1999). Critique and emancipation: Toward a critical theory of leisure. In E.L. Jackson & T.L. Burton (Eds.), *Leisure studies: Prospects for the twenty-first century* (pp. 487-505). State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Henderson, L., & Kitzinger, J. (1999). The human drama of genetics: 'Hard' and soft media representations of inherited breast cancer. In P. Conrad, & J. Gabe (Eds.), *Sociological perspectives on the new genetics* (pp. 59-78). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hindess, B. (1996). Liberalism, socialism, and democracy: Variations on a governmental theme. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (pp. 65-80). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

- Hofmeyr, K., Templer, A., & Beaty, D. (1994). South Africa: Researching contrasts and contradictions in a context of change. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 24(1-2), 190-209.
- Hollinshead, K. (1998). Tourism and the restless peoples: A dialectical inspection of Bhabha's halfway populations. *Tourism Culture and Communication*, 1(1), 49-77.
- Hollinshead, K. (2004a). A primer in ontological craft: The creative capture of people and places through qualitative research. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies* (pp. 63-82). London: Routledge.
- Hollinshead, K. (2004b). Ontological craft in tourism studies: The productive mapping of identity and image in tourism settings. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies* (pp. 83-101). London: Routledge.
- Hollinshead, K., & Jamal, T.B. (2001). Delving into discourse: Excavating the inbuilt power-logic(s) of tourism. *Tourism Analysis*, 6, 63-73.
- Horkheimer, M. (1989). Notes on science and the crisis. In S.E. Bronner & D.M. Kellner (Eds.), *Critical theory and society: A reader* (pp. 52-57). New York: Routledge.
- Hudson, R. (2001). *Producing places*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Hudson, R. (2001, September 28). Nanaimo from a tourism perspective. [Let's Talk Tourism]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Hudson, R. (2001, November 16). Nanaimo from a tourism perspective. [Let's Talk Tourism]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Hunt, I. (1991). Governing the city: Liberalism and early modern modes of governance. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (pp. 167-188). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Humberstone, B. (2004). Standpoint research: Multiple versions of reality in tourism theorising and research. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies* (pp. 119-136). London: Routledge.
- Hume, M. (2006, October 23). How big a divot does a bulldozer make? *The Globe and Mail*, p. A8.
- Huntington, S.P. (1981). *American politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Inayatullah, S. (1998). Causal layered analysis: Poststructuralism as a method. *Futures*, 30(8), 815-829.
- Ingamells, A. (2006). Community development and community renewal: Tracing the workings of power. *Community Development Journal*, 42(2), 237-250.
- Innes, J.E., & Booher, D.E. (1999). Consensus building and complex adaptive systems: A framework for evaluating collaborative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 64(4), 412-423.
- Ioannides, D. (2001). Sustainable development and the shifting attitudes of tourism stakeholders: Toward a dynamic framework. In S.F. McCool & R.N. Moisey (Eds.), *Tourism, recreation and sustainability: Linking culture and the environment* (pp.55-76). Wallingford: CABI Publishing.
- Irvin, R.A., & Stansbury, J. (2004). Citizen participation in decision-making: Is it worth the effort? *Public Administration Review*, 64(1), 55-65.
- Jacobs, K. (2004). Waterfront redevelopment: A critical discourse analysis of the policy-making process with the Chatham Maritime Project. *Urban Studies*, 41(4), 817-832.
- Jamal, T., & Kim, H. (2005). Bridging the interdisciplinary divide: Towards an integrated framework for heritage tourism research. *Tourist Studies*, 5, 55-83.
- Jamal, T.B., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration theory and community tourism planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 186-204.
- Jamal, T.B., & Getz, D. (2000). Community roundtables for tourism-related conflicts: the dialectics of consensus and process structures. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability* (pp. 159-182). Clevedon Hall: Channel View Publications.
- Jenkins, J.C., & Eckert, C.M. (2000). The right turn in economic policy: Business elites and the new conservative economics. *Sociological Forum*, 15(2), 307-338.
- Jenson, J. (2003). The Canadian citizenship regime in a conservative era. In R.O. Shultze, R. Sturm, & D. Eberle (Eds.), *Conservative parties and right-wing politics in North America. Reaping the benefits of an ideological victory?* (pp. 81-100). Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Johannesson, G.P., Skaptadottir, U.D., & Benediktsson, K. (2003). Coping with social capital? The cultural economy of tourism in the north. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 43(1), 3-16.
- John Talbot and Associates Inc. (2003, May). Social development strategy for Nanaimo Phase 1: Social status report. Prepared for: The Social development strategy steering

- committee. Retrieved April 10, 2008, from [www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Community~Planning/Social~Planning/Soc\\_Status\\_Rpt.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Community~Planning/Social~Planning/Soc_Status_Rpt.pdf).
- John Talbot and Associates Inc. (2004, September). Social development strategy for Nanaimo. Prepared for *The Social Development Strategy Steering Committee*. Retrieved April 10, 2008, from [www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Community~Planning/Social~Planning/Soc\\_Dev\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/assets/Departments/Community~Planning/Social~Planning/Soc_Dev_Strategy.pdf).
- Johnson, J.M. (2000). In-depth interviewing. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 103-119). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Johnson, R., & Mahon, R. (2005). NAFTA, the redesign, rescaling of Canada's welfare state, *Studies in Political Economy*, 76, 7-30. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from <https://www.mediatropes.com/index.php/spe/article/viewFile/5230/2137>.
- Jonas, E.G., & Wilson, D. (1999). The city as a growth machine: Critical reflections two decades later. In A.E.G. Jonas & D. Wilson (Eds.), *The urban growth machine: Critical perspectives two decades later* (pp. 3-20). Albany, NY: State University of New York (SUNY) Press.
- Jones, B.D. (1994). *Reconceiving decision-making in democratic politics: Attention choice, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Jordan, B. (2006). *Social policy for the twenty-first century: New perspectives, big issues*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Juby, B. (2005). Saving the downtown: Spare us, o Lord, these tendered mercies. In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and future: critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* (pp. 19-30). Nanaimo, BC: Impact Visual Communications.
- Karlsson, R. (2004). Mapping the newspaper market 1980-2003. *Revelation*, 1, 223-265.
- Katz, H. (2006). Gramsci, hegemony, and global civil society networks. *Voluntas*, 17, 333-348.
- Kelle, U. (1997). Theory building in qualitative research and computer programs for the management of textual data. *Sociological Research Online*, 2(2), <<http://www.ocresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/2/1.html>> (accessed 09/14/09).
- Kelly, K., & Van Vlaenderen, H. (1995). Evaluating participation processes in community development. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 18(4), 371-383.
- Kezar, A. (2003). Transformational elite interviews: Principles and problems. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 395-415.

- Kincheloe, J.L., & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (pp. 279-313). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kincheloe, J.L., & McLaren, P. (2002). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In Y. Zou & E.T. Trueba (Eds.), *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education*. (pp. 87-138). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- King, J.E. (2002). *A history of post-Keynesian economics since 1936*. Cheltenham, UK: Edgar Elgar Publishing.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1998). *Destination, culture: tourism, museums and heritage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Kotler, P., Haider, D., & Rein, I. (1993). *Marketing places: Attracting investment, industry and tourism to cities, states and nations*. New York: Free Press.
- Kurtz, D.V. (1996). Hegemony and anthropology: Gramsci, exegeses, reinterpretations. *Critique of Anthropology*, 16(2), 103-135.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lahiri-Dutt, K. (2004). 'I plan, you participate': A southern view of community participation in urban Australia, *Community Development Journal*, 39(1), 13-27.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and social strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Thetford Press.
- Lane, M.B. (2005). Public participation in planning: An intellectual history. *Australian Geographer*, 36(3), 283-299.
- Lang, R.E., & Gough, M.Z. (2005). Growth counties: Home to America's new suburban metropolis. In B. Katz, A. Berube & R. Lang (Eds.), *Redefining urban and suburban America: evidence from census 2000* (pp. 61-82). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(4), 673-693.
- Lefort, C. (1986). Outline of the genesis of ideology in modern society. *The political forms of modern society: Bureaucracy, democracy, totalitarianism* (translated John B. Thompson). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lemke, T. (2001). 'The birth of bio-politics': Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society*, 30(2), 190-207.

- Lemke, T. (2002). Foucault, governmentality, and critique. *Rethinking Marxism*, 14(3), 49-64.
- Letner, H. (2005). Hegemony and autonomy. *Political Studies*, 53, 735-752.
- Lew, A.A., Hall, C.M., & Williams, A.M. (Eds.). (2004). *A companion to tourism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Li, T.M. (2007) *The will to improve: Governmentality, development and the practice of politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Lipschutz, R.D., & Rowe, J.K. (2005). *Globalization, governmentality and global politics: Regulation for the rest of us?* New York: Routledge.
- Lidstone, D. (2001). A comparison of new and proposed municipal acts of the Provinces: Revenues, financial powers and resources. Paper prepared for the 2001 *Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities*. Banff, AB: 27 May, 2001. Retrieved October 4, 2008, from [http://www.toronto.ca/inquiry/inquiry\\_site/cd/gg/add\\_pdf/77/Governance/Electronic\\_Documents/Other\\_CDN\\_Jurisdictions/Comparison\\_of\\_Prov\\_Acts.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/inquiry/inquiry_site/cd/gg/add_pdf/77/Governance/Electronic_Documents/Other_CDN_Jurisdictions/Comparison_of_Prov_Acts.pdf).
- Lidstone, D. (2007). Recent British Columbia legislation: The Community Charter. *UBC Law Review*, 40(1), 410-420.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (2000) Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lloyd, R., & Clark, T.N. (2001). The city as an entertainment machine. In K.F. Gotham (Ed.), *Critical perspectives on urban redevelopment. Research in urban sociology, Volume 6* (pp.357-378). Oxford: Elsevier Science.
- Logan, J., & Molotch, H. (1987). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lowes, M.D. (2002). *Indy dreams and urban nightmares: Speed merchants, spectacle, and the struggle over public space in the world-class city*. Toronto, ON: Toronto University Press.
- Lowi, T.J. (1964) American business, public policy, case-studies, and political theory. *World Politics*, 16(4), 677-715.
- Maile, S., & Braddon, D. (2003). *Stakeholding and the new international order*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

- Main Street National Trust for Historic Preservation. (2000, September 28, 29) *Revitalising downtown Nanaimo: An assessment of downtown Nanaimo's opportunities for revitalisation*. Washington, DC: R. McDuffie Nichols & S. Stuart.
- Mangueneau, D. (2006). Is discourse analysis critical? *Critical Discourse Studies*, 3(2), 229-230.
- Mair, H. (2006). Global restructuring and local responses: Investigating rural tourism policy in two Canadian communities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(1), 1-45.
- Mantysalo, R. (2002). Dilemmas in critical planning theory. *Town Planning Review*, 73(4), 417-436.
- Marchak, M.P. (1991). *The integrated circus: The New Right and the restructuring of global markets*. Montreal, QC: McGill University Press.
- Marcus, G. (1998). *Ethnography through thick and thin*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1989). Philosophy and critical theory. In S.E. Bronner & D.M. Kellner (Eds.), *Critical theory and society: A reader* (pp. 58-74). New York: Routledge.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, J. (2008, June, 21). Shutdown puts hundreds more workers off job. *Nanaimo News Bulletin*. pp. 1, 5.
- Marshall, J. (2009, January 10). Nanaimo mills staying shut down; 250 out of work. *Nanaimo News Bulletin*. p. 5.
- Mason, P., Johnston, M., & Twynam, D. (2000). The World Wide Fund for nature arctic tourism project. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability*. (pp. 98-116). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- McBride, S., & McNutt, K. (2007). Devolution and Neoliberalism in the Canadian welfare state: Ideology, national and international conditioning frameworks, and policy change in British Columbia. *Global Social Policy*, 7(2), 177-201.
- McKinlay, P. (2006). The challenge of Democratic participation in the community development process. *Community Development Journal*, 41(4), 492-505.
- McMartin, W. (2005, April 21). Nanaimo and Nanaimo-Parksville moving left, right. *The Tyee*. Retrieved December 19, 2007, from <http://thetyee.ca/Election/Battleground/2005/04/21/NanaimoParksville>.

- McMartin, W. (2008, October 10). Charting the votes in Nanaimo-Cowichan. *The Tyee*. Retrieved December 19, 2007, from <http://thetyee.ca/Views/2008/10/10/Cowichan>.
- Melossi, D. (2006). Michel Foucault and the obsolescent state: Between the American century and the dawn of the European Union. In A. Beaulieu & D. Gabbard (Eds.), *Michel Foucault and power today: International multidisciplinary studies in the history of the present* (pp. 3-12). New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Michelman, I.S. (1994). *The moral limitations of capitalism* (Avebury series in philosophy). Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Miller, R.A. (2002). The Frankenstein syndrome: The creation of mega-media conglomerates and ethical modeling in journalism. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 36, 102-110.
- Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. (2002). *The community charter: A new legislative framework for local government*, Victoria, BC: Author.
- Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise. (2002). *A new era update*. Annual Report 2001/2002. (ISSN 1703-3977). Retrieved October 14, 2008 from [http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual\\_Reports/2001\\_2002/cse.pdf](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2001_2002/cse.pdf).
- Ministry of Community and Rural Development. (2003). *Community Charter Act*. Province of British Columbia Retrieved October 22, 2008 from [www.legis.gov.bc.ca/37th\\_4th/1st\\_read/gov14-I-pt01.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/37th_4th/1st_read/gov14-I-pt01.htm).
- Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development. (2004, September 24). *Campbell outlines sweeping new tourism strategy*. News Release, (2004SBED0036-000766). Retrieved October 9, 2008 from [http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm\\_news\\_releases/2004SBED0036-000766.pdf](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm_news_releases/2004SBED0036-000766.pdf).
- Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture. (1995). *Bill 14 - 1995 Tourism Act*. 4<sup>th</sup> Legislative session 4, 35<sup>th</sup> Parliament. Retrieved September 14, 2008 from [http://leg.bc.ca/35th4th/3rd\\_read/gov14-3.htm](http://leg.bc.ca/35th4th/3rd_read/gov14-3.htm).
- Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture. (1987). *Stewardship and opportunity: Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Heritage Conservation*. Prepared by Project Pride Task Force, Kim Campbell Chair. (ISBN: 0772607230). Retrieved October 19, 2008 from <http://www.library.for.gov.bc.ca/>.
- Mitchell, C. (1998). Entrepreneurialism, commodification and creative destruction: A model of Post-modern community development. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14(3) 273-286.
- Moisey, R.N., & McCool, S.F. (2001). Sustainable tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In R.N. Moisey & S.F. McCool (Eds.), *Tourism, recreation and sustainability: Linking culture and the environment* (pp. 343-352). New York: CABI Publishing.



- Molotch, H. (1976). The city as a growth machine: Toward a political economy of place. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82(2), 309-332.
- Mordue, T. (2007). Tourism, urban governance and public space. *Leisure Studies*, 26(4), 447-462.
- Morgan, N. (2004). Problematizing place promotion. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 173-183). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Morse, J.M. (2002). Interviewing the ill. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 317-330). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Morrissey, J. (2000). Indicators of citizen participation: Lessons from learning teams in rural EZ/EC communities. *Community Development Journal*, 35(10), 59-74.
- Morrow, R.A., & Brown, D.D. (1994). *Critical theory and methodology*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (1998). *Tourism and sustainability: New tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge.
- Mullen, D., & Ceddia, A. (2003). The impact of public law of privatization, deregulation, outsourcing, and downsizing: A Canadian perspective. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 10(1), 199-246.
- Murphy, P.E. (1985). *Tourism: A community approach*. London: Routledge.
- Mruck, K., & Breuer, F. (2003). Subjectivity and reflectivity in qualitative research. *Forum Qualitative Social Research Sozialforschung*, 4(2). Retrieved, February 20 2010 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index/php.fqs/viewArticle/696>.
- Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1993, October 18). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1994, April 18) [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1997, September 22). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1999, January 11). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1999, March 1) [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1999, May 31). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1999, December 13). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2002, December 16). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (1993, October 18). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2000, February 7). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2000, March 27). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2000, April 13). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2001, April 5). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2000 December 18). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2002, December 16). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes .(2003, December 15). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2004, August 16). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2004, September 13). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

Nanaimo City Council Minutes. (2004, October 19). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.

- Nanaimo Downtown Centre Standing Committee Minutes. (2002, February 11). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo Special Open Meeting Council Minutes. (2000, February 3). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo Special Open Meeting Council Minutes. (2004, September 9). [Electronic File].City of Nanaimo Legislative Services.
- Nanaimo District Museum. (2004, September). *Timelines*, 3(4): 1-4. [newsletter]. Nanaimo, BC. Retrieved January 21, 2009, from [http://www.nanaimomuseum.ca/web\\_documents/2004Sept.pdf](http://www.nanaimomuseum.ca/web_documents/2004Sept.pdf).
- Nanaimo Port Authority. (n.d.). *Foreshore recreation and amenities*. Retrieved September 19, 2008, from <http://www.npa.ca/en/forec2.htm>.
- Norcross, E.B. (1996). How Nanaimo grew. In E.B. Norcross (Ed.), *Nanaimo retrospective: The first century* (Rev. ed.) (pp. xix-xxi). Victoria, BC: Nanaimo Historical Society.
- Noy, C. (2006) The language(s) of the tourist experience. In I. Ateljevic, A. Pritchard & N. Morgan (Eds.), *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies* (pp. 349-370). London: Elsevier.
- Odendahl, T., & Shaw, A.M. (2002). Interviewing elites. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 299-316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511-519.
- Overholser, G. (2000). Front-page ads and other supposed threats to credibility. *Columbia Journalism Review*, Sept/Oct. 39 (3), p. 72 ABI/Inform Global.
- O'Neill, J. (1992). Journalism in the market place. In A. Belsey & R. Chadwick (Eds.), *Ethical issues in journalism and the media* (pp. 15-32). London: Routledge.
- O'Regan, J.P. (2006). This risky order of discourse: The normative debate in critical discourse studies. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 3(2), 231-235.
- Pal, L. (2001). *Beyond policy analysis: Public issue management in turbulent times*. Scarborough, Ontario, Canada: Nelson Thomson Learning.
- Pannell Kerr Forster Consulting Inc., (2004, July). Market feasibility study proposed hotel. Vancouver, BC: Prepared for Triarc International, Inc.

- Pacquin, J. (2001). World city theory: The case of Seoul. In R. Hutchison (Series Ed.) & K.F. Gotham (Vol. Ed.), *Research in urban sociology: Vol. 6. Critical perspectives on urban development* (pp. 337-356). Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd.
- Paradis, T.W. (2004). Theming, tourism and fantasy city. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 195-209). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Parker, S. (2000). Collaboration on tourism policy making: Environmental and commercial sustainability on Bonaire, NA. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability* (pp. 78-98). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Pasha, M.K., & Blaney, D.L. (1998). Elusive paradise: The promise and peril of global civil society. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 23(4), 417-450.
- Patterson, A. (1999). The dynamic nature of citizenship and participation: Lessons from three rural Senegalese case studies. *Africa Today*. Retrieved, March 10, 2004, from [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/Africa\\_today/v046/46.1patterson.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/Africa_today/v046/46.1patterson.html).
- Patton, M.Q. (1997). *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002) Neoliberalizing space. In N. Brenner & N. Theodore (Eds.), *Spaces of neoliberalism: Urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe* (pp. 33-57). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Perkin, H. (1992). The enterprise culture in historical perspective: Birth, life, death – and resurrection? In P. Heelas & P. Morris (Eds.), *The values of the enterprise culture: the moral debate* (pp. 37-60). London: Routledge.
- Peterson, J. (2002). *Black diamond city: Nanaimo, the victorian era*. Surrey, BC: Heritage House Publishing.
- Peterson, J. (2003). *Hub city: Nanaimo, 1886-1920*. Surrey, BC: Heritage House Publishing.
- Peterson, J. (2006). *Harbour City: Nanaimo in transition, 1920-1967*. Surrey, BC: Heritage House Publishing.
- Phillimore, J., & Goodson, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies*. London: Routledge.

- Phillimore, J., & Goodson, L. (2004). From ontology, epistemology and methodology to the field. In J. Phillimore & L. Goodson (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies* (pp. 185-194). London: Routledge.
- Phillips, N., & Hardy, C. (2002). Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction. *Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative Research Methods*, Vol. 50. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Phillips, N., & Ravasi, D. (1998). Analyzing social construction in organizations: discourse analysis as a research method. [Paper presentation]: *Organizational Discourse: Pretexts, Subtexts and Contexts Conference*, King's College, 29-31 July, University of London.
- Phillips, R.A., & Reichart, J. (2000). The environment as a stakeholder? A fairness-based approach. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 23, 185-197.
- Pinder, D., & Smith, H. (1999). Heritage and change on the naval waterfront: Opportunity and challenge. *Ocean and Coastal Management*, 42(10/11), 861-889.
- Pink, J. (2004, December 17). Media big help lifting image [Nanaimo Proud]. *Nanaimo Daily News*, p. A4.
- Plant, R. (1991). *Modern political thought*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Pleumarom, A. (1994). The political economy of tourism. *The Ecologist*, 24(4): 142-147.
- Pierson, C. (2005). Lost property: What the Third Way lacks. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10(2), 145-163.
- Poland, B.D. (2002). Transcription quality. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 639-650). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Poole, W. (2007). Neo-liberalism in British Columbia Education and Teachers' Union Resistance. *International electronic journal for leadership in learning*, 11(24). Retrieved April 17, 2009 from <http://ucalgary.ca/iejll/vol11/poole>.
- Porto, M.P. (2007). Frame diversity and citizen competence: Towards a critical approach to news quality. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24(4), 303-321.
- Prasch, R.E. (2005). Neoliberalism and empire: How are they related? *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 37(3), 281-287.
- Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (2000). Privileging the male gaze: gendered tourism landscapes. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(4), 884-905.

- Pritchard, A. (2004). Gender and sexuality in tourism research. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 316 -326). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Public inside with plan, poll suggests. (2004, September 28). *Nanaimo Daily News*, [Section: Local]. p. A3.
- Reed, M. (1997). Power relations and community-based tourism planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(3), 566-591.
- Reed, M. (2000). Collaborative tourism planning as adaptive experiments in emergent tourism settings. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability* (pp. 247–271). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Reid, D.G. (2003). *Tourism, globalization and development: Responsible tourism planning*. London: Pluto Press.
- Reid, D.G., Mair, H., & George, W. (2004). Community tourism planning: A self-assessment instrument. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 623-639.
- Richards, G. & Hall, D. (2000). The community: A sustainable concept in tourism development? In G. Richards & D. Hall (Eds.), *Tourism and sustainable community development* (pp. 1-14). London: Routledge.
- Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Richardson, T. (2002). Freedom and control in planning: Using discourse in the pursuit of reflexive practice. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 3(3), 353-361.
- Ricker, E. (2005). Friends of plan Nanaimo, the New Nanaimo Centre referendum and the run-up to the 2005 municipal election (pp. 3-18). In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and present: Critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre*. Nanaimo, BC: Impact Visual Communications.
- Rieper, L. (2005). Of ice and men: The politics of procuring ice surfaces in Nanaimo. In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and future: Critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* (pp. 20-30). Nanaimo, BC: Impact Visual Communications.
- Riley, R., & Love, L. (2000). The state of qualitative research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(1), 164-187.
- Rist, R.C. (2000). Influencing the policy process with qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). (pp. 1001-1017). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Ritchie, B.W., & Inkari, M. (2006). Host community attitudes toward tourism and cultural tourism development: The case of the Lewes District, southern England. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 8, 27-44.
- Ritchie, J.R.B. (2000). Interest based formulation for tourism policy for environmentally sensitive destinations. In B. Bramwell & B. Lane (Eds.), *Tourism collaboration and partnerships: Politics, practice and sustainability* (pp. 44-77). Clevedon: Channel View Publications.
- Robinson, J. (1998). Spaces of democracy: Remapping the apartheid city. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 16(5), 533-548.
- Robinson, W.I. (2004). *A theory of global capitalism: Production, class, and state in a transnational world*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Roca, E.M. (1997). A ladder of empowerment. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 17, 31-44.
- Rojek, C. (1997). Indexing, dragging and the social construction of tourist sites. In C. Rojek & J. Urry (Eds.), *Touring cultures: Transformation of travel and theory* (pp. 52-74). London: Routledge.
- Rollins, P. (2006). *How (not) to speak of God*. London: Paraclete Press.
- Rose, N. (1996a). Governing “advanced” liberal democracies. In A. Barry, T. Osborne & N. Rose (Eds.), *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (pp. 37-64). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rose, N. (1996b). The death of the social? Re-figuring the territory of government. *Economy and Society*, 25(3), 327-356.
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: reframing political thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rose, N., & Miller, P. (1992). Political power beyond the state: Problematics of government. *British Journal of Sociology*, 43(2), 173-205.
- Rose, N., O’Malley, P., & Valverde, M. (2006). Governmentality. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 2, 83-104.
- Roseland, M. (2000). Sustainable community development: Integrated environmental, economic and social objectives. *Progress in Planning*, 54, 73-132.

- Rosenblatt, P.C. (2002) Interviewing at the border of fact and fiction. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 893-910). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ryan, C. (2000). Tourism experience, phenomenographic analysis, and post-positivism and neural network software. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2(2), 119-131.
- Sassens, S. (1991). *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Sassoon, A.S. (1982). Hegemony, war of position, and political intervention. In A.S. Sassoon (Ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci* (pp. 94-115). London: Writers and Readers.
- Schilcher, D. (2007). Growth versus equity: The continuum of pro-poor tourism and Neoliberal governance. In C.M. Hall (Ed.), *Pro-poor tourism: who benefits?: Perspectives on tourism and poverty reduction* (pp. 56-84). Clevedon Hall: Channel View Publications.
- Scholte, J.A. (2000). *Globalization: A critical introduction*. New York: Palgrave.
- Schoenbach, K., & Lauf, E. (2002). Content or design? Factors influencing the circulation of American and German newspapers. *Communications*, 27, 1-14.
- Schneider, M. (1992). Undermining the growth machine: The missing link between local economic development and fiscal payoffs. *The Journal of Politics*, 54(1), 214-230.
- Eberle, D., Schulze, R.O., & Sturm, R. (2003). Mission accomplished? A comparative exploration of conservatism in the United States and Canada. In R.O. Shultze, R. Sturm, & D. Eberle (Eds.), *Conservative parties and right-wing politics in North America. Reaping the benefits of an ideological victory?* (pp. 11-30). Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Schwandt, T.A. (1998). Constructivist, interpretivist, approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 221-259). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T.A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 189-213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schwandt, T.A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sharpley, R. (2002). Tourism and development. In R. Sharpley & D. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 11-34). Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.



- Sharpley, R., & Telfer, D. (Eds.). (2002). *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues*. Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Shaw, S., Bagwell, S., & Karmowska, J. (2004). Ethnoscapes as spectacle: Reimagining multicultural districts as new destinations for leisure and tourism consumption. *Urban Studies*, 41(10), 1983-2000.
- Short, J.R., Benton, L.M., Luce, W.B., & Walton, J. (1993). Reconstructing the image of an industrial city. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83(2), 207-224.
- Shuy, R.W. (2002). In-person versus telephone interviewing. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 537-556). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Silk, J. (1999). The dynamics of community, place, and identity. *Environment and Planning A*, 31, 5-17.
- Silk, M.L. (2007). Come downtown and play. *Leisure Studies*, 26(3), 253-277.
- Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing talk and text. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 821-834). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Silverman D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Simons, J. (1995). *Foucault and the political*. New York: Routledge
- Singer, B.C.J., & Weir, (2006). Politics and sovereign power: Considerations on Foucault. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9(4): 443-465.
- Fryer, M. (2004, September 30). 63% in favour of borrowing: survey. *Nanaimo News Bulletin*. pp.1, 5.
- Smith, P.J., & Stewart, K. (2005). Local government reform in British Columbia, 1991-2005: One oar in the water. In J. Garcea & E.C. Lesage Jr. (Eds.), *Municipal reform in Canada* (pp. 25-55). Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- St. Louis, K., & Calabrese Barton, A. (2002). Tales from the science education crypt: A critical reflection of positionality, subjectivity, and reflexivity in research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research Sozialforschung*, 3(3). Retrieved February 20, 2010, from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/article/view/832>.
- Stake, R.E. (2000). Case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Stake, R.E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Statistics Canada (2001). *2001 Community Profiles*. E-STAT ed. Ottawa, Ont.: Statistics Canada [producer and distributor], Retrieved April 15, 2008, from [www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Search/SearchForm\\_Results.cfm?Lang=E](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/CP01/Search/SearchForm_Results.cfm?Lang=E).
- Stern, P.C., & Fineberg, H.V. (Eds.). (1996). *Understanding risk: Informing decisions in a democratic society*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Stewart, A., & Gray, T. (2006). The authenticity of 'type two' multistakeholder partnerships for water and sanitation in Africa: When is a stakeholder a partner? *Environmental Politics*, 15(3), 362-278.
- Stige, B., Malterud, K., & Midtgarden, T. (2009). Toward an agenda for evaluation of qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 19(10), 1504-1516.
- Stiglitz, J.E. (2006). *Making globalization work*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Stivers, C. (1990). The public agency as polis: Active citizenship in the administrative state. *Administration & Society*, 22(1), 86-105.
- Stone, D. (2004). Politics and planning in Nanaimo, 2004-2005. In E.W. Ricker (Ed.), *Nanaimo between past and future: Critical perspectives on growth, planning and the New Nanaimo Centre* (pp. 75-94). Nanaimo, BC: Friends of Plan Nanaimo Society.
- Taxpayers cool to convention centre study. (1999, March 4). *Nanaimo Daily News*, [Editorial] p. A6.
- Taylor, G. (1995). The community approach: does it really work? *Tourism Management*, 16(7), 487-489.
- Telfer, D.J. (2002). The evolution of tourism and development theory. In R. Sharpley & D. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 35-78). Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Telfer, D.J. (2002). Regional tourism development. In R. Sharpley & D. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 112-148). Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Thrift, N., & Olds, K. (1996). Refiguring the economic in economic geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 20, 311-337.

- Timothy, D.J. (2002). Tourism and community development issues. In R. Sharpley & D. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and development: Concepts and issues* (pp. 149-164). Toronto, ON: Channel View Publications.
- Timothy, D.J., & Ioannides, D. (2002). Tour operator hegemony: Dependency and oligopoly in insular destinations. In Y. Apostolopoulos & D.J. Gayle (Eds.), *Island tourism and sustainable development: Caribbean, Pacific, and Mediterranean Experiences*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Tosun, C. (1999). Towards a typology of community participation in the tourism development process. *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 10(2), 113-134.
- Tosun, C. (2006). Expected nature of community participation in tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 27, 493-504.
- Tourism Nanaimo. (2007). *About Nanaimo*. Retrieved September 06, 2007, from <http://www.tourismnanaimo.com/visitors/about-nanaimo.php>.
- Tribe, J. (2007). Critical tourism: Rules and resistance. In I. Ateljevic, N. Morgan & A. Pritchard (Eds.), *The critical turn in tourism studies: Innovative research methodologies* (pp. 29-40). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. New York: Zed Books Ltd.
- Tully, J. (1989). Wittgenstein and political philosophy. *Political Theory*, 17(2), 172-204.
- UMA Engineering Ltd. (2005). *Final Report: Five year official community plan review, growth centre concept assessment and policy direction report*. Retrieved September 6, 2007, from [www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site\\_Structure/Development\\_Services/Planning\\_and\\_Development/Community\\_Planning/FinalReportPolicyDirections070202.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site_Structure/Development_Services/Planning_and_Development/Community_Planning/FinalReportPolicyDirections070202.pdf).
- Urban Forum Associates. (1994, April). *Downtown height and density study: Design guidelines*. City of Nanaimo, pp. 3-38. Author.
- Urban Futures. (2006). *Population and housing projections for the city of Nanaimo, 2006-2031*. Retrieved September 6, 2007, from [www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site\\_Structure/Development\\_Services/Planning\\_and\\_Development/Community\\_Planning/NanaimoPopulationHousing.pdf](http://www.nanaimo.ca/uploadedfiles/Site_Structure/Development_Services/Planning_and_Development/Community_Planning/NanaimoPopulationHousing.pdf).
- ul Haque, I. (2004). Globalization, neoliberalism, and labour. Paper presented at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. [Discussion Paper #173]. Retrieved January 09, 2007, from [http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/osgob20047\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/osgob20047_en.pdf).

- Valverde, M. (2007). Genealogies of European states: Foucauldian reflections. *Economy and Society*, 36(1), 159-178.
- Van Mill, D. (1996). The possibility of rational outcomes from democratic discourse and procedures. *The Journal of Politics*, 58(3), 734-752.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- Van Dijk, T.A. (1996). Discourse, power and access. In Caldas-Coulthard, R. Carmen Rosa & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 84-104). London: Routledge.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage Publications.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1999). Critical discourse and conversation analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 10(4), 459-460.
- van Leeuwen, T. (1993). Genre and field in critical discourse analysis: A synopsis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 193-223.
- Verbole, A. (2000). Actors, discourses and interfaces of rural tourism development at the local community level in Slovenia: Social and political dimensions of the rural tourism development process. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8(6), 479-490.
- Vidich, A.J., & Lyman, S.M., (2000). Qualitative methods: Their history in sociology and anthropology. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 37-84). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wanhill, S. (2000). Issues in public sector involvement. In B. Faulkner, G. Moscardo & E. Laws (Eds.), *Tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Lessons from experience* (pp. 222-242). New York: Continuum.
- Warnke, A. (2002) Remarks concerning the Community Charter. Canadians for Direct Democracy (2002, May 25). Retrieved September 25, 2008, from <http://www.npsnet.com/cdd/warnke.htm>.
- Warren, C.A.B. (2002). Qualitative interviewing. In J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context & method* (pp. 83-101). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wasson, C. (2004). The paradoxical language of enterprise. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 1(2), 175-199.
- Wearing, S., & Wearing, B. (2001). Conceptualising the selves in tourism. *Leisure Studies*, 20, 143-159.

- Webler, T., & Tuhler, S. (2000). Fairness and competence in citizen participation: Theoretical reflections from a case study. *Administration & Society*, 32(5), 566-595.
- Whittemore, R., Chase, S.K., & Mandle, C.L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 522-537.
- Williams, A.M. (2004). Towards a political economy of tourism. In A.A. Lew, C.M. Hall & A.M. Williams (Eds.), *A companion to tourism* (pp. 61-73). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Williams, J.J. (2006). Community participation: Lessons from post-apartheid South Africa. *Policy Studies*, 27(3), 197-217.
- Williams, J., & Lawson, R. (2001). Community issues and resident opinions of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 269-290.
- Wood, D., & Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 27(2), 139-162.
- Wood, L.A., & Kroger, R.O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Report). (1987). *Our Common Future*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Yin, R.K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods* (Rev. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Young, I. (1999). Residential segregation and differentiated citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 3(2), 237-252.
- Zukin, S. (2006). David Harvey on cities. In N. Castree & D. Gregory (Eds.), *David Harvey: A critical reader* (pp. 102-120). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

**Appendix A**  
**Contact Follow-up Letter**

---

[Date]

[Participant Name]  
[Participant Address]

Dear,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and provide an early perspective on the decision making process in the building of the NNC in Nanaimo. As we discussed, this project is the final phase of my doctoral degree and your co-operation and interest is greatly appreciated.

I want to also thank you for the names of your contacts as potential study participants. I have determined there is enough information to pursue this project so I will be in contact with them and yourself in the near future. As discussed, with your permission I will be using your name when I introduce myself to them.

If you'd like to discuss this further, please do drop me an email or feel free to call. My email is [lesailor@ahsmail.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:lesailor@ahsmail.uwaterloo.ca) or I can be reached at 519 886 0112.

Thank you again and I look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Lisa Sailor  
Ph.D. Candidate,  
Dept. of Recreation and Leisure Studies  
University of Waterloo

**Appendix B**  
**Telephone Follow-Up Letter/Information Sheet**

---

[March 26, 2008]

[Participant Name]

[Participant Address]

Dear,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. I'm looking forward to meeting you once again and dialoguing about *your perception* surrounding the decision making process in the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre.

As you know, by way of background, this project is the final phase of my doctoral degree and fittingly, my studies have brought me full circle. Over 20 years ago, I moved to Nanaimo to pursue a Recreation Administration Diploma at what is now Malaspina University. Two areas of study - tourism and community development – resonated with me. They have remained the focal points of my education. Having the opportunity to return to the island, coupled with the pursuit of my research interests is personally very gratifying.

You will find all the information pertaining to the logistics of this study, along with my study's purpose outlined on the attached sheet. If you have any questions, or need to change your interview time, you may email me at any time (lesailor@ahsmail.uwaterloo.ca) and I will be in contact with you shortly thereafter. There is no preparation required on your part, however if you have any further documents that you believe may be relevant to informing my understanding of the decision making process and can provide me with a copy(ies), or if you can part with them for a short period of time in order that I can make copies, I promise to return them. Either would be greatly appreciated! Further if you know of anyone who may be interested in providing their perspective, and can provide me with their names, once you have received their permission, I would be interested in dialoguing with them as well.

Otherwise I will see you in person at [time] for our interview at [location] on [date] as arranged on March 26, 2008 when we spoke by phone.

Thank you again for taking time out of your schedule to meet with me. I'm looking forward to it!

Sincerely,

Lisa Sailor  
Ph.D. Candidate,  
Dept. of Recreation and Leisure Studies  
University of Waterloo

## **Understanding the Decision Making Process: A Case Study Surrounding the Port of Nanaimo Centre Information Sheet**

---

The information provided below is intended to serve as a reference point for some initial questions or ponderings you may have about either your participation in my study and/or the interview.

### Study Purpose

- This study examines how the decision making process was perceived to unfold surrounding the building of the Port of Nanaimo Centre. Using Nanaimo's new convention centre as a case study allows me to understand one community's process and the experience of local community members' understanding and perception when a significant capital project is undertaken.

### The Benefits

- Assessing this project's decision making process, will be of benefit for those involved in future projects where public input is required or deemed important. It is my hope the findings will benefit Nanaimo and other communities embarking on similar ventures.

### Why You?

- Through background information to the project, or in speaking with others, I can see that you have worked, volunteered, or followed closely the events as they unfolded surrounding the decision making process. You are one participant, amongst a number who can provide *your perception and your understanding of the process*.

### What will be asked of you as an interviewee?

- Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can decline to answer any question, or end the interview at any time.
- I'm requesting approximately 60-90 minutes of your time for an interview to take place at either Malaspina University, in the meeting room of Student Services or if you would prefer, a public place of your choice.
- I would like to audio-tape your interview as it will assist me in the analysis phase, however all audio-tapes will be erased 2 years after the project is complete.

### Ensuring your Confidentiality

- There are no known or anticipated risks associated with this study, and all information provided is strictly confidential. Your name, or statements that could potentially identify you, will never appear in any report, publication, or presentation resulting from this research project.
- All information gathered, including the audio tapes, will be stored in a secure research office, and any personal identifying information will be removed.
- All data will be kept for a period of two years after the study is complete; all audio recordings will be erased, and transcribed data will be shredded.
- A summary of the results will be made available to you either by email or by post, depending upon your preference.

### The Research Study & Inquiry Contacts

- This study is the final phase of my doctoral programme, and is being supervised by Professors Bryan Smale and Heather Mair, in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. Dr. Smale can be reached at 519-888-4567, ext. 35664; and Dr. Mair can be reached at 519-888-4567, ext. 35917. If it is more convenient for you, you may also contact them through email at [smale@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:smale@uwaterloo.ca), or [hmair@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:hmair@uwaterloo.ca). In addition, the study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics. In the event you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes at 519-888-4567, ext. 36005.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your perspective on the decision making process!



## Appendix C Consent Form

---

I, [ ] understand that the information I am providing is completely confidential and that at any time during the interview, I am free to decline answering any questions, or if I deem necessary, to end the interview. I am also free at any time, to withdraw from this study, and am not obligated to follow through with any further questions that Lisa Sailor, Ph.D. candidate may have.

In addition, I understand that any information I provide may be used for reports, journal articles and presentations, but that at no time will my name appear anywhere, nor any quotations that I give be used that may compromise my confidentiality.

[ ] [ ]  
Name Date

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview Guide**

---

#### *Convention Centre*

1. How did the idea to build a conference centre come about?
2. Whose idea was it?
3. What were the key factors or catalysts behind the idea of a convention centre?
4. How did Nanaimo's City Council make the decision to pursue a convention centre?

#### *Decision Making Process*

1. Tell me about the decision-making process?
2. How did you come to be involved in the decision making process?
3. What was done well/not done well in the decision making process?
4. How was community representation built into the process?
5. How did the decision making process allow for public participation into the process?
  - a. what factors contributed to the level of citizen participation in the process?
  - b. Was it meaningful? Why or why not?
  - c. Was the information made available for public input? How?
6. What would you change about the decision making process? Why?

#### *Stakeholders*

1. Who was involved in the decision making process?
2. How were they chosen?
3. Did all stakeholders participate equally in the decision making process?
  - a. Why or why not?
4. Were conflicting perspectives accounted for?
  - a. How?
5. Who was a part of:
  - a. Local development meetings?
  - b. Debates?
  - c. Information sessions?

#### *Referendum*

1. Tell me about the referendum.
2. Was the referendum important to the decision making process? Why?

#### *Hindsight*

1. If the community was to do this again, what might they do differently?
2. What role, if any did the media play in the decision making process?

**Appendix E**  
**Follow-Up Thank You Letter**

---

[Date]

Dear [            ],

Let me just say it was a pleasure for me to meet with you! I hope you found the interview process worthwhile. Thank you again for giving of your time.

I wish to convey to you once again, the importance that your perspective has been to informing my understanding of the decision making process as it unfolded in your community. Your perspective is also important to the broader academic community. It serves to inform our understanding collectively as to what may be some of the salient issues that have the potential to contribute and/or detract from participation in the decision making process.

Upon reflection of the interview process, or the study, if you would like to speak with myself, my Advisors, or the Office of Research Ethics; their information is outlined in the “blue boxes” below.

Once my study is complete, I will forward you a summary of the findings. However should you have any further thoughts or information you would like to convey, please don't hesitate to be in touch. You may want to keep my business card handy for this purpose!

It was my privilege to hear your perspective and I hope you will find the results of this project informative. Again, thanks. It was a pleasure to dialogue with you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sailor  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies  
University of Waterloo

**Advisors to the Study**

1. Dr. Bryan Smale: 519 888 4567 ext. 35664; email: smale@uwaterloo.ca
2. Dr. Heather Mair: 519 888-4567 ext. 35917; email: hmair@uwaterloo.ca

**Office of Ethics Research**

1. Dr. Susan Sykes, 519 888-4567 ext. 36005; email: ssykes@uwaterloo.ca