

“LET’S BE HONEST...”
RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION
IN HAMILTON’S *NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION*

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Abstract

This research is a qualitative case study of a collaborative, resident-led community development initiative in Hamilton, Ontario. The study investigated how the initiative, known as *Neighbourhood Action* (NA), engages residents in identified neighbourhoods in collaboration with local service providers, city staff, and community developers. NA is an attempt to respond to levels of concentrated poverty in the identified neighbourhoods, and forms parts of evolving responses to social, economic and racial inequity in cities across North America. Focusing on the period of operation from 2013-2015, this study explores who participated in *Neighbourhood Action*, how participants addressed issues of social difference and inequity, and how barriers to participation were challenged and/or reproduced. Framed by critical theory and using critical discourse analysis, the study used interviews, participant observation, and focus groups coupled with an analysis of official project documents.

Despite a well-articulated mandate of inclusion, NA stakeholders struggled to elicit diverse and meaningful participation, specifically from low-income and new immigrant residents. The study sheds light on the complex processes of exclusion that operate in participatory, community development projects, which are often premised on exclusionary discourses of class, race, and neighbourhood change. The findings also illustrate how citizen-led initiatives aimed at empowering low-income communities can be both sites of exclusion and sites of mobilization and resistance. The need to interrogate official mandates of inclusion is also highlighted by the study, acknowledging that they can obscure the reality of exclusion and be complicit in classist and racist discourses. In identifying these tensions, the research offers implications for research and practice in urban communities.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOAR – Anti-Oppressive Anti-Racist

ABCD – Asset Based Community Development

CD – Community Developer or Community Development Worker

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CNA – Centretown Neighbourhood Association

CP – Critical Pedagogy

CRT – Critical Race Theory

CUT – Critical Urban Theory

HCA – Hillboro Community Association

HCF – Hamilton Community Foundation

HNAP – Hillboro Neighbourhood Action Plan

NA – Neighbourhood Action

NAE – Neighbourhood Action Evaluation

NIMBY – Not in My Back Yard

RCF – Residential Care Facility

SPRC – Social Planning and Research Council

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and study rationale

This study investigates the experiences of participation and inclusion in a resident-led neighbourhood initiative in Hamilton, Ontario known as *Neighbourhood Action* (NA). NA is an example of targeted neighbourhood initiatives, which are becoming increasingly common responses to the growth of neighbourhood inequity in urban centres across Canada. Often called neighbourhood strategies, these initiatives begin by identifying marginalized neighbourhoods with demonstrated concentrated levels of poverty, which are then targeted with place-based community development¹ initiatives. These initiatives form part of broader municipal efforts towards urban renewal or revitalization, and increasingly involve resident engagement and collaborative forms of leadership and decision-making. Well-known examples of resident-focused neighbourhood initiatives in Canada include *Action for Neighbourhood Change* as part of Toronto's *Strong Neighbourhood Strategy* (United Way Toronto, 2014), Calgary's *Strong Neighbourhood Initiative* (United Way Calgary, 2014), and Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action Strategy* (City of Hamilton, 2013a). While each initiative is unique in its development and structure, together the initiatives share a commitment to ideals of resident leadership, collaboration, and building on community strengths and assets.

In theory, resident-focused neighbourhood initiatives are directed by resident groups in low-income and racialized communities, who work in collaboration with municipal actors and other agencies in order to create change in their communities. Citizen-led groups and initiatives are important sites for investigating the possibilities and challenges to democratic ideals of participation and inclusion. On one hand, they offer spaces where citizens can come together to discuss and debate issues of concern and mobilize around citizen priorities. On the other hand,

however, patterns of civic engagement have been observed to be unequal and divided along socioeconomic and racial lines (Portney & Berry, 2010; Putnam, 1995; Nakhaie, 2008). Importantly, recent collaborative neighbourhood strategies have been found to suffer from the same barriers to inclusion and racially-divided civic participation, despite the concentration of low-income and racialized residents in these communities and the official mandate of inclusion (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Despite championing democratic ideals, neighbourhood-based citizen groups have been observed to reflect white, middle-class interests, while low-income and racialized communities experience significant barriers to meaningful civic involvement (Zagofsky, 2013). Young (2000) argues that the legitimacy of a democratic process “depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision-making process and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes” (p. 5). If resident-led neighbourhood strategies are intended to address patterns of poverty that disproportionately affect low-income and racialized residents, it is essential to consider how central their voices are in the process and to interrogate the espoused ideals of participation, deliberation and inclusion.

Concerns about participation and representation in democratic processes are especially warranted in contexts of growing urban diversity, economic stratification and racialized patterns of poverty – the present reality of major Canadian cities. It is this speed and depth of these urban shifts that have sparked new approaches to addressing social and economic disparities, particularly at the neighbourhood level. The identified under-representation of low-income and racialized residents from citizen-led processes contrasts sharply with the stated goals of collaborative neighbourhood strategies, which emphasize granting voice to those most affected by social and economic marginalization. Acknowledging this point of friction, it is clear that resident-led neighbourhood strategies pose both transformative and risky potential for the

democratic practice and addressing inequity. Central to this tension are the ways in which broader social and economic inequities are challenged and/or reproduced at the local level. Collaborative neighbourhood strategies offer ripe sites for investigating how local government and citizens respond to inequity, and how issues of inclusion and exclusion continue to play out within those processes.

My research is a case study of a collaborative neighbourhood strategy in Hamilton, Ontario known as *Neighbourhood Action*. Hamilton, known for its concentrated patterns of poverty, is also a strategic location of study due to its position “on the cusp” of the gentrification in its downtown core (Harris, Dunn & Wakefield, 2014). My study therefore takes place in a context of urban inequity yet in the midst of competing processes and discourses of development. Understanding *Neighbourhood Action* as a response to social and economic disparities that emphasizes resident leadership, I identify who participates in the process, how participants address issues of inclusion and inequity, and barriers to participation that affect the initiative. Specifically, I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1989) to examine official documents and construct an account of neighbourhood events through participant narratives and personal observations. Grounded in critical theory and informed by literature on urban inequity and civic participation, the findings shed light on the complex processes of exclusion and patterns of participation that operate in NA. The following section further details my study and research questions.

1.2 Study and research questions

As a result of the above-mentioned critiques around participation and representation in resident-led civic processes efforts, there have been calls for dedicated attention to issues of

diversity and inclusion in these initiatives, particularly in Canadian cities (Leviton-Reid, 2006). My research explores the opportunities and tensions that arose as Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) participants took up this collaborative, resident-led initiative during the period of 2013-2015. Launched in 2011, NA engages Hamilton neighbourhoods in creating resident-led action plans using an asset-based community development model. NA represents an especially rich site for investigating practices of inclusion and exclusion, particularly due to Hamilton's drastic economic disparities across neighbourhoods (Mayo & Pike, 2013) as well as having the third highest foreign-born population in Canada after Toronto and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2011a). Moreover, *Neighbourhood Action* in many ways exemplifies the shifting priorities in responses to inequity common to many Canadian urban centres. Central to NA are the tensions that emerge as the City of Hamilton attempts to share decision-making power while residents work to negotiate diverse community interests. On the City's part, despite a well-articulated goal towards resident involvement and inclusion, municipal actors and processes in NA have been found to both facilitate *and* suppress participation (Cahuas, Wakefield & Peng, 2015). Meanwhile, residents struggle to balance the day-to-day demands and broaden outreach, while also seeking to tackle the systemic inequalities that NA was established to address.

Amidst these shifts in approach and tensions in process, my research addresses the following questions: 1) Who are the participants involved in *Neighbourhood Action* and how do they understand their role in it? 2) How are participants involved in *Neighbourhood Action* taking up and redefining community development? 3) How do NA participants address issues of inequity and inclusion in the broader community? 4) What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation in the *Neighbourhood Action* project? 5) How are these identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced through NA? To

answer these questions, I have collected key events and stories from four selected NA neighbourhoods, analyzed them, and used them to unpack central themes around exclusion, identity and community. Each chapter presents key events in a narrative format and explores how patterns of exclusion in the neighbourhoods (informed by classism and racism) are reproduced and/or challenged by NA participants.

Below, I will outline the background and context of the *Neighbourhood Action* project, which is then followed by my methodological approach and data sources.

1.3 Background and context of Neighbourhood Action

Neighbourhood Action (NA) is a collaborative, resident-led neighbourhood strategy formed jointly by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation in 2011. The initiative engages identified Hamilton neighbourhoods in creating resident-led action plans in order to address local issues through strengthening community participation (City of Hamilton, 2011). As of 2015, there are 11 identified neighbourhoods, though at the time of data collection (beginning in 2013) only 10 neighbourhoods were participating fully. The neighbourhoods identified were initially those targeted in a local news series called *Code Red* (Buist, 2010), which highlighted concentrated levels of poverty and striking health outcome disparities in several downtown and east end neighbourhoods. The series was based on health and poverty statistics (see Figure 1) but also incorporated attention-grabbing narratives of resident hardships. While the series has been heavily critiqued for its problematic, stigmatizing portrayals of low-income neighbourhoods and residents (Cahuas, Malik & Wakefield, 2014), it also created significant public discussion about poverty in Hamilton and ultimately sparked the creation of *Neighbourhood Action* (City of Hamilton, 2011; Deluca et al., 2012).

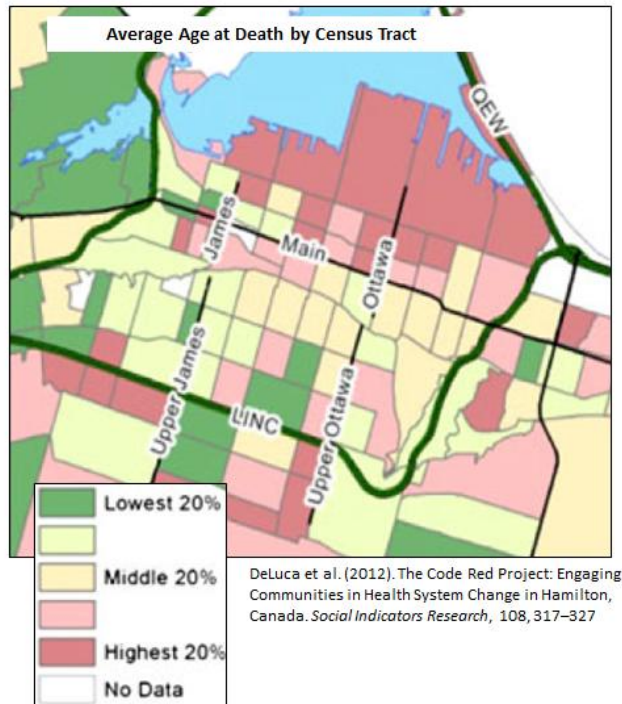


Figure 1.1: Map of “Code Red” neighbourhoods. (DeLuca et al., 2012)

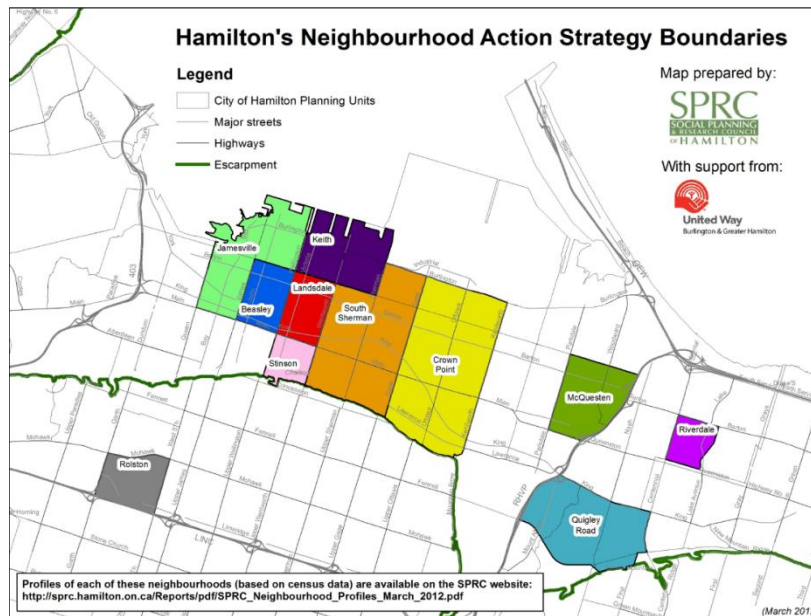


Figure 2.1: Map of *Neighbourhood Action* identified areas (Mayo, Klassen & Bahkt, 2012)

Eleven neighbourhoods are currently involved NA, which uses an asset-based community development model. This model of community development focuses on mobilizing community strengths and building civic competencies as a means to address local challenges from the

bottom up (Hancock, 2009). As such, NA is ideally a resident-led initiative where community members work alongside community development workers, city staff, and service providers to create neighbourhood “action plans”. These action plans identify neighbourhood assets, priorities and goals, and are intended to inform policy and program and resource development in the neighbourhoods. Planning takes place largely at monthly public meetings which are attended by local residents, community development workers, city staff and councillors, as well as representatives from local religious organizations, business owners, schools, and service providers. As of September 2015, the neighbourhoods had created action plans and were in the implementation phase – that is, they were currently working towards the identified goals and priorities. Some examples of projects undertaken by the neighbourhoods to date include: community gardens, beautification projects that use public art, social events such as barbeques and seasonal festivals, complete streets and walkability initiatives, youth engagement activities, as well as general organizing and advocacy work around issues affecting the communities, such as school closures and political elections.

While community development and poverty reduction have long histories in Hamilton, *Neighbourhood Action* is innovative for three reasons. First, the unified structure of NA may represent an improvement over more fragmented, "piecemeal" efforts of the past. Second, NA is intended to maximize resident voice and eliminate barriers to navigating city bureaucracy, which should ideally improve the community's ability to achieve its goals. Third, NA is constitutive of the partnership between the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Community Foundation, and numerous local organizations, which has the potential to facilitate relationship-building that goes beyond the impact of the neighbourhood plans themselves. Due to the innovative nature of the initiative, there is significant interest in evaluating NA. *Neighbourhood Action* is currently

involved in several phases of evaluation, assessing both the process and the outcomes.

My research is a case study which draws on existing empirical data and an analysis of public documents. The empirical data for my study is drawn from the *Neighbourhood Action Evaluation* (NAE), which is a collaboration between the University of Toronto and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. NAE is evaluating the process and progress of community development work in the *Neighbourhood Action* initiative. The NAE project is based in the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto and is led by Dr. Sarah Wakefield, who is the principal investigator (PI). The broader NAE project consists of a mixed methods process evaluation (Saunders et al., 2005) and data includes to date: in-depth interviews with 67 stakeholders (residents, service providers, community developers and city staff), participant observation at neighbourhood meetings, focus groups with neighbourhood residents in each neighbourhood, and progress reports from resident trackers. Having worked with the NAE as a research assistant and having been active in data collection from 2013-2015, I was granted permission by the PI to use NAE data to engage in my study and address research questions listed above.

For my study, I used selected data sources from the NAE project, coupled with document analysis of public documents, to create a case study of *Neighbourhood Action* participants and their experiences with issues of inclusion and barriers to meaningful participation. The following chapter details the research methods and framework for the study.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the literature relevant to my investigation into Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action. First, I examine literature that discusses issues of urban inequity, including responses to urban decline, the growth of urban community development work, and competing discourses on revitalization. This will help to contextualize *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) within broader urban trends. Next is a review of theories and studies that explore the rise of public participation and its risks and possibilities, particularly the well-documented barriers to equitable and representative participation. In addition to this literature and in order to examine who is involved in NA and assess whether participation is representative, I review the demographics of Hamilton, highlighting the cultural and economic diversity in the targeted neighbourhoods. I also explore various approaches to social inclusion and diversity, including literature on exclusion, multiculturalism and anti-racism, which will allow me to situate NA participants' approaches to social difference and inclusion within broader discourses.

2.1 Urban decline, inequity and revitalization

2.1.1 History of urban decline and the growth of inequity

Since the latter half of the 20th century, widespread social, political and economic change has sparked major transformations in urban centres. Particularly in North America and Europe, cities have been transformed by population changes, migration trends, economic restructuring, the scaling back of the welfare state and growing income polarization, among other shifts. These changes have created urban centres marked by increased social polarization, racially concentrated distributions of poverty, and the marginalization of minority groups (Sugrue, 2014;

Beauregard, 2001; Clark, 2013; Hulchanski, 2010). Referring to Canadian cities like Toronto, Cowen & Parlette (2011) explain:

These patterns stem from political and economic shifts at multiple scales, including the deindustrialization of the economy, the rise of precarious work, the dismantling of social protections, the growing problem of housing affordability, limited access to transportation, and racism in local labour and housing markets. (p. 10)

In addition, chronic underinvestment in physical and social infrastructures by multiple levels of government have made urban neighbourhoods especially vulnerable to broader trends of unemployment, housing insecurity and shrinking social protections.

Rates of concentrated and racially divided poverty are a growing reality in Canadian urban centres, despite the common perception that Canada is a place with little poverty compared to the United States (Osberg, 2000). For instance, between 1980 and 1995, the proportion of low-income neighbourhoods doubled across major Canadian cities (Lee, 2000). Heisz and Macleod (2004) further report that between 1990 and 2000, proportions of low income neighbourhoods reverted to 1980 levels, despite economic conditions improving. The gap between poorer and richer neighbourhoods in this period also widened significantly. In Ontario, growing poverty and widening income disparities at the neighbourhood level have been well-documented. A 2004 report called *Poverty by Postal Code* noted that between 1981 and 2001, the number of poor neighbourhoods in Toronto grew from 30 to 120 (Greater Toronto United Way, 2004). Urban neighbourhoods have also become increasingly economically homogeneous, with a widening gap between low-income and more affluent neighbourhoods. In Hamilton, for instance, the *Code Red* newspaper series highlighted marked disparities between neighbourhoods, including a 20-year gap in life expectancy between the lowest and highest income areas (Buist, 2010).

Similarly, Hulchanski's (2010) analysis of Toronto neighbourhoods proposed that the disparities between low, middle and high-income areas are so drastic that they could be considered "three cities within Toronto". Moreover, between 1970 and 2005, Hulchanski found that Toronto became increasingly marked by drastic economic, social and racial polarization. To expand on the latter point in relation to racial polarization, there has been a striking growth in the number of racialized and immigrant families living in poverty in Ontario. Across the province, racialized families are three times more likely to live in poverty and experience disproportionate barriers to employment and housing (Block, 2010). Not unique to Ontario, this pattern is known as the racialization of poverty, a term that highlights that the growing gap between the rich and poor is increasingly characterized by a racial divide (Galabuzi, 2001; Ornstein, 2000; Lovell, 2008).

Kobayashi & Peake (2000) explain:

“Racialization” is therefore the process by which racialized groups are identified, given stereotypical characteristics, and coerced into specific living conditions, often involving social/spatial segregation and always constituting racialized places. It is one of the most enduring and fundamental means of organizing society. (p. 393)

The growth of racialized patterns of poverty in Canada has been linked to a combination of historic and institutionalized racism, as well as neoliberal global restructuring. Racially-based segregation has a long history in Canada, and in urban neighbourhoods has been especially observed and followed since the postwar period. Older industrial centres tended to be home to immigrant groups due to the high labour demands in these areas. While earlier immigrants to Canadian cities were largely labourers were largely from Irish, Polish, Italian and Portuguese descent, as Canada's immigration policies shifted to more freely allow immigrants from developing countries, the ethnic make-up of urban neighbourhoods grew to include more

racialized groups. Meanwhile, deindustrialization, which intensified in the postwar period, ushered in widespread unemployment and contributed to urban decline patterns, with the hardest hit places being older industrial centres (Clark, 2013). Surgue (2014) contends that persistent racial discrimination magnified the effects of deindustrialization on racialized communities and further intensified the racialized effects of poverty. Galabuzi (2006) further argues that racial segregation and racialized patterns of poverty are perpetuated today through persistent racism in local housing and labour markets. More recent neoliberal policies and processes may be further entrenching patterns of racialized poverty by contributing to precarious income and employment, and weakening social supports. Galabuzi (2001) notes that neoliberal processes have led to “the growth of precarious forms of work and declining power of labour, the retreat of the state from economic and social regulation, and the acceleration of South-North migration” (p. xi). When combined with existing racialized patterns of poverty and the proliferation of racist practices, neoliberal processes that increase precariousness of income and employment may further entrench racial marginalization. It is not surprising then that poverty and other forms of social exclusion are continuously characterized by racial divisions.

Canada is distinct from many other Western countries in that immigrants and refugees make up a much larger share of the population: 20.6% as of 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011a). While neighbourhoods are becoming more economically homogeneous, many large urban centres are experiencing unprecedented levels of cultural and linguistic diversity as a result of rising migration and urban patterns of settlement. (Specific data on Hamilton’s demographic profile will be explored in section 2.3.1). The shifting demographic landscape marked by this high proportion of immigrant and refugees, coupled with Canada's historic multicultural policies, can create an idealized image of a barrier-free country and can obscure the ongoing presence and

processes of racism. Like poverty, racism and racialized patterns of social and economic exclusion manifest strongly at the local level but do not originate there. Nevertheless, efforts to address class and race-based social exclusion are becoming increasingly localized, which is a topic that will be explored in the section discussing responses to urban inequity.

2.1.2 Responses to urban inequity

Growing urban inequity and the decline in prosperity in city centres have promoted movements towards urban revitalization. Also known as “regeneration” in the UK and formerly known as “renewal” in the US, revitalization efforts seek to restore economic and social vitality to urban centres (Pomeroy, 2006). Drawing on conclusions of Beauregard (1993) and Zukin (1998), Lees (2003) posits the following as the basis for urban revitalization efforts:

They are driven by the belief that the decline of once vibrant inner cities was precipitated by the post-war flight of the middle classes to secluded suburban enclaves and that to reverse urban decline it is necessary to entice the middle classes back to city centres so as to make them more diverse, interesting and economically vibrant places. (p. 613)

Revitalization then focuses on restoring the appeal of urban neighbourhoods to middle class residents, with success being measured in terms of “decline in crime and insecurity, rising property values, growth in business investment and active local business enterprise, and increased opportunity for local residents.” (Pomeroy, 2006, p. 2)

Here, competing discourses on revitalization can be observed. The first emphasizes increasing neighbourhood desirability to attract middle class residents and business investments. A second, disparate discourse instead focuses on improving conditions for existing residents in urban neighbourhoods. In the first discourse, cities are understood to compete in a global market

to attract residents, where even one undesirable neighbourhood is thought to compromise investment prospects, in effect making an entire city "bad for business" (Viswanathan, 2010). With this premise, revitalization efforts are aimed at "fixing" low-income neighbourhoods through beautification, green space, transportation and reducing crime, for example, where the goal is to attract new residents and secure economic growth. However, such processes have been shown to displace existing low-income communities and negatively affect social mix and ethnic diversity in affected neighbourhoods (Walks & Maarenen, 2008). Meanwhile, other discourses on revitalization focus on improving neighbourhood conditions for the benefit of existing residents. Some revitalization efforts are compatible with best practices in creating "healthier" communities, based on a Social Determinant of Health (SDOH) model (Marmot & Wilkinson, 1999; Adler et al, 1999; Diderichsen et al., 2001). In the SDOH model, personal and community health are understood to be shaped by social and environmental factors, like transportation and food accessibility, education and employment opportunities, early childhood development, and social exclusion. Many revitalization efforts directly address these factors and may then benefit neighbourhoods for the wellbeing of existing residents, although they may be intended to attract new residents and investments.

Seeking to attract the middle classes, however, does not necessary increase the quality of life for existing residents. In fact, urban revitalization efforts can promote processes of gentrification in which existing residents are "priced out" of their own neighbourhoods. Though gentrification has numerous and often competing definitions, one simple description calls it a process that brings to a neighbourhood "a more affluent and very different incoming population" (Slater, Curran and Lees, 2004, p. 1145). While Slater identifies how some neighbourhoods have been chosen by municipalities to actively develop, other schools note that some types of

neighbourhoods are simply more likely to undergo processes of gentrification, whether targeted or not. For example, Ley (1996) posits that more affluent incoming populations are attracted to areas with older Victorian houses that are also close to a downtown core with urban amenities and employment opportunities, which is a feature that is characteristic of many of the NA communities examined in this study. Processes of gentrification have been observed in many comparable Toronto neighbourhoods (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005, Slater, 2004, Murdie & Teixeira, 2010), exploring how residential and commercial development prompt complex processes of change in urban communities. Gentrification is a divisive issue in urban centres, carrying a promise of increase investment, opportunities and amenities, while also carrying the risk of displacement and marginalization. Scholars have argued that neoliberal restructuring that influences social welfare policies, privatization, and global competitions between cities means that gentrification has been “incorporated into public policy” under the guise of revitalization (Wyly and Hammel, 2004, p. 36). Paton (2010) argues that this results in the “institutionalization of gentrification” (p. 140). Gentrification is often supported by policies that aim to foster a healthy “social mix” in urban neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2010; Gidley & Rooke, 2010). Importantly, however, rather than supporting social mixing, processes of gentrification have been found to result in “segregated and fragmented urban realm, rather than an inclusive one” (Walks & Maarenen. 2008, p. iii) due to the physical and social displacement of lower-income and working class residents.

Slater et al. (2004) argue that not only are low-income residents often marginalized in neighbourhoods undergoing gentrification, but also the perspectives of working class communities are often marginalized in gentrification and revitalization research. Noteworthy is that revitalization efforts and processes of gentrification have been observed to play out in

complex ways in formerly industrial working class communities (Paton, 2010, 2016; Watt, 2008). Paton's (2010, 2016) works articulate how processes of urban renewal alter not only physical spaces, but also prompts shifting class identities. Paton (2010) found that even anti-gentrification efforts were controlled and executed by middle-class residents, marginalizing the voices of working class residents. In this way, processes of urban renewal are understood to reflect class struggles on an economic and material front as well as through ideological and identity work. Lacquant (2008) further argues that gentrification in urban centres cements patterns of erasing working class residents and communities from the public sphere. (A further exploration of social class as a category of analysis is found in section 3.5.3)

In sum, revitalization discourses that propose neighbourhood change to benefit the health of existing residents compete with those that propose neighbourhood change to attract middle class residents and stimulate economic growth. Nevertheless, these competing discourses can be observed operating simultaneously in recent urban revitalization efforts aimed at addressing neighbourhood inequity, which I will further address in section 2.16. Since NA defines itself as using an asset-based community development approach to addressing neighbourhood-level disparities, I will first overview these concepts, beginning with the use of community development work in Canada and highlight recent trends in neighbourhood-level efforts to address inequity.

2.1.3 Community development as a response to inequity

State and citizen responses to growing inequity in Canadian cities have evolved significantly from the latter half of the mid-20th century to the present. Since Canada's declaration of a War on Poverty in 1965, Canadian cities, as well as rural areas, experienced a

resurgence of community development work centred around citizen organizing and consensus-building to address issues of common concern. Efforts aimed at promoting self-help efforts and economic growth stemmed from roots in Depression-era organizing and began to be used more formally as a model of intervention in urban centres in the 1960s (Lotz, 1998). Community development work reflects changing approaches to how governments and citizens address social change, particularly in terms of scale. Importantly, Shragge (2013) notes that community development tends to be inward-looking, directing efforts towards the community itself. This follows from Frank & Smith's (1999) definition of community development:

Community development is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. ...The primary outcome of community development is improved quality of life. Effective community development results in mutual benefits and responsibility among community members. (p. 6)

The focus on community well-being, responsibility and benefit demonstrate that the scope of community development work is inwardly focused. As Shragge (2013) notes, this stands in sharp contrast with the social or community action approach to community organizing of the late 1960s and early 1970s, where special interest groups challenged external social, economic and political structures as a means to promote change. The inward focus of community development lends itself well to work in neighbourhoods, which are by their nature bound and delineated. While early community development work did not tend to use the neighbourhood as a focal point, in recent years, the terms "community" and "neighbourhood" are now often used interchangeably in North America (Pomeroy, 2006). Neighbourhoods have been increasingly identified as sites

where symptoms of structural inequity manifest, but also where the causes of poverty purportedly develop (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Along with varying views on the sources of poverty, there too have been diverse approaches to addressing urban inequity through community development work. Below I will outline two divergent approaches that have emerged in community development work addressing urban inequity: needs/deficit-based and strength/capacity-based.

2.1.4 Deficit- and needs-based approaches

As argued by Kretzmann & McKnight (1993), traditional community development efforts in low-income neighbourhoods have been marked by a deficit- or needs-based approach, focused largely on the provision of services and programs to residents. That is, low-income neighbourhoods and residents have been portrayed as deficient, needy and full of “problems”, which becomes the basis for service and policy intervention. This approach emphasizes top-down, expert-driven planning, which denies resident agency and treats community members as only clients or service users, as opposed to active and capable citizens (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). In a needs-based approach, the problems and deficiencies of communities are often explicitly identified, quantified and mapped by conducting needs surveys, which are used to justify intervention of service provision and community development efforts (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996). Some argue that there is an insidious and cyclical nature to this process, where institutions receive funding to provide services based on perceived needs, and then develop a vested interest in maintaining this situation of need and service provision (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Moreover, Jackson et al. (2003) explain that the negative and stigmatizing portrayals of low-income neighbourhoods can affect residents in the following ways:

The resulting labels can be disabling when: (i) community members internalize such information and describe themselves in negative or problem-based terms; (ii) community workers and agencies come into communities to ‘fix’ problems that workers have identified and offer training to community members on how to fix problems; and (iii) communities are denied opportunities for growth and development because of how labels lead others to perceive their communities. (p. 339-340)

Not only then can residents internalize deficit-based labels, but the labels can also lead to “neighbourhoodism” – discrimination based on where one lives. What is more, the lack of participation and input from residents in deficit-based approaches have been identified as leading to ineffective planning, policy, and service provision, which ultimately disempowers communities (Hancock, 2009).

2.1.5 Asset-based and placed-based approaches

In direct response to the downfalls of deficit- and needs-based approaches of government-led development initiatives, strength or capacity-based approaches have been thriving in the last two decades. Strength-based approaches have been used in many neighbourhood initiatives of the past two decades, most noticeably under a framework known as asset-based community development (ABCD). Emerging as a direct alternative to deficit and needs-based approaches, ABCD posits that strong communities are based on the capacities, skills, resources and assets of local people and their relationships (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). To directly counteract the needs-based mapping common to deficit-based approaches, ABCD instead uses the mapping of community assets and resources to promote change. ABCD is then both an approach and a set of methods for bringing people together in identifying and

mobilizing existing individual and community assets (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). While the focus on relationship building and the development of informal and formal networks has direct ties to social capital research, the attention to community-driven assessment and action stems from work on capacity building.

Targeted neighbourhood interventions like NA also reflect shifting policy approaches to inequity, which are increasingly informed by conceptions of place. Within "place-based development" and "place-based public policy", local settings are appreciated for all of their complexities, tensions and opportunities, and understood as places where broader structural causes of inequity manifest (Leviten-Reid, 2006). Bradford (2005) contrasts what he calls "urban", "community" and "place-based" approaches to urban inequity:

An urban perspective concentrates on physical infrastructures and the powers available to municipalities. A community perspective focuses on social infrastructures and the networks for democratic participation. The place-based framework recognizes the importance of both perspectives, and seeks their integration through a mix of public policies responding to the needs of cities of all sizes and locations. (p. v)

In other words, while an "urban" response on inequity seeks to counteract the historic underinvestment in physical infrastructure in cities, a "community" perspective seeks to foster social capital by fostering networks, relationships and civic engagement. Meanwhile, a place-based approach synthesizes these perspectives, acknowledging the importance of both physical and social infrastructure. In addition to mixing public policies to respond to the needs of cities, a place-based perspective is further characterized by tapping into local knowledge, collaboration between government, civil society and the economy, and recognizing the importance of local government (Bradford, 2005). Under this definition, Hamilton's NA could be considered a place-

based initiative.

Place-based policy approaches first developed in the UK, Europe and the US, but have been slower to take hold in Canada. Nevertheless, they have been increasingly apparent, for example, in the growth of place-based community development work in targeted strategies responding to neighbourhood inequity. In Canada, place-based initiatives have targeted neighbourhoods, and tend to be locally delivered but also form part of provincial and federal poverty reduction strategies. *Action for Neighbourhood Change*, for example, was a federal effort taken up in Surrey, Thunder Bay, Halifax, and most notably in Toronto's "Priority Neighbourhoods". Meanwhile, in Manitoba, *Neighbourhoods Alive!* centres on "designated" neighbourhoods across the province. Other efforts are municipally driven, such as Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* and Calgary's *Neighbourhood Strategy*. The collaborative nature of these initiatives means that they often involve partnerships with provincial and federal bodies, as well as with non-profits like the United Way. Many place-based initiatives like these have been applauded for their attention to the complexities of local settings, where diverse factors are understood to come together to create opportunities and challenges (Leviten-Reid, 2006). It remains unclear, however, whether place-based responses can address the broader, systemic causes of urban inequity and exclusion. These and other critiques will be explored below.

2.1.6 Critiques of neighbourhood strategies and place-based approaches

There has been significant scepticism in the literature around the claims of place-based initiatives and targeted neighbourhood strategies. To begin, some scholars have highlighted the ambivalence of resident-led neighbourhood strategies regarding ownership and responsibility, particularly under current political conditions dominated by neoliberal policies (Bradford, 2007;

Elwood, 2002). Neoliberal policies involve scaling back state involvement in public welfare and reorganizing civil society to privilege self-organizing citizen groups (Jessop, 2002). Some argue that the implementation of place-based initiatives "may only confirm the retreat of the state from the kind of universal commitments that remain the foundation of inclusive cities" (Bradford, 2007, p. 2). While collaborative neighbourhood strategies may offer new opportunities for citizen involvement in urban policy making and priority setting, some fear that they may also overburden citizens with state responsibilities (Gunn, Brooks & Vigar, 2015; Elwood, 2002). Elwood's case study of Minneapolis' neighbourhood planning initiative suggests that collaborative revitalization efforts like this one may simultaneously foster opportunities for citizen involvement in urban policy planning while overburdening them with state responsibilities. Such an analysis stems from the observation that under neoliberal governments, responsibility for previously state-run activities is increasingly moved onto citizens in efforts to downsize state institutions. Ican & Basok (2004) and Wolsh (1990) call the tendency towards increased citizen and community duty "responsibilization", where citizens acquire new responsibilities that previously belonged to the state. In turn, citizens can become a source of blame for social ills. Whether framed within a deficit or strength-based model, positioning residents as primary agents of neighbourhood change may imply that they were responsible for the issues in the first place. That is, as opposed to recognizing the role of the state in historic neglect of particular neighbourhoods, as well as the role of systemic forms of oppression affecting these communities, the state (via the city) downloads the responsibility of the structural calamities of poverty, unemployment, crime and health concerns onto residents. In this way, neighbourhood residents are granted "responsibility without power", while the state maintains a position of "power without responsibility" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 386).

Moreover, some argue that the emphasis on neighbourhood-based interventions for addressing broader structural issues like poverty may be misguided and that the promises of place-based interventions have been overstated. Cowen & Parlette (2011) argue that

when place-based approaches are guided by assumptions of “neighbourhood effects” and take the shape of resident engagement initiatives rather than poverty reduction or economic development, they actually risk exacerbating some of the experiences of poverty that they ostensibly aim to mediate. (p. 31)

Here, Cowen & Parlette reference two divergent approaches to concentrated patterns of poverty and rationales for neighbourhood-focused intervention. The first attributes neighbourhood inequity to patterns of historic underinvestment in particular areas, coupled with migration patterns, housing, and accessibility issues. This understanding, they argue, prompts a meaningful response to inequity with investments in physical and social infrastructure to correct the history of chronic underinvestment. The second rationale stems from a body of research on “neighbourhood effects”, where living in poor neighbourhoods is believed to have a negative effect on social development, even independent of variables like individual or family income (Galster, 2012; Wilson, 1987). Bauder (2002) argues that this idea is based on essentialist assumptions about neighbourhoods, class and race, and it places blame for neighbourhood inequity and poverty onto residents. In Canada, studies of “neighbourhood effects” indicate that life opportunities are in fact more influenced by individual or family factors than neighbourhood conditions (Oreopoulos, 2002, 2008). Moreover, others argue that while concentrated and racialized poverty manifests at the neighbourhood level, it does not originate there and efforts to address it must involve work at multiple scales (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Interventions that rely on “neighbourhood effects” explanations of poverty target the local level and posit cultural and

behavioural interventions as central modes of response. This can be seen in the emphasis on “resident engagement” in neighbourhood strategies across the country. Underlying these initiatives is the assumption that poor residents are disengaged, disillusioned and in need of middle class models of civic engagement to correct neighbourhood inequities (Curley, 2010).

While some scholars have questioned the effectiveness and rationale behind collaborative and place-based strategies, others have critiqued the promises of resident leadership and inclusion. There is widespread support for resident involvement in community development work, and the ideals of ownership, autonomy and participation central to resident-led models are generally agreed to be traits that support strong communities and foster positive social change. While top-down community development efforts have been found to disempower communities (Hancock, 2009; Jackson et al., 2003), resident participation in neighbourhood development has been found to have markedly positive effects (DeFilippis, Fisher & Shragge, 2010). Nevertheless, there have been critiques to promises about resident leadership and inclusiveness of collaborative strategies. First of all, despite an emphasis on community engagement and resident leadership, some neighbourhood initiatives have been found to undervalue resident input. In their study of a resident-led neighbourhood strategy in Scarborough, Cowen & Parlette (2011) found that these efforts “do not always incorporate residents into planning processes or decision making in meaningful ways” (p. ix). Similarly, Perrons & Skyers (2003) noted in their work in the UK that “despite the progressive nature of the formal procedures for participation ...in reality, the extent of participation, although improving, tends to remain limited...so many voices remain marginalized” (p. 282). In other words, surface-level or tokenistic involvement of residents means that traditional top-down community development approaches may continue to dominate, despite goals to the contrary (Eversole, 2010). This undermines the value of resident

leadership espoused by these efforts, and negates the benefits to be reaped from genuine participation from citizens. Surface level resident involvement also raises questions about the risks and possibilities of communities being involved formally in state processes and policy. Shragge (2013) poignantly asks: “has the current period created an opportunity for community organizations to play a role in a process of progressive social change? Or has it brought the community into the orbit of state regulation through these organizations - or are both possible at the same time?” (p. 100) That is, while citizen participation in local government may have great benefits, it may also run the risk of cooptation by state interests.

Another note of concern about collaborative neighbourhood initiatives is that the focus on consensus-building and partnerships can obscure power relations between actors. In their work on Hamilton’s *Neighbourhood Action*, Cahuas, Wakefield & Peng (2015) found that municipal actors and processes work in complex ways to both facilitate *and* suppress resident participation. While this work focused on power imbalances between citizens and city staff, other critiques of neighbourhood initiatives have targeted power imbalances between citizens. Namely, while collaborative community development efforts are ideally inclusive, they can fail to elicit diverse, representative participation from residents (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Put differently, despite the fact that there is an overrepresentation of low-income and racialized residents in the targeted communities, they are not equally represented in neighbourhood initiatives. Moreover, some purportedly inclusive, resident-led initiatives have been critiqued for reinforcing barriers to meaningful participation, which disproportionately affect low-income and ethnically diverse residents (Zagofsky, 2013). Specifically, Zagofsky found that while low-income and racialized residents participated in lower numbers in a Sacramento neighbourhood initiative, when they were involved, other actors often overpowered their voices. True collaboration is constrained and

power differences will only be exacerbated “if persistent inequalities between community partners are unacknowledged or unaddressed” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. ix).

The power imbalances and barriers to meaningful participation documented in the cases above are not unique to collaborative neighbourhood strategies. With the understanding that resident participation in neighbourhood initiatives reflects growing patterns of citizen involvement in public policy, I will turn to the literature on public participation and engagement to gain further insights into barriers to meaningful civic involvement in local affairs. This will serve to provide context for my research questions about barriers to meaningful and diverse participation in Neighbourhood Action and the processes that create, reproduce and challenge these barriers.

2.2 Citizen involvement and public participation

2.2.1 The participatory turn

In recent decades, public policy has become dominated by collaborative approaches to planning increasingly marked by public participation and citizen involvement (Healey, 1997, 2003; Forester, 1999, 2006). Public involvement in decision-making has become the norm in many policy fields and is characterized by collaboration and partnership between various stakeholders, including lay citizens, residents, clients, or service users. Bond & Thompson-Fawcett (2007) note that this movement is based in communicative planning theory, which envisions planning processes that are “inclusive, discussion-oriented, consensus building and transformative, in that they engender social learning through a respect for difference and recognition of others’ values” (p. 451). Although public participation in decision-making is not a new concept, it has experienced resurgence in public policy in recent decades, resulting in an

explosion of venues for citizen involvement. These processes of public involvement may be established by officials in order to facilitate dialogue with the public or may originate in voluntary, charitable or political groups. Public participation venues include citizen juries, public panels, round tables, charets, and learning circles, as well as processes centred around collaboration, partnership, and multisector work that include citizens directly in planning and policy (Thurston et al., 2005). Cornwall & Coelho (2007) call these emerging forums “new democratic spaces”, defined as:

intermediary spaces, conduits for negotiation, information and exchange. They may be provided and provided for by the state, backed in some settings by legal or constitutional guarantees and regarded by state actors as *their* space into which citizens and their representatives are invited. Yet they may also be seen as spaces conquered by civil society demands for inclusion. Some are fleeting, one-off consultative events; others are regularized institutions with a more durable presence on the governance landscape.

(p. 1)

In Canada, the participatory turn has been well-documented in environmental issues (O’Faircheallaigh, 2010; Doelle & Sinclair, 2006; Gauthier et al., 2011), healthcare (Church et al., 2002; Thurston et al., 2005), land use (Illsley, 2003, Brown & Weber, 2011) and local government (Pinnington & Lerner, 2009; Graham & Philips, 1998). While earlier work in this area focused largely on the merits of public participation, more recently attention has turned to how to design processes of public participation that are more effective and legitimate (Ableson et al., 2003).

There are diverse sets of purported benefits of increased public participation in planning and policy. These benefits range from enhancing democratic processes and legitimizing decision-

making, to promoting community empowerment, responding to exclusion, and minimizing costs (Solitaire, 2005, p. 920). Key to the first points on democratic process and legitimacy, Barnes et al. (2003) explain that public involvement has become viewed as central in government, health services and other public bodies in addressing the “democratic deficit” (p. 379). That is, increased public participation is seen as a response to public disenchantment and cynicism in public institutions, which many name as a source of declining rates of civic participation (Putnam & Pharr, 2000). Church et al. (2002) argue that increased interest in civic participation “reflects an attempt by government to respond to the increasing and widespread view that the major institutions of society are unresponsive and unaccountable to citizens” (p. 12). Meanwhile, the effectiveness and legitimacy of traditional mechanisms of public involvement, based in ideals of representative democracy, are being increasingly scrutinized. Fung & Wright (2001) explain:

... this mechanism of political representation seems ineffective in accomplishing the central ideals of democratic politics: facilitating active political involvement of the citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implementing public policies that ground a productive economy and healthy society, and, in more radical egalitarian versions of the democratic ideal, ensuring that all citizens benefit from the nation’s wealth. (p. 5)

Participatory and collaborative forms of decision-making have then become viewed as a means to expand civic involvement beyond merely electing officials and move towards more continuous, active, and holistic citizen participation in decision-making. Moreover, increased public involvement has been posited as central to egalitarian democratic ideals that respond to widespread social and economic disparities.

In response to stark and growing inequity experienced by many cities in North America

and Europe, public participation has become particularly common in local government and urban planning. Many have argued that the local scale is well-suited for participatory practices and that urban spaces are ideal sites for fostering direct citizen involvement. Portney & Berry (2010) note that unlike federal politics, which must rely heavily on representative government, “urban policy making can offer opportunities for direct citizen involvement and even face-to-face democracy at the neighborhood level” (p. 2-3). Bradford (2005) further observes that cities and communities have become the frontline for tackling major public policy challenges, making them rich with opportunities for experimentation, learning and innovation (p. 45). As municipal authorities have been passed significant responsibility from federal and provincial governments in recent years, local government is at the helm of urban physical and social infrastructure (Andrews, Graham & Philips, 2002). As a result of these increased responsibilities and pressures, as well as growing disenchantment with state responsiveness, local governments have been increasingly looking to increase public participation in decision-making. Increased public participation in local government is also understood as a response to inequity and social exclusion common to urban centres (Gaventa, 2004). By creating more participatory, inclusive processes for citizens to be directly involved in public policy that affects their immediate social and physical environment, many contend that these venues have the potential to address the inequity and exclusion that have come to characterize urban centres. The explosion of venues for citizen involvement then reflects growing interest in finding new ways to democratize civic processes in urban spaces (Amin & Thrift, 2002, Beauregard & Bounds, 2000; Fung & Wright, 2001). However, despite the widespread growth of public participation in urban and other settings, and despite its many purported and demonstrated benefits, there have been significant critiques of its recent

proliferation, which will be detailed below.

2.2.2 Limitations and barriers to meaningful participation

As noted above, the growth of citizen participation in public policy and planning has been substantial in recent decades, particularly in the areas of local government, health services and environmental planning. Given the numerous benefits attributed to citizen participation, from increasing legitimacy and efficiency of decision-making to addressing cynicism in public institutions and promoting community empowerment, many argue that the use of public participation has become difficult to critique (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Konisky & Beierle, 2001). That is, citizen participation has become so pervasive and common in public institutions, and its benefits for the public appear so undeniable, that there has been hesitancy to question it; in this regard, the concept itself is now considered “common sense” (Hall, 1996, drawing on Gramsci). Particularly in urban projects, Jones (2002) argues that there has been “a glaring neglect of attention to power relations and participation as political and social discourse and practice” (p. 583). Furthermore, Jones contends that despite the widespread belief that public participation promotes inclusion and democratic processes, it remains unclear “...whether participation can alter social stratification within communities...it may even (re)produce inequities” (p. 582). The sudden growth of public participation as a response to disparagement and inequity, coupled with the lack of attention to power relations within participatory processes, has been a concern for many (See, for example, Cooke & Kothari, 2001; King et al., 1998; Gaventa, 2005). The bulk of the criticism in this area falls into two categories. The first is a concern that public processes that include direct citizen participation may be used by public institutions to garner legitimacy and popularity, and may include only minimal or tokenistic

consideration of citizen input. The second concern is that “the public” who participate in participatory processes are not representative of the “general public”, and therefore may promote interests inconsistent with principles of inclusion. Below I explore literature that addresses these two sets of concerns below. First I address the question of intent; that is, questions about the intent of public institutions to use/engage “the public” in achieving goals are addressed. Second is a look at literature that answers the question, who is “the public”, or what bodies, or what are the identities of those deemed to constitute “the public” and thus, public participation.

2.2.3 What are the intentions behind public participation efforts?

With the recent explosion of venues for citizen participation, there has been growing concern about the intentions of public institutions in pursuing such participatory processes. In particular, many fear that public institutions may use citizen involvement to create an image of inclusion, respect, and community empowerment, when in fact citizen voice is often only marginal in the process. Here, citizens or residents many remain “peripheral insiders...at the table but unable to influence central issues” (Maloney et al., 2000, p. 1022). Moreover, there is concern that participation can obscure power relations and can allow powerful actors to pursue their interests at the expense of more marginal actors (Eversole, 2010). Citizen involvement in participatory forums is often highly constrained by institutional arrangements. Drawing on the work of others, Eversole (2010) writes:

Participation, while intended as a corrective to the ‘top-down expert-led model of development’ subtly perpetuates it by presenting community action within a project and program frame. Thus professional roles, structures and institutions define how we think about and action [take on] development in and with communities.

(p. 32)

While such critiques have flourished in recent years, the core ideas are not new and stem from the work of earlier scholars like Arnstein (1969) and Rosenbaum (1978). Arnstein's well-known 1969 work defines citizen participation as "the redistribution of power that enables the 'have not' citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future" (p. 216). With this ideal as a premise, she presents a "ladder of citizen participation" portraying a continuum of possibilities for public participation processes. The continuum ranges from overt manipulation and tokenistic consultation at the lowest rungs, to delegated power and citizen control at the highest end of the ladder. The point here is that citizen participation is neither inherently beneficial nor harmful, but rather depends greatly on the intentions of actors in the process. Rosenbaum's (1978) work similarly points out that power relations can significantly affect the potential benefit of public participation. Specifically, participatory processes can easily be rendered meaningless if public institutions have already made decisions that will not be changed by citizen input. It is then crucial to examine the institutional arrangements that frame participatory processes.

More recent scholars share similar concerns about the intentions of more powerful actors in public participation processes. With reference to urban revitalization projects, Jones (2002) argues that:

the potential for and effectiveness of including the excluded through participation must involve scrutinising the nature and quality of whatever institutional arrangements are creating the 'political space' within which regeneration initiatives are played out. (p. 583)

It is then recognized that particular arrangements and processes for garnering public input can vary greatly, and can work to constrain or facilitate meaningful participation. As previously

mentioned, in addition to fears of tokenism and manipulation, participatory processes have been critiqued for potentially downloading state responsibilities onto citizens (Bradford, 2007), which can lead to overburdening citizens and communities. When citizens and communities acquire new duties (expending time and labour) but have inadequate opportunities to affect decision-making, public participation processes can be rendered meaningless and detrimental. As a result, scholars advocate exercising vigilance with regards to power relations and institutional arrangements that define participatory processes. (Eversole, 2010; Cornwall, 2008; Gaventa, 2005)

2.2.4 Who are “the public” in public participation?

The second set of concerns about the growth of public participation processes relates to issues of representation and inclusion. That is, many have argued that “the public” involved in participatory processes are not representative of the general public and that processes can be highly exclusionary. There is particular concern that public participation exercises can exclude marginal communities and individuals, which, ironically, the processes are often intended to support. Bond & Thompson-Fawcett (2007) note that:

Inclusive and equitable processes are recognised as an ideal in much planning theory and practice, yet this ideal is increasingly difficult to realise in today’s societies that comprise diverse and multiple publics. (p. 449)

In addition to struggling to represent the interests of multiple public groups, participatory processes can grant more voice to those citizens who already have substantial power (Fainstein, 2000). Some argue that this is caused by a combination of self-selection, or the selection of the “right kind” of people by those directing the process (Martin, 2008). As a result, public

participation can represent the interests of some subgroups but often at the expense for more socially marginal groups. Moreover, because of the smaller scale of urban projects, especially at the neighborhood level, a modest number of participants can impede and even derail efforts that would benefit the community by fostering inclusion (Fiorina, 1999). Some neighbourhood groups have been known to stand in the way of progressive changes in the community, including advocating for affordable and supportive housing. For instance, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2009) openly acknowledges “discriminatory neighbourhood opposition” (also known as “Not in My Back Yard” or NIMBY opposition) as a major barrier to developing affordable and supportive housing across the province. While some argue that well-constructed citizen involvement programs can ameliorate NIMBYism (Berry, Portney & Thomson, 1993; Portney & Berry, 2010), it is nevertheless clear that issues of power and representation are ever-present in participatory processes.

It has been observed that there is unequal access to participation in public venues designed to garner citizen input. Those at the helm of public participation projects often assume that “the same traditional middle-class cross-section of citizenry...represent the interests of all” (Church et al., 2002, p. 17). As a result, the involvement of low income and racialized communities has been observed to be especially underrepresented in participatory processes (Zagofsky, 2013; Cowen & Parlette, 2011). This is of particular concern since many participatory processes, especially in urban settings, centre on issues that directly affect low-income and racialized communities. When considering the unequal representation in public participation efforts, it is helpful to consider patterns of civic involvement more generally, including voter turnout and participation in other political and voluntary activities. Literature on civic involvement has long lamented on unequal patterns of participation. In Canada, 6% of

adults represent 35%–42% of those involved in all civic activities (Reed & Selbee, 2001). Stolle & Cruz (2005) note that those with more socioeconomic resources, particularly income and formal education, are “usually overrepresented when it comes to voicing their opinions and influencing public policies” (p. 99). This proves true for Canadian adults and youth in terms of voting as well as volunteering (McClintock, 2004) and other forms of civic engagement. Education and income have been identified as predictive factors in voting and political participation more generally in the US (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996) as well as in Canada, especially among younger Canadians (Rubenson et al., 2004; Tossutti, 2007). Lijphard (1997) observes that unequal patterns of participation affect all forms of citizen participation and refers to this as “democracy's unresolved dilemma”. He writes:

...the inequality of representation and influence are not randomly distributed but systematically biased in favor of more privileged citizens - those with higher incomes, greater wealth, and better education - and against less advantaged citizens. (p. 1)

With participation being “fueled by high levels of education or wealth” (Portney & Berry, 2010, p. 5), patterns of civic involvement reflect widespread and growing socioeconomic disparities. Such unequal patterns of participation are believed to contribute to unequal representation and influence in the public realm, which can further social inequities. Young (2000) argues that the legitimacy of a democratic process “depends on the degree to which those affected by it have been included in the decision-making process and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes” (p. 5). On this basis, unequal patterns of participation present a significant challenge for the legitimacy of civic processes.

Scholars have observed considerable barriers to civic participation that disproportionately affect ethnic and cultural minority communities. Commonly cited barriers include:

... levels of racism/discrimination, “coolness”ⁱⁱ on the part of political parties and community groups toward visible minorities, a lack of access to funds and networks, a lack of familiarity with political norms and party culture, and linguistic and mobility challenges... (Best, Dustan & Breton, 2006, p. 10)

In terms of official representation, “...newcomers and minorities do not yet have even close to what could be described as an equitable numerical presence in elected office” (Biles & Tolley, 2004, p. 178). These trends are also reflected in civic participation patterns. There has been special attention paid to civic participation among immigrant populations, which is identified as especially low in Canada as well as in other immigrant-accepting countries (Simard, 2002; Blais et al., 2000). Nakhaie (2008) argues that this is a crucial consideration for pluralist societies, remarking that:

[t]he extent of immigrants' participation in Canadian political structures and processes points to their level of trust for political institutions...and thus signifies the legitimization of Canadian multicultural democracy. (p. 835)

On one hand, unequal patterns of civic involvement among immigrant communities can be explained factors that limit participation more generally. Namely, recent immigrants may experience additional time pressures, financial difficulties, residential mobility and disruption of family and community ties, which Putnam (1995) identifies as “usual suspects” in accounting for decreased civic participation. This may partially explain why participation differences between Canadian-born and immigrant citizens tend to diminish with length of residency (Gidengil et al., 2006; Soroka et al., 2007; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Nakhaie (2008) suggests that while education and income are significant factors, other markers of social capital are more significant since “immigrants do not have access to the same type and/or level of social capital when

compared to those born in Canada” (p. 839). Drawing on literature on participation, Nakhaie notes that settlement experiences may serve to weaken both bonding (within group) and bridging (between group) social capital, which have both been correlated with public participation. The process of being uprooted, having family and community connections severed, and experiencing higher residential mobility in the early settlement period are all contributing factors. Aside from these factors, some may simply choose to not participate or may come from a “culture of silence” which affects their willingness to participate (Frideres, 1997).

In addition, it has been observed that public participation has been constructed in ways that exclude newcomers, both by basing assumptions on European Canadian ideals and norms, and by not acknowledging the civic contributions of newcomers. Scholars such as Best, Dustan & Breton (2006) contend that civic participation is a manifestation of belonging, noting that discourses on participation among immigrant communities cannot ignore “...the innate contradiction of belonging and making oneself a part of a larger community where the elite, white, male is the standard and norm” (p. 7). They further argue that ideal forms of civic participation are framed in ways that do not reflect the reality of most Canadians. That is, traditional measurements of civic participation, such as voting or attending civic meetings, do not always capture other cultural forms of participation that other community members may engage in (King et al., 1998, p. 322). Unconventional forms of civic involvement may focus on the individual, the family, local community, region or nation, and may take place in the workplace, school settings, and voluntary or religious organization (Frideres, 1997). In other words, minority communities may experience barriers to traditional forms of participation, and at the same time, may engage in alternative civic engagement practices, which may not be always be recognized as civic participation.

In order to address unequal levels of civic involvement that affect low-income and racialized communities, scholars and governments alike have pursued various avenues to minimize barriers to participation. Given the predictive effects of income and education that dominate civic participation literature, it is not surprising that some advocate for address the root inequities that cause such disparities. This would mean a more equitable distribution of socio-economic resources – namely, income and education. In addition,

... the importance of resources also necessitates a focus on how political or social structures and institutions determine which people or groups have access to socio-economic resources, and which people or groups are marginalized. (Stolle & Cruz, 2005, p. 90)

In other words, efforts to remove socio-economic barriers to participation must also address broader structural issues that produce and reproduce patterns of exclusion and marginalization. In this vein, Saloojee (2003) names an additional barrier to equal participation: "...the complex interplay between social identity and the persistence and reproduction of racial oppression and discrimination" (p. 41). Saloojee further argues that systemic racism is a powerful socio-economic, political and ideological force that maintains and produces racialized patterns of poverty and exclusion. These patterns both contribute to and are caused by limited civic participation and constrained citizenship, which serve to further inscribe exclusion.

In the previous sections, I have traced the literature on urban decline, responses to inequity, and unequal patterns of public participation. In order to gain insights in the larger processes that produce neighbourhood inequity and unequal patterns of public participation. The next section presents discourses on diversity and social exclusion more broadly. This is intended to situate my research questions on how Neighbourhood Action (NA) participants address and

conceptualize issues of social difference and inclusion. As my study will explore who is participating in NA and whether participation is representative of diverse community voices, I will first provide demographic information on Hamilton neighbourhoods in order to contextualize the social, economic and cultural diversity that exists in these communities and across the city.

2.3 Approaches to difference: Discourses on diversity, race and social difference

2.3.1 Economic, cultural and racial diversity in Hamilton

Hamilton, Ontario is a mid-sized city in southern Ontario of approximately 500,000 residentsⁱⁱⁱ, and due to its economic and ethnic diversity, is a strategic site for investigations into urban inequity. With a reputation as a steel town, its economy formerly relied on heavy industry although Hamilton is increasingly professionally diversifying towards healthcare, education and social services. As a result of the decline of industry over the past four decades, coupled with falling investments in infrastructure and social welfare common to many urban centres across the country, as well as poor planning at the local level (Cruikshank & Bouchier, 2004), the city has experienced high rates of poverty, economic inequality and significant disparities between neighbourhoods. Wealth and poverty in the city are not only concentrated, but also pattern predictably from west-east and from south-north, reflecting patterns of settlement of workers and proximity to industry (Harris, Dunn & Wakefield, 2014). Hamilton's drastic income disparities have been an increasing area of concern in recent years, particularly in response to a local news series called *Code Red* (Buist, 2010), as well as a report called *Vital Signs*, conducted by community foundations across Canada to assess the health of urban communities. Similar to Hulchanski's (2010) findings of economic disparity which he called "three cities within

Toronto”, Hamilton’s *Vital Signs* creates a picture of “two cities that share the same urban boundary but little else” (Cooke & George, 2010). The authors note:

One city is an archipelago of affluent neighbourhoods with healthy, well-educated residents enjoying an enviable quality of life. The other city concentrates shocking levels of poverty, curtailed education, high unemployment and ill health into poor neighbourhoods that might as well be on a different planet. (p. 1)

The report contends that city-wide averages obscure the reality of disparities in Hamilton. That said, the poverty rate in the city falls at 20%, significantly above the national average (Johnson, 2006). Moreover, 27% of the population are persons with disabilities compared to 18% nationally, which is believed to be due to “the correlation between the level of functioning and income” (City of Hamilton, 2013b). At the neighbourhood level, however, the details of income disparity become more jarring. Demographic profiles for each of the targeted Neighbourhood Action communities conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) show vast disparities between these neighbourhoods and the city average (Mayo, Klassen & Bahkt, 2012). Some neighbourhoods were identified to have as much as three times the prevalence of poverty when compared to the city average, with one neighbourhood noted to have 75% of children living in poverty compared to 26% across the city (p. 30). While these statistics vary considerably between even the NA neighbourhoods, as a whole, low-income individuals and families living in poverty are over-represented in these communities. The jarring disparities between neighbourhoods can mean that low-income and working class residents are physically segregated from more affluent areas. One study identified Hamilton’s low-income earners in 2001 as “the most segregated [of any city]...in recent Canadian history” (Stanger-Ross & Stanger-Ross, 2012, quoted in Harris et al. 2014, p. 6). While a working class culture remains in

much of the city, in the downtown core, there are indications that certain areas are beginning to gentrify, a process which appears “almost inevitable” in downtown neighbourhoods in the city (Harris, Dunn & Wakefield, 2014). This is due in part to Hamilton’s close proximity to Toronto, the relative affordability of housing in Hamilton and the expansion of public transit between the two cities (Gee, 2015).

In addition to economic diversity and disparities across the city, Hamilton also has a strong presence of ethnically and cultural diverse residents, which is notable at the city-wide level and more significant at the neighbourhood level. According to the most recent census data, Hamilton has the third highest proportion (24%) of residents born outside of Canada, following only Toronto and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2011a). It is the eighth most common city in Canada for recent newcomers to settle (City of Hamilton, 2013b). Recent influxes of immigrants have come largely from Asia and the Middle East, followed by Africa and Europe. Between 2006 and 2010, the top countries of origin were listed as: the Philippines, India, People’s Republic of China, Iraq, United States of America, Colombia, Pakistan, United Kingdom and Colonies, United Arab Emirates, and Democratic Republic of Somalia (Workforce Planning Hamilton, 2012). Newcomer and minority populations tend to be geographically concentrated in the city, particularly in some NA neighbourhoods. Across the city, 14% of city residents identify with a visible minority group, while in some NA neighbourhoods, the number is more than 40% (Mayo et al., 2012). Similarly, at the city level, the number of recent newcomers (arrived between 2001 and 2006) is modest at 3%, while in one NA neighbourhood the number is more than five times higher (p. 37). In addition, the percentage of residents who identify as having Aboriginal ancestry is 3% citywide, but upwards of 10% in some NA neighbourhoods (p. 21).

It is worth noting that while Hamilton has a long history of immigration, strong cultural

communities, and amenities and services that support newcomers. Recent immigrants and refugees nevertheless face significant challenges in Hamilton, as indicated by a poverty rate of over 50%, which is higher than any other city in Ontario (Hamilton Community Foundation, 2011, p. 3). This may be due to the higher proportion of refugees coming in the city in recent years, who would face additional challenges when compared to other classes of immigrants. Between 2003 and 2008, for instance, 31% of newcomers to the city were refugees (government-assisted or claimants), which is more than double the national average (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, 2008). This proportion of refugees is higher than any other city in Ontario or in Canada (Chung, Hong & Newbold, 2013). Klassen's (2012) report for the SPRC noted additional challenges specific to Hamilton; in particular, in 2011 the city witnessed the sudden closure of the main provider of settlement services amidst fraud charges. This created a rapid loss of services, followed by a reallocation of services among many agencies but with fewer resources and additional regulations. At the same time, Klassen notes, "newcomers are generally taking longer to settle in our community as measured by levels of employment, income and health status compared to Canadian born residents" (p. 3). Though not unique to Hamilton, settlement challenges are a significant barrier to participation and inclusion for immigrant and refugee residents in the city and contribute to patterns of racialized, concentrated poverty.

2.3.2 Approaches to diversity and discourses of inclusion/exclusion

The above discussion indicates that concentrated racialized patterns of poverty are a reality in a growing number of Canada's urban centres. City centres are sites of increasing cultural diversity, economic disparity and above all, social difference. Madanipour, Cars & Allen (1998) note that while statistical and demographic data may help to identify and describe cities

and neighbourhoods, "...it does not provide a sufficient basis for fully appreciating the social processes which have created and maintained these neighbourhoods. Nor does [it] provide a sufficient basis for understanding what these processes mean to people caught within them" (p. 279). Similarly, statistical data can serve to demonstrate who is participating in civic and public processes, but does little to illuminate the factors that create unequal patterns of participation. For this reason, it is necessary to look to the "complex interplay" (Saloojee, 2003) between social exclusion and identity in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these processes operate.

Definitions of social exclusion vary widely, but largely focus on barriers to accessing resources that affect one's livelihood, personhood and citizenship. Saloojee (2003) notes that social exclusion literature has tended to focus on poverty and labour market exclusion, but is increasingly concerned with racism and other forms of marginalization. She posits that social exclusion discourses are attentive to those who:

- (i) are denied access to the valued goods and services in society because of their race, gender, religion, disability etc.;
- (ii) lack adequate resources to be effective, contributing members to the political and economic life of society; and
- (iii) those who are not recognized as full and equal citizens and participants in society. (p. 35)

By centring on issues of access and recognition, social exclusion then draws on themes of alienation, powerlessness and marginalization, focusing on the structural causes of exclusion. Of particular interest are the ways in which particular individuals, groups and communities are excluded "from decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes" (Madanipour et al., 1998, p. 22). Importantly, Galabuzi (2001) points out that social exclusion is a multidimensional process and

therefore cannot be determined by singular factors. So, for example, being unemployed, or living in poverty, or belonging to a racial minority group do not, in isolation, always create conditions for social exclusion. Rather, exclusion operates on multiple, mutually-reinforcing levels, where “groups living in low-income areas are likely to also experience inequality in access to employment, substandard housing, insecurity, stigmatization, institutional breakdown, social service deficits, spatial isolation, disconnection from civil society, discrimination, and higher health risks” (Galabuzi, 2001, p. 177). Importantly then, social exclusion does not operate randomly, but rather is highly systematic and shaped by hierarchies of race, class, gender, sexuality ability and other markers of difference or identity. Further, it is understood that these categories are “mutually transformative and intersecting” (Ruddick, 1996), and that forms of oppression that operate against these identity markers are “interlocking systems of oppression” (Collins, 1986).

Young (2000) outlines how broader structural hierarchies play out at the micro level in two ways: through processes of internal and external exclusion. The distinction is helpful in accounting for how these processes operate in civic processes and urban spaces characterized by high levels of economic and cultural diversity. External exclusion refers to cases where some groups or individuals are kept out of decision-making processes, while other more powerful actors dominate. Here, Young specifically refers to the “the fact that allegedly participatory processes often exclude members of racial and ethnic minorities, have fewer women than men, fewer working-class than professionals, are often age-biased, and rarely involve people with disabilities” (interview in Fung, 2004, p. 49, in Fung). Internal exclusion, on the other hand, refers to cases where more marginalized actors are nominally included but their voices are minimized, dismissed or misunderstood. This includes the ways in which some people's ideas

and perspectives are likely to dominate discussion and decision making, based on a set of practical norms of communication that tend to correlate directly with race, gender and class. Accordingly, both internal and external exclusion, though including interactions and processes that occur at the micro-level, are based in macro-level forces resulting in structural marginalization.

Importantly, discourses of social exclusion are not understood simply as the opposite of social inclusion. While social exclusion discourses emphasize structural inequality, marginalization and unequal access to resources, Galabuzi (2001) argues that social inclusion discourses can erase differences and obscure the reality of historical and contemporary class, race and gender oppression. She contends that social inclusion “essentially means bringing the excluded into the tent, but likely allowing the persistence of the processes and structures of exclusion, and so damning them to the periphery or margins of the tent” (p. 175). Young (2000) similarly proposes that inclusion may presuppose “an already given set of procedures, institutions, and the terms of the public discourse into which those excluded or marginalised are incorporated without change” (p. 11). This tendency can force diverse voices and perspectives into a single public process or discourse. Social inclusion discourses can also play upon idealized conceptions of urban and civic spaces where difference is positively valued, and where exclusion is not addressed. Young cautions that:

The concepts of exclusion and inclusion lose meaning if they are used to label all problems of social conflict and justice. Where the problems are racism, cultural intolerance, economic exploitation, or a refusal to help needy people, they should so be named. (p. 13)

Ahmed (2012) similarly emphasizes the need to interrogate how we name approaches to

difference, asking: “what are we talking about when we use the language of diversity?” (p.1)

The failure of social inclusion discourses to identify and confront the structural, systemic basis of marginalization and exclusion has been a major critique. Galabuzi (2001) posits social inclusion discourses that obscure difference and marginalization as congruent with the project of official multiculturalism, which has also been critiqued for idealizing diversity and failing to question the reality of root causes of social inequity. In many ways, the tension between social inclusion and social exclusion discourses mirrors debates in the literature on multiculturalism and anti-racism, which I will explore below.

2.3.3 Multiculturalism and anti-racist approaches

While multiculturalism and anti-racism both have racial and cultural diversity as their focus, literature from each area reveals distinct and competing discourses on immigration, inclusion and diversity. In opposition to assimilationist policies and discourses of the past, multiculturalism has been a dominant framework for approaching issues of diversity and immigration in policy and public affairs, particularly in immigrant-accepting countries like Canada. Importantly, scholars of multiculturalism have isolated three distinct usages of the term. Berman & Paradies (2008) explain:

First, multiculturalism can be seen as a description of the demographic make-up of modern states. Second, multiculturalism can be conceived as a set of norms or principles that uphold the right of all individuals to equal access and ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life. Finally, multiculturalism can be seen as a government strategy. (p. 7)

Wood & Gilbert (2005) further contend that multiculturalism is not only a socio-demographic

fact and a set of policies, but also a state-mandated vision (p. 679). Kymlicka (2008) argues that multiculturalism as policy emerged both as a natural extension of larger processes of social and political liberalization occurring in the early 1970s, and as a bargaining tool in response to growing Quebecois nationalism and competing demands from other established ethnic groups (such as Ukrainians, Italians, and Poles) (p. 2-3). Multiculturalism stood in opposition to assimilationist policies which were common to the early and mid-20th century (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998) and emphasized immigrants becoming part of the dominant Canadian (white, Christian) culture. Canada's later turn to multiculturalist policies is often placed in contrast to the United States, where it is widely believed that Canada is an inclusive *mosaic* while the United States is portrayed as an assimilatory *melting pot* (Breton, 1990; Peach, 2005; Skerrett, 2008). As such, multiculturalism rests on the idea of diversity as difference, and in more recent years, diversity as strength. This has been particularly true in the urban context, where multicultural policies have become central to municipal planning policy and to marketing cities as global, competitive spaces (Wood & Gilbert, 2005).

While most contemporary scholars would agree that multiculturalist policies and frameworks offer a more welcoming political and cultural space for newcomers than assimilationist policies, multiculturalism has been the subject of considerable scholarly criticism, particularly from anti-racist scholars (Bannerji, 2000; Dei, 2005; Galabuzi, 2006; Razack, 1998). For many critics, multiculturalism is characterized as "...a feel-good celebration of ethnocultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine that exist in a multiethnic society" (Kymlicka, 2012, p. 5). As a result, multiculturalist policies have been accused of cultural essentialism and have been criticized for failing to address the reality of social, political and economic inequity that disproportionately

affect ethnic and cultural minority groups. Within a paradigm of multiculturalism, Dei & Johal (2005) contend that “prejudice of individuals, rather than systemic inequity is [seen to be] the primary obstacle facing ethno-cultural communities” (p. 4). As such, in multiculturalist policies and programs, inequity has been redressed through language of cultural sensitivity and exchange. However, as Amin (2002) suggests, following Barth (1969), the reality of cultural pluralism and contact between diverse people and communities alone “...is no guarantor of cultural exchange” (p. 969). In addition, multiculturalism as a state-initiated project is believed to result in “rearranging issues of inequity and racism into questions of diversity and identity” (Bannerji, 2000). Dei (2005) argues that “many critics are quick to point out that multiculturalism in fact does nothing to address racism or redress issues of inequity” (p. 100). What is more, others argue that multiculturalism as a policy and discourse has been complicit in perpetuating and denying racism, which Razack (1998) contends has become a central aspect of Canadian identity (p. 11). As noted in the Chapter 2, anti-racism emerged as a response to multiculturalist discourses that emphasize culture at the expense of race and fail to directly counter racial inequity. Antiracist scholars (e.g. Bonnett, 2000; Dei, 2005; Dei & Johal, 2005; Galabuzi, 2006; Lawrence & Dua, 2005) instead prioritize the need to interrogate race and eliminate personal, social, cultural and institutional racism. Within this approach, racism is understood as ongoing processes of marginalization and oppression that proliferates through everyday practice and institutional realities. (See section 2.5.4 for more on anti-racist theory). Other approaches to scholarship on race and immigration have emphasized the complex processes involved in migration and settlement, which will be explored below.

2.3.4 *Transnationalism and diaspora communities*

Literature on transnationalism and diaspora have become growing sites of thought about diversity, migration and identity. Although distinct in many ways from anti-racist work, these sets of literature also position themselves in opposition to discourses of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism as a public policy and public discourse has been critiqued for reflecting only patterns of immigration and settlement of the 1950s to 1970s (Vertovec, 2007). In this way, it largely reflects the experiences of earlier waves of voluntary immigration, primarily from Europe and East Asia. As such, multiculturalist discourse of this kind does not account for more recent trends towards *transnationalism*, defined as “a circular flow of persons, goods, information and symbols that has been triggered in the course of international labor migration and refugee flows” (Faist, 1998, p. 214). Transnationalism can also refer to political, economic and cultural phenomena (Kivisto, 2008). Culturally, Faist (1998) argues that transnational spaces widen a range of theoretical and social possibilities, extending beyond previous trajectories available to newcomers through assimilationist and multiculturalist frameworks. Transnational flows of migration have created a situation of “superdiversity” (Vertovec, 2007). Superdiversity refers to the demographic reality in many immigrant-accepting countries, and particularly urban centres, where there are levels of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity that surpasses any previous time period. Whereas assimilationist and multicultural frameworks “presuppose a model of immigrant containment within national borders” (Satzewich & Wong, 2011, p. 93), transnational frameworks assume that contemporary migrant communities stay more actively involved with their homelands, remaining politically, economically and culturally involved in the home country (Levitt, 2001).

With growing migration and unprecedented ease of travel and technological

connectedness, migrant communities have increased contact with home countries and across multiple borders, creating situations of hybridity and ongoing identity transformations at the individual and community level. Faist (1998) calls those involved in this ongoing process of cultural, linguistic, social and political negotiations “trans-lated persons”:

Migrants are continually engaged in translating languages, culture, norms, and social and symbolic ties. Trans-lated persons are situated in diverse contexts. There is no simple return to the sending country. The individual and collective identities are not fixed once and for all; they are not permanent over decades or centuries. (p. 239)

Transnationalist frameworks further account for variation within immigrant and refugee groups, recognizing that modes of migration and political and legal status can vary greatly (Vertovec, 2007). For instance, some may be citizens, while others permanent residents, government-assisted refugees, asylum seekers, economic or family class immigrants, or undocumented migrants. Accordingly, these variations will influence the relationship to home countries and experiences of host communities, and in turn affect identity negotiation and sense of belonging and, by implication, notions of participation in the ‘new homeland’.

The theme of migration class and identity has been taken up strongly in literature on diaspora studies which is often conflated with transnational studies. Cheran (2006) argues that while there are considerable areas of overlap, the term *diaspora* “has historically been used to describe the experiences of forced displacement and to analyze the social, cultural, and political formations that result from this forced displacement” (p. 4). Meanwhile, the term transnational refers more generally to those living or belonging to more than one national space. As such, the literature on diaspora tends to focus more on individual and collective identity and connection to homelands and cultural origins within the context of displacement, resettlement and refugee

experience (Collett, 2007; Dlamini et al., 2010; Henry, 1994; Karim, 2003; McGown, 1999). Current definitions of diaspora emphasize an ethnic minority's sense of difference, marginality and displacement in the host country, as well as a sense of identification with the homeland and cultural community and the lack of choice in settlement (Shuval, 2000). Conceptions of diaspora also tend to highlight migrant communities' desire to maintain connection with a real or imagined homeland and resistance to assimilating completely into the dominant host culture (Dlamini et al., 2009). This acknowledgement of continued interaction and negotiation with home countries and communities challenges multiculturalist discourses that posit a one-way migration path between a historic homeland and a future life in the host country (Karim, 2007). Moreover, through interactions with the host culture and other diaspora communities, individuals are consistently in a process of transformation and negotiation (Hall, 2000). Cultural identity then is understood as moving beyond fixed or essentialist conceptions, and is instead understood as fluid, dynamic and in flux. Moreover, there is a recognition that factors beyond cultural, linguistic and ethnic background, such as migration class, shape the settlement process and identity formation. By emphasizing the possibilities of identity transformation and cultural creation, literature on diaspora also posits migrancy as agency (Sinclair & Cunningham, 2000), which attempts to counter discourses that victimize immigrant and refugee communities.

2.3.5 Cosmopolitanism

Another area of literature on diversity that is related to transnationalism and diaspora studies is cosmopolitanism, which has a long history among social and political theorists. In its current usage, cosmopolitanism can refer to a political and moral attitude towards diversity, which can be either descriptive or prescriptive (Roudometof, 2005). Although it is often conflated with transnationalism, it is quite distinct in its historical development and connotations.

The idea of cosmopolitanism has been used for centuries and developed a strong tradition among Enlightenment-era scholars, who emphasized the common moral value of human beings and privileged the idea of being “citizens of the world” (Delanty, 2006, p. 26). Cosmopolitanism of this era had a moral underpinning based in ideals of common good and global justice, but also reflected political and cultural visions. The joint moral, political and cultural interpretations of cosmopolitanism maintained the belief that:

... we should recognize the equal moral worth of all human beings by creating a single world political order united around a single common language and global culture. (Kymlicka & Walker, 2012, p. 3)

Given the inherent colonialist and imperialist implications of such a vision, most modern understandings of cosmopolitanism seek to maintain the commitment to human rights and global justice but challenge utopian ideals of a single political order, “...affirming instead the enduring reality and value of cultural diversity and local or national self-government” (p. 3). Scholars from fields like geography, political science, sociology, anthropology and international relations have taken up this task with such vigor that David Harvey (2000) announced that “cosmopolitanism is back.” Cosmopolitanism takes many forms in modern social theory, where it is acknowledged that reconceptualization of the term is necessary in the face of globalization, nationalism, migration, multiculturalism and feminism (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002). Kymlicka & Walker (2012) argue that forces of globalization have made some form of cosmopolitanism virtually inevitable and have especially prompted scholars to readdress this concept. They explain:

The pressures of globalization – environmental concerns, refugees, the migration of peoples, awareness of the crimes of genocidal regimes, terrorism, multinational trade, and

advances in communication technology – have made older ideas of national autarky or isolation increasingly untenable. There is growing recognition of the need for some normative conception of global community, responsibility, and governance. (p. 3)

Scholars on cosmopolitanism have thus been concerned with tensions of boundaries, such as between the global and the local, the international and the national, and “us” and “them” (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). Hannerz (1996) defined cosmopolitanism as “...a willingness to engage with the other. ... an intellectual and aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (p. 103). The idea is that increased flows of people and information across time and space, and resulting increased global interdependence, promote tolerance and openness across cultures and nations, and in fact can soften the boundaries between them (Beck, 2006). This is believed to foster peaceful coexistence, encourage new cultural forms and hybridity, and strengthen our sense of international responsibility, which will ultimately further global justice aims.

Recent scholars have noted that while the terms cosmopolitanism and transnationalism are frequently conflated, it is important to distinguish the two. For one, cosmopolitanism is more so considered an attitude of openness towards cultural others, while transnationalism is more often used to refer to the reality of population migration and the resulting cultural hybridity that individuals and communities experience and create. Beck (2006) argues, importantly, that not all transnational activities or experiences will necessarily generate cosmopolitan attitudes characterized by openness and tolerance. Moreover, Roudometof (2005) notes that discourses on transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are shaped by class and racial boundaries:

Transnationalism is typically connected to recent (and poorer) immigrant cohorts,

whereas cosmopolitanism is evoked as an expression of the transnational mobility of more affluent groups. (p. 65)

Furthermore, when cosmopolitan ideals are discussed in terms of voluntary mobility and travel for business and pleasure, it can ignore the reality of forced migration and exile experienced by many refugee and diaspora communities. As a result, while literature on cosmopolitanism describes an attitude towards cultural diversity and explores the tensions of boundaries in globalized urban contexts, transnational scholars make significant contributions to accounting for the experiences of refugee and diaspora communities.

2.4 Summary of literature review

In the above literature review, I have highlighted works on urban inequity, public participation and approaches to social exclusion and diversity in order to inform my case study of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action. In response to growing concentrated, racialized patterns of poverty and exclusion, it is natural that urban centres are exploring new ways to address such inequity. Municipalities are increasingly looking to collaborative, participatory models of civic engagement in order to counter the top-down, government-led models of the past, which have been found to disempower communities. However, as indicated by the literature on civic involvement, unequal patterns of participation complicate these processes and lead to questions about their legitimacy and purpose. Specifically, there are long-standing fears that some public participation efforts may be tokenistic and artificial. Moreover, low-income and ethnically diverse residents have been found to be under-represented in public participation efforts, yet over-represented in the communities in which they often take place. In light of the increasing economic and cultural diversity of urban centres, I reviewed literature on the changing

demographics in Canada urban centres and highlighted the competing discourses on social inclusion and exclusion, multiculturalism, anti-racism, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Moving forward, this review of the literature will allow me to contextualize the processes of exclusion and approaches to social difference and inequity that are taken up by Neighbourhood Action participants and situate them within larger processes.

Chapter 3: METHODS AND FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I present my methodological approach and my position as a researcher in this context. I highlight the various data sources used and foreground the analysis informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Lastly, I incorporate my theoretical framework, grounded in critical theory, and explain how it works together with my methodological approach.

3.1 Methodological approach

In order to explore the nuanced, complex experiences of Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* participants as they engage in this community development initiative, my research uses a qualitative ethnographic case study design. A case study design involves using multiple forms of contextual data to develop a comprehensive understanding of particular group, culture or organization (Silverman, 2000) – in this case, NA and its participants. By concentrating on one specific unit of analysis, the goal is to generate a highly detailed description of the case at hand. Typically, qualitative methods such as interviews, documents and observation are used to allow the researcher to understand the participants, their situation and worldview. Stake (1995) refers to the object of analysis for a case study as a bounded system, “emphasizing unity and wholeness of that system, but confining the attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time” (p. 258). The bounded system in question is chosen because it is typical, innovative, experimental or otherwise noteworthy (Merriam, 1998). Different types of cases might be chosen to serve different research purposes. For instance, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that

the *extreme* case might be chosen to illustrate a dramatic point, including famous examples like Freud's "Wolf-Man" or Foucault's "Panopticon". Meanwhile, a *critical* case can be defined as "having strategic importance in relation to the general problem" (p. 14). In this way, a critical case might represent a "more likely" or "less likely" situation, which may either be generalizable or highlight the exceptionality of a particular case.

Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* presents a rich opportunity for a critical case study for both its innovative nature (in terms of its comprehensive structure and focus on collaboration and resident leadership) and its representativeness (in being reflective of new approaches to addressing inequity in changing urban landscapes). Moreover, the location of Hamilton has strategic importance to the study questions that I ask about identity, social difference and inclusion due to the dramatic economic disparities between neighbourhoods as well as the quickly changing population and high rates of new immigrants and refugees. According to Flyvbjerg (2006), case study methodology is ideal for in-depth studies of urban phenomena, as it is capable of bringing out the complexities and power relations operating in local urban planning, policy and organizational work. This follows from Yin's (1994) argument that a case study is "particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context" (p. 10). That is, case study research is capable of highlighting the nuances of a phenomenon, such as those in highly political and contested urban contexts, rather than testing a single hypothesis or isolating variables (Merriam, 1998).

Case studies typically privilege the experiences of the participants, allowing their voices to be central to the research. As noted by Baxter & Jack (2008), this is because case study research follows from a constructivist paradigm, where reality is understood as socially constructed and subjective. Accordingly, participants' experiences are indispensable for

understanding a given occurrence, since there is considered to be no singular objective reality outside of that which is created and experienced by the participants. This is clear in the case of *Neighbourhood Action*, which cannot be understood outside of its participants and their actions and experiences. In coming from a constructivist paradigm, the researcher is also implicated as a social actor involved in the creation of meaning and interpretation. As such, my subject position as researcher in this context is presented following this section.

The acknowledgement of positionality in my study, the socially-situated nature research questions, as well as the use of fieldwork, make the study well-suited to a critical ethnographic approach. Ethnography is defined as "a scientific approach to discovering and investigating social and cultural patterns and meanings in communities, institutions, and other social settings" (Schensul, 1999, p. 1). This is typically accomplished through some combination of fieldwork like participant observation and other qualitative or quantitative methods of data collection. The researcher "participates, overtly or covertly, ...over an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he or she is grappling" (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1995, p. 2). Given the socially-embedded role of the researcher in these methods, engaging in self-reflexivity as a researcher is considered crucial to an ethnographic approach (Krenske, 2002).

Beneito Montagut (2011) explains the connection between the research and the researcher:

The objective of any ethnography is to describe the lives and experiences of people and, in doing so, the ethnographic researcher is required to be accurate, sensitive and reflexive towards his/her subject/object of analysis and the context in which it is acting and performing. (p. 718)

Since the researcher encounters social situations and collects data through social interactions, reflexivity is then essential for situating how knowledge is interpreted and constructed.

Reflexivity is an especially central aspect of critical ethnography, which goes beyond simply observing what exists and instead moves towards envisioning possible futures (Thomas, 1993; Trueba & McLaren, 2000; Carspecken, 1996). The critical ethnographer is involved not only in strict observation, but also analyzes the social and political conditions of the phenomena under study, focusing on inequity and social change. By taking on a critical ethnographic perspective then, my study goes beyond simply observing who participants in Neighbourhood Action and how participants address issues of inclusion. Rather, I generate insights into how participants can actively address patterns of exclusion and countering barriers to participation often experienced by low-income and ethnically diverse communities.

3.2 Position as researcher and community member

My own complex position in this research context requires that I foreground this section with an overview of the concept of insider-outsider status in social science research. Insider and outsider status and related concepts of emic and etic knowledge are frequently addressed in debates about research ethics. Originally used in linguistics (Pike, 1954) and anthropology (Harris, 1976; Goodenough, 1970), emic (insider knowledge and perspectives) and etic (outsider knowledge and perspectives) have become significant conceptual considerations through the social sciences. As Westoby (2008) points out, accounts of emic and etic, or insider-outsider, tensions are often attuned to the power differential between researchers/professionals and the populations with which they are working. Particularly in the case of research conducted with marginalized communities, researchers encounter what Minkler (2004) calls the “thorny ethical

challenges” brought about by insider-outsider tensions. Reflections on insider-outsider tensions seek to expose the difficulties of outsider researchers trying to engage with and grant voice to a community that is not “native” to them, while also acknowledging the complicated position of insider researchers working in communities to which they belong. Insider-outsider status has frequently centered around racial and cultural differences (Chavez et al., 2003; Collett, 2008; Minkler, 2004; Wallerstein, 1999), with outsider researchers negotiating historic trauma, institutionalized racism and mistrust within their research context. Although insiders have had a reputation for having easier access to the community and being able to provide more authentic research accounts, they have also been accused of being inherently biased and too close to the community personally and culturally to be able to capture its nuances (Merriam et al., 2001). Conversely, outsider researchers have a reputation for being theoretically more objective but also potentially exploitative, engaging in “helicopter research” and quickly leaving the community (Horowitz et al., 2009).

Although these concerns around insider-outsider status are well-founded in certain cases, many scholars caution against portraying researcher and community relationships to a simple dichotomy (See, for example, Breen, 2007; Collins, 2002; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Considerations related to a researcher’s status in the community might be more accurately imagined as a continuum (Eppley, 2006). Moreover, as DeLyser (2001) argues, researchers navigate complex and multifaceted identity negotiations in every research project and, while we must be aware of our position, we should not let it limit our research. Following from feminist and critical theorists, Merriam et al. (2001) note that researchers are taking up more nuanced approaches to identity that recognize the intersectional relationship between race, culture, gender, sexuality, class and ability. In this vein, it has become a common practice in many fields

for researchers to position themselves in relation to the communities in which they are working (Bridges, 2001). All researchers are complexly positioned, and whether explored explicitly or not, this positionality informs everything in our research including data collection, relationship with participants, methodological and theoretical approach, as well as our interpretation and presentation of findings (Chiseri-Strater, 1996; England, 1994). Accordingly, I will outline my own positionality and identify how I am situated in the research at hand.

While we as researchers have many facets of our identities that affect our work, the most important aspect of my position to mention is my status as a community member and resident in the *Neighbourhood Action* neighbourhoods. I could be considered an insider in this research since I am a fellow resident, like many of the research participants. I have lived in three of the targeted neighbourhoods for most of my life, and have family, work, or social ties to all of the neighbourhoods, and so have strong opinions about community issues. In the neighbourhood in which I currently reside, because I have attended a requisite number of meetings, I am therefore considered an official member with voting rights (though I do not vote since I feel it would conflict with my position as a researcher). Nevertheless, in this neighbourhood and others, I am also an outsider in several ways. First, I was not involved in *Neighbourhood Action* or any of the neighbourhood groups before I started working on the evaluation project (NAE). Although I live in a neighbourhood where NA has been underway for several years, with an active NA group, until I started on the evaluation project in 2013, I had never attended a meeting and knew very little about the initiative. That said, I was still treated as an insider in some neighbourhoods (the ones I have lived in) because I was considered a neighbour to the active resident members of the group. Nevertheless, I often felt like an outsider among the fellow residents, as I often disagreed with residents on key issues that affect the NA neighbourhoods. This is similar to Gilbert (1994)

who found that her own experiences as a working-class woman in her hometown were “so completely different from the women that [she] interviewed that [she] would not consider herself an ‘insider’” (p. 92). Moreover, my mere role as a researcher marked me as an outsider in most contexts. Wallerstein & Duran (2006) explain that in community-based research, “each pre-existing role ... carries a set of power positions and privileges, which exist apart and before any relationships are built” (p. 317). As such, I was implicated in any history of exploitative or ineffective research that many have been experienced by the communities. In Hamilton, anecdotal information indicates that some neighbourhood residents have previously felt exploited and/or ignored by the local educational institutions, which NA participants and the local university have been actively working to address. Moreover, I identify with Wallenstein (1999) in her struggles with the “weight of authority” she carries as a white, university-educated academic. While my being white and university educated does not necessarily set me apart among NA participants, I nevertheless struggled with being considered an expert or authority, and sought to portray participants as “masters of inquiry” into issues that affect them (Freire, 1982). In recognizing the structural and historic nature of inequitable relationships between researchers and communities, I sought to engage in ongoing reflection of my own position within this project and acknowledge the ways in which it affected all aspects of research.

3.3 Data sources

Data for my project draws from the *Neighbourhood Action Evaluation* (NAE) and from public documents related to *Neighbourhood Action*. The NAE sources come from 2013-2015 data collected by myself and other members of the research team. Data includes: in-depth interviews with NA participants, participant observation (at monthly meetings of the ten NA

teams and other NA events), and focus groups with the neighbourhood teams. My study also includes an analysis of documents related to *Neighbourhood Action*, such as reports, neighbourhood “action plans”, press releases and newspaper articles. Each data source is further detailed below.

3.3.1 Key stakeholder interviews

In-depth interviews were used in this research as a means to examine how NA participants perceived their work in the initiative and how barriers to participation play out within neighbourhood teams. The interviews were semi-structured in nature, meaning that there was a suggested list of questions and topics for discussion (see interview guide in Appendix A). However, the interviewers were flexible to new information that emerged during the interaction with the participant. This allowed the researcher to “respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 1988, p. 78). As such, the interviews were able to capture nuanced insights into participants’ roles, involvement, and perspectives on NA, and helped to construct accounts of key events that took place within the neighbourhood planning teams.

Interviews were conducted between July 2013 and August 2014, which focused on participants’ views of the NA process during the early implementation phase. I conducted approximately half of the interviews, while my colleague conducted the other half. Interview participants included: resident members of the neighbourhood planning teams (31 residents across ten neighbourhoods), community development staff employed in the initiative (6), and service providers and city staff who are closely involved in NA (28). In my analysis, I targeted responses to the questions on participant experiences and identities (Appendix A, sections A and I of interview protocol), where participants explained their role in the process, how they got

involved, and gave details on their experience and identity outside of the project. I also targeted questions about perceptions of inclusiveness and engagement (section E), where participants were asked what efforts have been made to include participants from diverse sociocultural backgrounds and organizations. This allowed me to develop a sense of who was participating and to gain a deeper understanding of the processes of facilitating or excluding meaningful participation. As part of the larger NAE study, recruitment for interviews took place at neighbourhood meetings, where participants were invited to contact the research team for an interview. The neighbourhood teams were also left with recruitment flyers to distribute as well as electronic correspondence to forward to their membership (see Appendix B). Approximately 3-5 residents and 1 service provider were sought from each of the ten neighbourhood teams. Additionally, city staff, councillors and community developers were invited through electronic correspondence to participate in interviews. Purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) was used to maximize the diversity of viewpoints represented that would not have been possible through random selection. Informed consent forms were presented to selected participants, signed, and stored confidentially (see Appendix C). Interviews were generally between 45-60 minutes and were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and stored in an NVivo database. I sought the individual consent to use specific quotes in the case of the Community Developers (CDs), whose roles were unique and so their comments were potentially identifying. I did not hear back from one CD, so I removed their quotes, while I received approval and included quotes from all remaining CDs.

3.3.2 Participant observation

Members of the research team (my colleagues and I) attended the monthly meetings of

the ten neighbourhood teams involved in NA from 2013-2015. Here, we acted as observer-participants, where “the researcher is mainly an interviewer and observer, and participates only marginally in the groups’ activities” (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 154). Detailed field notes were taken on what was observed in meetings, and these notes were typed and uploaded into NVivo to become part of the database for further analysis. This observation was valuable in identifying the ongoing developments that influenced *Neighbourhood Action*, and in identifying interpersonal dynamics and other subtle nuances that would have been difficult to capture elsewhere. Experience to date suggests that this observation was essential to contextualize the analysis of interview and focus group data. In addition, attendance at monthly meetings and NA events allowed for continued dialogue between the research team and participants, which is an essential principle of community-engaged work (Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998). This process of dialogue and establishment of trust with the community was valuable in its own right, but also facilitated other components of the research such as recruitment for interviews and focus groups.

3.3.3 *Focus groups*

My study included data collected at focus groups, which were also part of the NAE. These sessions served as mechanisms of knowledge exchange, in that participants heard about preliminary findings (which they could use to inform their work in NA) as well as provided feedback to the research team that added to existing data and informed analysis. One round of focus groups took place in the summer of 2014. In these sessions, preliminary findings were presented back to neighbourhood groups before data was disseminated to broader audiences. The research team briefly presented preliminary results and provided structured opportunities for

attendees to give feedback (including group discussion and written exercises) (see Appendices 4 and 5). This allowed participants to discuss and help interpret the results of the study, and provide additional insight into their involvement with *Neighbourhood Action*. Focus group data was used as way to validate data and to critically examine any conflicting or discrepant results, as well as giving participants the opportunity to provide additional contextual information. In order to use focus group data in the NAE analysis, the research team, who recorded discussion points and observations on the meeting space and participants, typed detailed notes. In addition, written contributions from participants were typed and included in the NVivo database for analysis.

3.3.4 Document analysis

In addition to the NAE data sources above, my study also includes an analysis of relevant documents in order to allow for a process of triangulation that is essential for rigorous qualitative research (Yin, 2009). These documents included: City of Hamilton documents related to NA, NA reports, neighbourhood “action plans”, press releases, neighbourhood meeting minutes, newspaper articles, maps, and local census data. Doing so helped to verify, contextualize and add richness to the data collected by other methods. The inclusion of these public documents also provided information on the history and trajectory of the *Neighbourhood Action* project, which was central to situating participants’ work in the initiative. The analysis of official documents also served as a source for determining the views of certain stakeholders (e.g. the City or the planning teams), and served as points of comparison between the stated ideals of NA work and the actual experiences of NA participants. Moreover, since NA has been profiled extensively in local media, newspaper articles provided a rich data source and allowed access to the experiences of participants who may not have been available through interview. I also targeted

those articles that make specific reference to issues of inclusion and diversity.

3.4 Data analysis

Information generated from interviews, participant observation, focus groups and relevant documents was entered into NVivo qualitative software and analyzed using techniques of thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Through an iterative process of identifying and organizing emergent themes, the data was systematically coded to look for similarities and differences across participants, as well as to highlight and explain prevalent issues and tensions. My analysis drew on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1992), which makes connections between discursive practices, social practices, and social structures. CDA explores the way “social power, abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). With this understanding, researchers use CDA to unpack ideologies and power relations that are embedded in everyday interactions and texts (McGregor, 2003). Rogers (2011) notes that there are distinct approaches taken up by various disciplines and scholars when using CDA (e.g. Fairclough, 1992, 2003; van Dijk, 1993; Foucault, 1972; Blommaert, 2005; Gee, 2004).

In my study, I draw on Fairclough’s (2003) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Rogers (2011) argues that Fairclough’s approach is distinct for its blending of Halliday’s (1994) systemic functional linguistics and Marxist-inspired theories of discourse. The result is a theory of language that emphasizes the agency of language users in executing linguistic choices and determining their social functions, while also positing discourse as an ideological and political practice that can establish, sustain or change power relations (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough & Wodak (1997) outline eight critical features of critical discourse analysis. Their

system of analysis addresses social problems; sees power relations as discursive; understands discourse as being a form of social interaction that is historical and that does ideological work; views the link between text and society as mediated through discourse and, finally, is interpretive and explanatory. Critical discourse analysis examines connections between linguistic features of texts and the social and cultural structures, relations and processes to which they belong. In this vein, I used CDA to look at documents in relation to historical and contemporary political ideology, changing demographics, the construction of social and individual identity, and social change in relation to *Neighbourhood Action*. Specifically, I use Fairclough's (2003) three-step process of description, interpretation and explanation of how participants understand their work in NA, how issues of social difference are addressed or ignored, and how barriers to participation are challenged or reproduced. Moreover, I look at how these discourse practices connect to larger social practices and social structures. As points of entry into the data, I used what Fairclough (1992) calls "cruces" or points of tension. For the purposes of my study, I considered cruces any instances of critical, collective self-reflection on the NA process, or moments that highlighted competing discourses on participation, exclusion and neighbourhood change. I used these cruces as the focal points of vignettes in each of the four NA neighbourhoods profiled in the chapters below. CDA is central in this study to assessing whose discourses on *Neighbourhood Action* are dominant in the initiative, how certain discourses become salient, and how these discourses can serve to perpetuate the exclusion of certain individuals or groups. The aim then is to challenge dominant discourses that perpetuate exclusion and create space for the voices of historically marginalized and silenced groups (Luke, 1997).

Although a largely discursive study, by comparing the official aims of the project through document analysis and the lived experiences of NA participants captured through interviews,

focus groups and participant observation, I aim to assess the degree to which NA is achieving its documented goals of fostering inclusion and addressing inequity, while simultaneously interrogating patterns of exclusion that operate in the process. Specifically, my theoretical framework draws on critical theory and its derivatives: critical urban theory, critical pedagogy and Critical Race Theory.

3.5 Theoretical framework

3.5.1 Critical theory

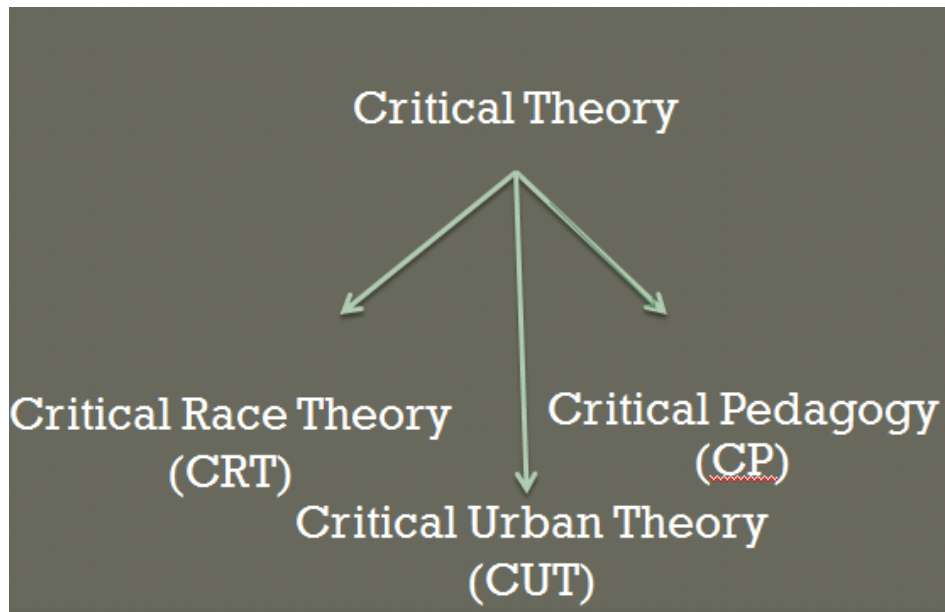


Figure 3.5: Critical Theory and its derivatives

For this study, my theoretical framework encompasses critical theory and its derivatives Critical Urban Theory, Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory. Critical theory emerged out of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research in the early 20th century through the work of prominent scholars like Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas and Benjamin. Drawing from

diverse disciplines like philosophy, social theory, psychology, political economy and cultural studies, theorists in this tradition proposed a critique of social conditions and culture in light of modernization, industrialization and capitalism (Bounds, 2004). Early critical theorists called for a reflexive approach to research that was grounded in social critique and concerned with issues of power, domination, social reproduction and knowledge. Moving beyond the Marxist tradition that many early scholars began working in, critical theorists like Marcuse took on a more holistic critique of contemporary social, cultural, political and economic life. While early critical theorists focused their critiques on aspects of modern industrial life, more recent theorists in this tradition focus on the new forces shaping institutional and material reality – namely, globalization, neoliberalism and capitalism (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). Steinburg & Kincheloe (2010) posit critical theory as a framework allows researchers to acknowledge and negotiate the complexities and tensions of modern society within these forces. They state:

....critical theory grapples with issues of power, justice, and moral action and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class, gender and sexuality, ideologies, discourses, religion, education, and other social dynamics construct the social systems that shape our consciousness. (p. 143)

In taking into account these forces and engaging in critical reflection and analysis of constantly evolving social systems, critical theory seeks to “initiate public processes of self-reflection” (Habermas cited in Bohman, 2007). In my research, I take on this intention by seeking to provide an analysis of processes of inclusion, exclusion and participation in *Neighbourhood Action*. In comparing official project documents and actual participant narratives, I aim to encourage such a process of public self-reflection by bringing the findings of my research back to the residents and those involved in the NA project.

2.5.2 *Critical Urban Theory*

Many contemporary scholars have used critical theory to inform research and practice particularly in urban spaces. This is especially highlighted by Neil Brenner's 2009 work on critical urban theory. Here, Brenner posits four key tenets of critical theory and relates them to developments in urban theory. First, he notes, critical theory is *theory* and, as such, it is abstract and does not offer a formula or a "how-to" approach to research or practice. Nevertheless, many critical theorists, particularly those working on urban issues, recognize the need to make theory relevant to practice. Addressing matters of urban planning, Forester (1993) argues that it is necessary to make theory relevant to practice, since the everyday practice of urban planning "can have political effects upon community members, empowering or disempowering, educating or miseducating, organizing or disorganizing them" (p. 4). Due to the immediacy and power involved in urban planning then, critical theory cannot remain abstract, but rather, must be used to address pertinent questions of practice.

Brenner's second proposed element of critical theory is that it is *reflexive*, and like many postmodernist theoretical traditions, distances itself from positivist understandings of knowledge. In being reflexive, critical theory posits that all knowledge is socially situated, even critical theory itself. Specifically, critical theory is concerned with "the question of how oppositional, antagonistic forms of knowledge, subjectivity, and consciousness may emerge within a historical social formation" (Brenner, 2009, p. 202). Critical theorist Theodor Adorno argues that reflexivity and awareness of social conditioning is particularly crucial for those who study social phenomena (Adorno et al., 1976; Adorno, 2000). Accordingly, many critical theorists not only seek to uncover the socially-constructed nature of the phenomena they study, but they also

explicitly situate their position and research agenda in recognizing how their experience shapes their work and the production of knowledge.

Strongly interconnected with reflexivity, the third element of Brenner's critical theory is a *critique of instrumental reason*. According to Brenner, this entails:

a forceful rejection of instrumental modes of social scientific knowledge—that is, those designed to render existing institutional arrangements more efficient and effective, to manipulate and dominate the social and physical world, and thus to bolster current forms of power. (2009, p. 202)

This concern with the production of power and knowledge is particularly relevant to urban contexts, where social research is often used to evaluate, validate or otherwise inform urban planning practices, which can in turn support the status quo. Recognizing the potential complicity of research and urban processes, Forester (1993) argues that we can use critical theory to interrogate the strategies used “use to reproduce beliefs, consent, trust and attention in highly politicized contexts” (p. 10-11). This critique of knowledge production is related to critical theory's focus on reflexivity, as this lens of critique is also applied to critical theory itself.

Critical theory's fourth element, according to Brenner, is the concern for the *disjuncture* between the actual and the possible. For example, Therborn (2008) takes up a critique of the modern capitalist, neoliberal state, balancing the possibilities for liberation that this reality offers while also condemning the structural inequities and domination that continue to operate and propagate within it. Young (2000) also exemplifies this element of critical theory, as much of her work focuses the difficulty of realizing the potential of democratic processes under current conditions of structural inequality. She uses critical theory as a lens to reveal deficiencies in contemporary democratic society while also envisioning transformative possibilities. This

concern for the disjuncture between the actual and the possible stems from critical theory's rejection of positivist concepts of a stable and unchanging reality. The embracing of change, flux and subjective interpretation that is central to critical theory is especially crucial to "making sense together" (Forester, 1985) of fluid and contentious urban contexts.

Central to critical theorists is the development of principles "...around which the deprived and the alienated can make common cause in pursuit of the Right to the City...to deepen democracy and expand public participation in public decisions" (Marcuse, 2009, p. 95). Given critical theory's focus on citizen empowerment, democratic ideals, and concern with structural inequality, it provides an ideal framework for my investigation into *Neighbourhood Action*, serving as a lens to make sense of the transformative potential and limits of the participants' work. As derivatives of critical theory, I also turn to critical pedagogy and Critical Race Theory to inform my theoretical framework. Critical pedagogy scholars provide unique contributions to understanding knowledge production, social transformation and critical practice, while Critical Race Theory will contribute a more refined framework for understanding racial difference and processes of racialization, which is crucial to any investigation of diverse urban settings.

3.5.3 *Critical pedagogy*

The theoretical framework for my research also draws from critical pedagogy, which is derived from critical theory and has made significant contributions to studies of urban issues. Critical pedagogy emerged primarily from Paulo Freire, with many key concepts stemming from his central work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). This work examined the role of education in domination, oppression and liberation, and posited a new relationship between school, students and society. Critical pedagogy theorists like Freire, hooks and Giroux seek to interrogate power

relations at play in educational institutions and other media, focusing on “social difference, social justice and social transformation” (Mayo, 1999, p. 58). Ira Shor (1980) defines critical pedagogy as:

Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (p. 129)

Like critical theory then, what is central in critical pedagogy is critique of processes, discourses and experiences as a means to interrogate the relationship between knowledge production and power. In doing so, the goal is for individuals to undergo a process of *conscientization*, or critical consciousness-raising, and develop an awareness of how forms of oppression play out in one’s own life. This is facilitated through *praxis*, defined as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1970, p. 33).

While most often invoked in matters of schooling or formal education, critical pedagogy is highly relevant to urban settings more generally, given its concern with power, knowledge, identity and democracy. Giroux & Simon (2001) define pedagogy as “...a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations” (p. 1543). Urban settings, including the kinds of citizen organizations and neighbourhood change initiatives addressed in this study, are sites of learning, growth and development at both the individual and community level. They are sites of knowledge production and mobilization, of democratic promises and risks, and of domination, contestation and transformation. Critical pedagogy’s focus on marginalized or “oppressed” groups also

contributes significantly to understandings of urban diversity and exclusion. Moreover, critical pedagogy is known for its deeply democratic character, based on the assumption that “knowledge, power, values, and institutions must be made available to critical scrutiny, ...and evaluated in terms of how they might open up or close down democratic practices and experiences” (Giroux & Searls Giroux, 2006, p. 27). Given this emphasis on democratic ideals, concepts like Freire’s *conscientization* and *praxis* can equally apply to citizens outside of school contexts, who are engaged in processes of civic learning and political action for social change. Finally, if critical pedagogy is fundamentally about “linking learning to social change, education to democracy, and knowledge to acts of intervention in public life” (Giroux & Searls Giroux, 2006, p. 28), it is a well-suited orientation to investigations of urban diversity, exclusion, and democratic process.

Critical pedagogy theorists are also helpful to my study in contributing to an understanding and analysis of social class in the neighbourhoods that are the basis for this study. Drawing on various versions of Marxist theory, scholars of critical pedagogy pay particular attention to the role of class in social relations. Freire's central works were concerned with class distinctions and conflict between the ruling class or “oppressors” and the exploited, marginalized or “oppressed” (Freire, 1972). Freire's theoretical analysis also centralized struggling against class oppression while “fostering conditions for critical social agency among the masses” (Lakin, 2003, p. 501). Although there is debate about official definitions of class, some working definitions describe class relations as “reflect[ing] the constraints and limitations individuals and groups experience in the areas of income level, occupation, place of residence, and other indicators of status and social rank” (McLaren, 2003, p. 74). Class has equally been described as a system based on “the confluence of income, wealth, and occupational prestige, along with the

less empirically verifiable, yet no less real, cultural and social capital that constitutes one's social position, [which] has a very real impact on the health and well-being of the populace.” (Muzzatti & Samarco, 2006, p. 1)

Scholars in critical pedagogy recognize that social class is a system that reproduces itself in often subtle and unseen ways, and that interacts with other forms of oppression, such as race, gender, ability and sexuality. Nevertheless, McLaren & Scatamburlo (2005) argue that class has fallen out of favour as a form of analysis, particularly as race, gender and sexuality have taken dominance in academic circles. Freire warned against losing insight of class struggles in the face of other forms of discrimination, emphasizing how “...the class factor is hidden within both sexual and racial discrimination” (Freire, 1997, p. 86). Importantly, critical pedagogical theorists also see class not only as a category of economic wealth or poverty, but also as a social, cultural and behavioral category (McLaren & Kinchloe, 2007; hooks, 1994). That is, social class as a system operates in a way that marginalizes the speech, behaviour and culture of poor and working-class people. hooks (1994) describes the dominance of middle-class comportment and the pressure put on "nonmaterially privileged" (e.g. poor or working-class) individuals and communities to conform or be excluded. She defines the struggle as:

...the constant evocation of materially privileged class experience (usually that of the middle class) as a universal norm [...and the pressure to] assimilate into the mainstream, change speech patterns, points of reference, drop any habit that might reveal them to be from a nonmaterially privileged background." (hooks, 1994, p. 9)

More than the lack of economic and material provisions, poor and working-class people are also understood here as having different social, cultural and linguistic practices that are marginalized and deemed to deviant from middle-class or dominant expectations. My study reflects this

understanding of class, which accounts for material inequities, social, cultural, linguistic and behavioural practices and norms. Specifically, my theoretical understanding of class assumes that it is a system that interacts with other forms of social difference (e.g. race, ability, gender, etc.) and is reflected and reproduced through spoken and written discourses, often in subtle and complex ways. In this way, critical pedagogy and its articulation of class complement my use of Critical Discourse Analysis, as defined above. Moreover, this understanding of class is essential to explorations of exclusion in the NA communities, which are historically marginalized, working-class neighbourhoods that have complicated relationships with the state (vis-à-vis the City). The NA communities have been selected to be included in the NA process specifically because of their socioeconomic profile and the associated health inequities associated with poverty. Social class distinctions and tensions are also ripe within the neighbourhoods between residents, and are intrinsically tied to processes of gentrification that are affecting some of the NA communities. Since patterns of exclusion are shaped by class, and the ways that people talk about their experiences are shaped by class as well, the intersectional understanding of social class articulated by critical pedagogy is central to this study.

In addition to critical pedagogy theorists' illumination of social transformation, knowledge production and an analysis of social class, I also turn to Critical Race Theory (CRT) to provide a more nuanced framework for conceptualizing race, which is essential for investigations of diverse urban settings.

3.5.4 Critical race theory and anti-racism

Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman other scholars coined the term “critical race theory” (Bell, 1987; Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw, 1993), which emerged in response to critical legal

theory of the 1970s. While many scholars praised the work of critical legal theorists, they also drew criticism for failing to incorporate race and racism into their analysis (Yosso, 2005). Critical race theory (CRT) then emerged as similar debates took place in other social science circles about the centrality of race-based analysis. As critical race theorists and activists began to build momentum and forge new pathways, the work gradually drifted away from its legal roots and branched out into other fields (Munoz, 2009). CRT has built a particularly strong tradition in educational research starting in the mid-1990s (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and continuing on into the 2000s (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Gillborn, 2005; James, 2011; Lopez, 2003; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT has also been used outside of education research in more general research on urban issues (Yosso & Garcia, 2007) as well as in population health research (Graham et al., 2011).

CRT has been defined as “a framework that can be used to theorize, examine and challenge the ways race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact on social structures, practices and discourses” (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). Theorists in this tradition seek to acknowledge that race and racism have shaped and continue to shape social institutions and citizens' social, economic, and political reality, and are forces that shape modern inequity. Delgado & Stefancic (2012) define six basic tenets of CRT as follow. The first central tenet common to critical race theorists is the understanding that racism is extraordinarily common and pervasive in modern society. As a result, “we often fail to see how it functions and shapes our institutions, relationships, and ways of thinking” (Lopez, 2003, p. 84). Yosso (2005) argues that “racism is often well disguised in the rhetoric of shared ‘normative’ values and ‘neutral’ social scientific principles and practices” (p. 74). Critical race theorists then seek to expose the ways in which racist ideologies and practices operate in social institutions and perpetuate systemic, race-based inequities. The second basic

tenet of CRT, known as “interest convergence” (Bell, 1987), is that racial hierarchies are self-serving for dominant groups. This concept suggests that dominant groups in society will only advocate for social justice aims if they can continue to benefit from the structures that maintain their own privilege. Milner (2007) explains interest convergence:

People in power are often, in discourse, supportive of research, policies, and practices that do not oppress and discriminate against others as long as they –those in power - do not have to alter their own systems of privilege; they may not want to give up their own interests to fight against racism, confront injustice, or shed light on hegemony. (2007, p. 391)

The failure to challenge structural inequities by dominant groups then serves to maintain the status quo, based on a socially constructed hierarchy. This relates to the third tenet of CRT, which holds that race is a social construct, as opposed to a fixed biological category. CRT challenges the attribution of certain physical traits to inherent personal, intellectual or moral characteristics. In addition to challenging innatist views on race, CRT also examines the ways in which socially constructed racial categories are part of processes of *differential racialization*, where certain groups are racialized differently in different historic and social periods. That is, particular racial groups may be considered by dominant discourses to fill certain social roles or stereotypes that vary widely across time and space. In addition, CRT contends that since race is not a fixed category and individual experience varies widely depending on any number of factors, analyses of race must be antiessentialist and intersectional. While the focus is on race, CRT makes “race, and its interlocking relationship with gender, class and other demographic factors, central to any social analysis” (James, 2011, p. 468). Next, CRT emphasizes the centrality of experiential knowledge in understandings of race and racial hierarchies. In other

words, the experiences, narratives and knowledge of people of colour are considered “legitimate, appropriate and critical” to understandings of racism (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). Delgado & Stefancic (2012) note that this tenet of CRT exists “in somewhat uneasy tension” with antiessentialism, since here racial minority status “...brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism” (p. 10). Nevertheless, the value placed on lived experience is a necessary contribution to theoretical conceptions of race.

Importantly, at the same time that CRT was proliferating in the United States, in the Canadian (as well as British) context, similar race-based approaches were emerging. Specifically, anti-racism emerged in Canada in response to multiculturalist discourses that emphasized culture and failed to directly consider race as an analytical category. Scholars like Kymlicka (2008), Berman & Paradies (2008) and Wood & Gilbert (2005) have argued that multiculturalism as a social and political discourse obscures power imbalances, maintains a white Canadian norm, emphasizes “show and tell” representations of culture, and, in so doing, fails to directly counter racist ideologies. In response to problematic multiculturalist discourses, Galabuzi (2006) defines anti-racism as the “process by which racism is identified and eradicated in its various forms in organizations, institutions, and society” (p. 249). In contrast to multiculturalism, antiracist theory seeks to move beyond neutrality towards actively challenging the personal, social, cultural and institutional behaviours that create and reproduce patterns of marginalization and oppression. It embodies “forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism” (Bonnett, 2000, p. 4). From an antiracism perspective, racism and racist practices are understood not as simply historical wrongdoing, but as ongoing processes of marginalization, exclusion and devaluation. However, many have criticized anti-racist work for being essentialist in its conceptions of fixed racial categories,

including Bonnett (2000), who notes that the essentialist tendency is not marginal and rather “weaves through almost every aspect of its historical and contemporary practice” (p. 133). Others meanwhile have charged that antiracist work has excluded Aboriginal people and perspectives and, in so doing, “participates in colonial agendas” (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 123). As such, antiracist work has been urged to move beyond strictly looking at race and aim to “...understand social oppression and how it helps construct and constrain identities (race, gender, class, sexuality), both internally and externally through inclusionary and exclusionary processes” (Dei & Johal, 2005, p. 2). In moving in this direction, current anti-racist work seeks to become more intersectional, looking at other forms of overlapping oppression but maintaining race as its focal lens.

Theoretically, Gillborn (2006) argues that anti-racism in a way “needs” CRT for the established history and conceptual tools it offers. This can be accomplished under the common aim of insisting that “racism be placed at the centre of analyses and that scholarly work be engaged in the process of rejecting and deconstructing the current patterns of exclusion and oppression” (Gillborn, 2006, p. 15). For this reason, and due to CRT’s direct connection to the other aspects of my theoretical framework, CRT will remain central in my analysis, though I consider an anti-racist approach comparable in its ability to provide an analysis of race. In my research, the use of a theoretical framework informed by CRT provides a lens to understand the experience of racialized groups and discourses on racial difference. This is essential for studies of urban spaces that are characterized by increasing ethnic diversity and by social stratification that is increasingly racialized. However, critics of CRT like McLaren (1998) have argued that CRT “fails to provide a systematic analysis of global capitalism and its effect on communities” and ignores class divisions that mark racialized communities (Parker & Stovall, 2004, p. 168).

While many critical race theorists recognize the intersectionality of different forms of oppression, I believe it will be helpful to draw on theorists of urban critical theory in order to shed light on forces such as globalization and capitalism. This allows for a more comprehensive framework for understanding the broader forces and complex power relations that shape urban spaces and processes. Meanwhile, critical pedagogy theorists help to shed light on social transformation and knowledge production central to urban and participatory processes, which are premised on evolving discourses of race, class and neighbourhood change.

3.5.5 Summary of theoretical framework and connection to methodological approach

In this section, I have outlined my theoretical framework, based on three interconnected branches of critical theory – namely, Critical Urban Theory (CUT), Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Pedagogy (CP). My methodological approach, grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), will allow for an approach to the data that is consistent with CUT, CRT and CP, given that they all share common underpinnings that stem from Critical Theory. Specifically, CDA is inherently compatible with Critical Race Theory in the efforts to uncover often hidden forms of racism and discrimination that play out both structurally and everyday interactions. CDA and CRT have been used in tandem by scholars including Rogers & Mosley (2005) and Rogers & Christian (2007). Meanwhile, Critical Urban Theory shares with CDA an understanding that analysis must be embedded in local, institutional and structural contexts. That is, urban phenomena under CUT cannot be understood without reference to broader social and political trends of modern capitalism and neoliberalism, or what CDA might refer to as societal orders. Lastly, CDA is compatible with Critical Pedagogy in its concern for unveiling instances

of oppression and its interest in social justice and social transformation. Given the shared roots of CDA and the frameworks of CRT, CUT and CP, the innate commonalities will facilitate a cohesive analysis and interpretation of the data at hand.

CHAPTER 4: Contextualizing *Neighbourhood Action* and the targeted communities

In this chapter, I will outline 1) how Neighbourhood Action (NA) operates including the roles and responsibilities of its major partners, 2) how the project articulates its mandate of inclusion, and 3) profiles of the NA communities positioned within three neighbourhood types. Doing so will allow the reader to better understand the daily operating of the initiative and the relationships between partners, how NA management understands its vision and values, and how NA might operate differently across distinct neighbourhoods. It will also help to answer the research questions: *Who participates in NA? How do participants address issues of inequity and inclusion?*

As a reminder to the reader, the data used in the following sections draws from two sources: 1) the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation (NAE), which, as previously stated, is a University of Toronto study; and, 2) public documents (Neighbourhood Action reports, planning team action plans and newspaper articles). NAE data was collected from 2013-2015 and includes: a) in-depth interviews; b) participant observation at monthly neighbourhood meetings and special events; and, c) focus groups with neighbourhood residents.

a) *Interviews*. The interviews included 67 stakeholders, comprised of 31 residents across the ten neighbourhoods, 6 community development staff, and 28 service providers, city staff and other stakeholders who are closely involved in NA. Resident interviews took place in the summer of 2013, while the other partner interviews took place from late 2013-2014. Participants were asked about their perceptions of inclusion in the planning team. Questions included: *Has a diverse group of people and perspectives from your community been brought into Neighbourhood Action? How? Who has been left out? What could be done to reach out to a broader range of communities?* My analysis of the interviews draws primarily from answers to

these questions, but also included any mention of inclusion, diversity, working with diverse groups, or stories of inclusion or exclusion that came up during the interviews. Working as a research assistant for the University of Toronto study evaluating NA, I conducted the resident interviews from the neighbourhoods detailed in the vignettes, as well as some of the community developer (CD) interviews, while my colleague conducted the city staff and councillor interviews.

b) *Focus groups*. Focus groups took place in all ten NA communities in the summer of 2014 and were attended by 5-30 participants per neighbourhood. NAE team members, including myself, facilitated the sessions. Although the focus groups did not include explicit questions on inclusion, meaningful reflections on inclusion and exclusion surfaced through discussion of enablers and barriers to participation in general. Focus group responses also served to flesh out particular vignettes and deepen the stories told in the words of participants.

c) *Participant observation*. Participant observation took place at monthly neighbourhood meetings in the NA communities from 2013-2015. For the neighbourhoods highlighted, I was the primary researcher and so the notes and observations are my own, although my colleague attended meetings for other NA communities. I used my notes and memories of monthly planning team meetings and other special events to contextualize participant interviews, and to more adequately address questions about who is participating and how issues of inclusion and exclusion were playing out at monthly planning team meetings.

2) *Public documents*. In addition to NAE data, I also strategically used newspaper articles and other public documents to add further depth to neighbourhood vignettes and moments of self-reflection around issues of inclusion and diversity. In particular, I draw on the action plans created by each neighbourhood, which define the values and mission of each team, as well as

public documents produced by the City of Hamilton and newspaper articles that spoke specifically about the events detailed in the vignettes.

4.1 Roles, partnerships and relationships: who does what?

4.1.1 Major partners

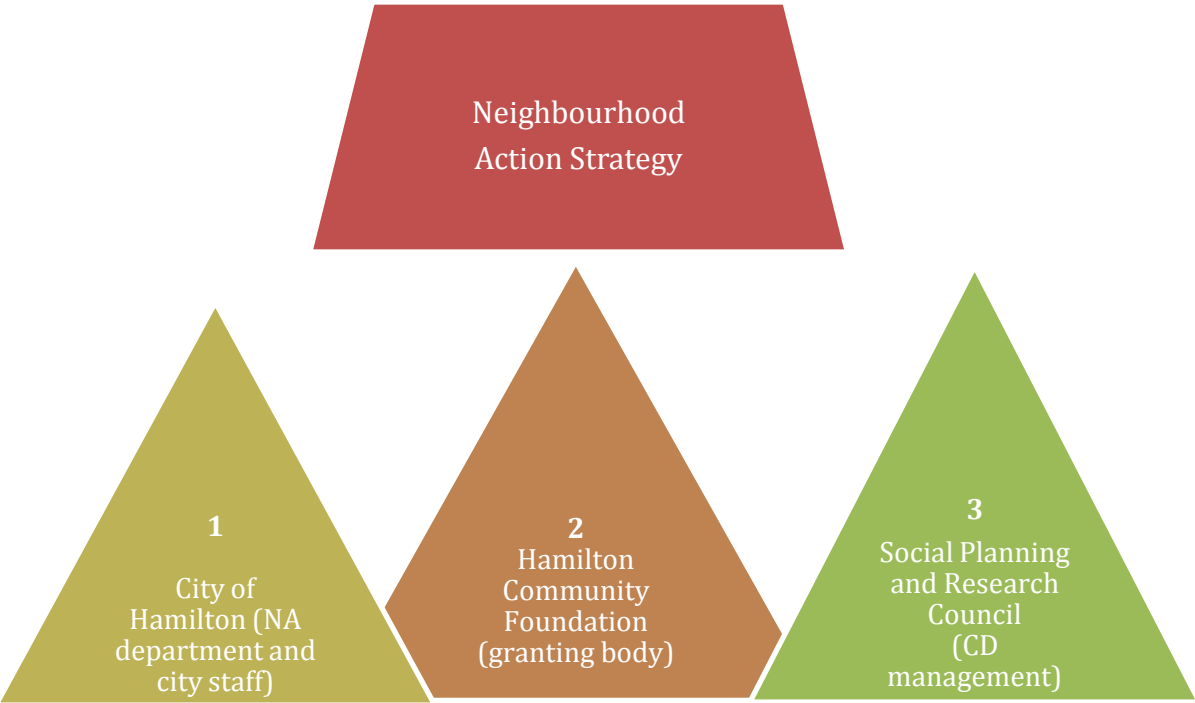


Figure 4.1: Major partners in Neighbourhood Action

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy (here simply called NA) involves three major partners: (1) the City of Hamilton, (2) the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), and (3) the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC). As discussed in the introduction, the NA was launched by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) in 2011 as a

response to social and health inequities within and across neighbourhoods. The partners' responsibilities are as follows:

(1) The City's contribution includes a Neighbourhood Action Strategy department and management team, which provide overall guidance for the strategy through its full-time staff. It also provides support and direction to staff from other City departments to work with the local planning teams. In some neighbourhoods, city staff from relevant departments, such as Recreation or Planning regularly attends meetings and work alongside residents on specific projects. The City also has a process for formally endorsing the planning teams' "action plans" before council (City of Hamilton, 2013a; 2016). This shows commitment by the City to support the planning teams in achieving the goals identified in their plans.

(2) Meanwhile, the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), a local granting agency, has been involved in anti-poverty work with a neighbourhood focus since 2002 (HCF, 2015). The HCF's prior work in many of the identified neighbourhoods laid important groundwork for what would become NA planning teams. In its current role, the HCF continues to provide significant granting funds to NA, which include grants for resident-led projects, local service provider initiatives and salaries for support staff including community developers (CDs). HCF staff members also contribute to guiding the vision of the overall strategy in conjunction with the City and other stakeholders. The Foundation also supports the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute, which provides annual leadership training and skills development for NA residents (HCF, 2016).

(3) The third partner in the strategy is the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC), a non-profit research organization that has been involved in poverty elimination work in Hamilton for many years. In fact, much of the social and demographic data that has informed

anti-poverty initiatives of the City, the HCF and other agencies, has been produced by the SPRC (SPRC, 2012). In 2014, the SPRC took over the management of the team of Community Developers (CDs) (SPRC, 2015). Prior to this, the CDs had been housed separately at various agencies throughout the city. Also, since 2014, the SPRC oversees the small granting process formerly administered by the HCF, and are involved in the management team of the NA strategy.

4.1.2 Planning team stakeholders



Figure 4.2: Neighbourhood planning team stakeholders

Resident-led planning teams are central to the Neighbourhood Action process. As indicated by the above diagram, planning teams are made up of residents, service providers, community developers, city staff and other partners who contribute to the team’s "action plan" – a list of priorities and goals developed by the team. The City of Hamilton (2016) describes the action plans as follows:

staff, residents and other key stakeholders are working together to create neighbourhood action plans that communicate a clear vision for the future of the neighbourhood and describe specific projects that can be implemented, are achievable, and have widespread community support.

Goals and priorities have included such issues as street safety, beautification, improving services and programming in the neighbourhood, increasing food security and addressing housing issues. The action plans were developed through broader resident engagement efforts early in the NA process in each neighbourhood, while the planning team is the group who continue to meet monthly to take on these goals. Early engagement efforts initiated by the NA strategy in the neighbourhoods included, in some cases, hundreds of residents in public events, in which asset-mapping, surveys and visioning activities were undertaken (City of Hamilton, 2016). On a monthly basis during my time of observation, the number of residents attending meetings ranged from less than 5 (e.g. Riverdale in 2013) to upwards of 50 (e.g. Sherman in 2015), depending on the meeting and the neighbourhood - details of which are discussed in the following 4 chapters. The planning team serves as a place for residents to organize with other partners around their goals, form sub-committees, and mobilize around new and emerging issues that affect their communities (City of Hamilton, 2012). As mentioned in the neighbourhood profiles, some planning teams are made up of members of previously existing neighbourhood associations, or groups of less formally engaged residents through initiatives done with the Hamilton Community Foundation, for example. In other neighbourhoods, however, the planning teams were developed more or less "from scratch" for the purposes of forming an NA action plan (e.g. Crown Point, Appendix 7). Below, I outline the major participants who take part in the planning teams: a) residents, b) service providers, c) community developers, and d) city staff.

a) Resident participants

Resident participants ideally form the core of the planning teams and drive the NA process. Resident status is defined by living within the boundaries of the NA neighbourhoods (although some boundaries overlap and have been debated frequently among some neighbourhood planning teams). In most cases, a resident becomes a member of the planning team, with voting rights, simply by being a resident and attending meetings. In one exception, there was a membership fee in one of the NA communities (a remnant from a previously existing neighbourhood association), which was eliminated in 2014. As already stated, residents were central to the development of each neighbourhood's "action plan", which were developed between 2011-2012. In the early implementation phase of NA from 2013-2015, residents' role in the planning team ranged from, as listed in many of the action plans: attending monthly meetings; creating an executive or support team to chair meetings and dealing with administrative tasks for the team; establishing sub-committees to take on action plan goals; and planning community events (e.g. Riverdale Community Planning Team, 2012). Almost all neighbourhoods struggled with resident engagement and have lacked a steady base of residents large enough to distribute all of the responsibilities of the team. This resulted in significant burn-out among residents and high turn-over in participation. Some participants equated their role on the planning team as a full-time job. One resident commented:

We have got a small group in the neighbourhood that take on every project and they are great for doing that. And I am just as guilty for it. I take on every project but eventually people just get burnt out.

The issue of resident burnout, turnover and difficult with outreach and recruitment were ongoing themes across the neighbourhoods.

b) Service Providers

Service provider participants typically refer to representatives from local social service agencies or partner organization. This may include staff from, for example, the YMCA, Boys and Girls clubs, police services, public schools, residential care facilities, or places of worship. Typically, the service providers are not residents in the neighbourhoods. Rather, they attend to support the hub or planning team with their activities, and to inform residents of programming, services and events in the community. Based on my conversations and observations at monthly meetings, service providers also attended meetings to listen to the needs of the community and respond with support as needed. As will be detailed in the neighbourhood chapters, however, the role of some service providers in the neighbourhoods has been at times challenging. Service providers were alternatively portrayed as supportive and respectful to residents, or overpowering to residents. Residents stated the following in interviews:

Some of the service providers are really amazing and really great and see the beauty and the assets in our community. And some of them, I think, don't. So I think it's really mixed.

... there's some service providers who have very high respect in the group and people want them to talk. But I think there is potentially that silencing, even if it is unintentional.

I think the community planning committee has to be able to generate their own sort of agenda and it has to be separate from what the service providers' agenda do because it interferes with what a service providers could do well and visa versa.

One tension noted here is the idea that service providers, with their professional roles and at times different agendas, can overpower resident voice.

c) Community Developers

Community Developers (CDs) are staff employed through NA to support residents and planning teams in creating and implementing their action plans and promoting asset-based community development. Each CD is employed full-time and is responsible for two neighbourhoods on average. CDs attend meetings, connect residents with city staff and resources, do resident outreach, foster capacity and leadership among residents, guide residents through granting processes, and support the planning teams on other tasks that residents find time consuming or cumbersome. Community Developers are defined by residents and other participants as: facilitators, liaisons, educators, and bridges between residents and the City. To quote a few residents on the role of the CDs:

We have put in a lot of as individual community members, but when things fall apart for us, it's great to have [the CD] to do things on paid time....

[the CD's] job is to make all these connections that we as residents with other jobs and life things, we don't have time to make those connections.

...connecting us, focusing us on what we're trying to do and teaching us about asset based - probably those are the three biggest things [the CD] does.

[The CD] has been instrumental (by) acting as a guide and also as... a mentor. [The CD] provides communication between the City and us.

Until 2014, the CDs were housed at a number of different agencies across the city but were eventually centralized under one employer, the Social Planning Research Council (SPRC, 2015). Questions remain in the broader NA project and among participants about the sustainability of these positions and the availability of funding to support the CDs' role on the planning team. In the words on one resident:

... there's a consistent worry about what's going to happen when the funding expires in 2015 or something like that. What's going to happen after that, right?

Some residents and partners understand the CD role as interim, with the goal of supporting the planning teams and building capacity until residents are able to complete all responsibilities on their own. Others view the CD positions as long-term commitments, but wonder where the funds will come from to support these positions.

d) City staff

City staff who participate in Neighbourhood Action range from the NA management team, who provide general guidance to the strategy, to staff from other departments who work directly with planning teams to accomplish their goals. Many staff regularly attend monthly planning team meetings and work alongside residents to assist with specific actions in their neighbourhoods. For example, staff from the Recreation division may regularly attend to inform residents of programs in the local community centre and receive feedback from residents on demand for activities. Meanwhile, staff from planning departments, for instance, may meet regularly with residents who are working on a park redevelopment project. Residents generally

expressed gratitude towards staff who regularly engaged with them and offered their support towards neighbourhood projects. One focus group participant stated:

We were blessed with workers that came to our meetings and we used them basically as inside staff, who were telling us how to do it.

While residents tended to positively identify individual city staff who worked with them regularly, some NA participants expressed a more complicated relationship with the city as a whole. Another resident said in interview:

I'm really pleased with the overall relationships you know and it's all about building relationships. ... there's been a couple of really major struggles but overall I'm pleased with how it's going on. Disappointed because of the city bureaucracy that puts barriers up in our way on certain things which then makes some of the things we've been doing now impossible to do because the city has these regulations that we can't circumnavigate.

Challenges in relationships between the city and resident planning teams will be explored thoroughly in chapter 7.

In the above section, I have outlined the roles of key stakeholders in Neighbourhood Action in order to clarify their responsibilities, the relationships between partners, and the major challenges of their respective roles. I first outlined the role of the major partners in NA – 1) the City of Hamilton, 2) the Hamilton Community Foundation, and 3) the Social Planning and Research Council. I also highlighted how the neighbourhood planning teams are made up of different participants: a) residents, b) service providers, c) community developers, and d) city staff. Understanding how various stakeholders work together will allow the reader to better

conceptualize how the culture of participation is constructed and how barriers to participation operate within NA. In addition, this overview lays the groundwork to explore various stakeholders' commitment in inclusion and their role in achieving, or failing to achieve, the stated project aims of diverse and meaningful resident participation. In next section, I explore how the mandate of Neighbourhood Action addresses issues of inclusion and equity by looking at the official NA project mandate. This will allow me to later compare the stated aims of the NA project to the mandates of the planning teams, and then to the lived experiences of participants presented below. By doing so, I will be able to assess the degree to which the stated aims of the project played out among NA participants during this period.

4.2 NA mandate of inclusion and equity

Given that Neighbourhood Action developed from a history of anti-poverty work and seeks to respond to social and economic exclusion, it is not surprising that the NA mandate frequently expressed a commitment to social inclusion in a number of public documents (available on the City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy website). Moreover, given that the NA neighbourhoods are economically and ethnically diverse, the NA mandate emphasized the need to include a diverse range of voices in the neighbourhood planning process. Official Neighbourhood Action documents frequently used the terms "inclusive" and "diverse" in defining the project's mission both in the initial planning process and in ongoing engagement with resident-led planning teams. In a 2015 document, NA defines its vision as "vibrant, healthy and *inclusive* neighbourhoods built on opportunity and trust by an engaged community" and its principles as "equity, asset-based, integrity, collaborative, innovation" (City of Hamilton, 2015).

More explicitly, in a neighbourhood action planning “toolkit” document produced by NA (City of Hamilton, 2012) to guide the planning process, “asset-based”, “inclusive”, and “resident-led” are listed as the major principles to guide the neighbourhood planning process. They are defined as follows:

- *Asset-based: An asset-based community development approach is used to build on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions. It draws upon existing diverse community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.*
- *Inclusive: The planning team is committed to working with Hamiltonians from all walks of life. The planning process ensures that everyone participating feels a sense of belonging and feels respected and valued for their knowledge of their neighbourhood. The planning team is supported by a community development worker and City of Hamilton staff. The CDW communicates often with the larger neighbourhood and seeks feedback on the neighbourhood action plan as it emerges.*
- *Resident-led: The majority of participants on the planning team and the chair of the planning team are residents or long-time champions of the neighbourhood. The planning team members strive to reflect the diversity in the neighbourhood. (p. 5, emphasis added)*

These three principles are proposed to work in tandem. By being asset-based, resident strengths and capacities are emphasized and privileged, which in turn should give all residents an opportunity to participate. Resident leadership, by definition here, strives to reflect the diversity in the community, and inclusivity in the process is to be supported by city staff and the community developers in the neighbourhoods. In order to be fully inclusive, the toolkit also

proposes that the planning teams include the continuous engagement of residents throughout the planning and implementation process. The following suggestions are proposed in the toolkit:

- *Reach out to all members of your community*
- *Include everyone by making meetings and events accessible and inclusive*
- *Communicate clearly with the broader community, using a variety of methods, to reach diverse community members*
- *Recruit new members for sub-committees and/or the planning team to make the teams representative of the neighbourhood (p. 8)*

Here, as above, the language of inclusion and diversity is ambiguous, focusing on "including everyone" and making sure that "everyone [is] participating". By failing to mention barriers or name those who are often excluded (e.g. lower-income residents, those with disabilities, new immigrants), these documents limit the ability of partners to respond to classism, racism and ableism. The use of terms like 'representative' is equally vague when not referenced in terms of markers like socioeconomic status, education, race, (dis)ability, immigration status, or homeownership, to name a few.

Despite the fact that the values of inclusiveness and diversity were repeatedly expressed (though vaguely) in NA documents and by NA management, some resident and stakeholder participants questioned the City's commitment to inclusion. Residents in one neighbourhood focus group feared that diversity was "just another check box" for the City, stating that they were "not walking the talk." Some stakeholders also doubted the clarity and strength of the City's

commitment to inclusion and questioned whether the stated mission was realized on the ground.

One stakeholder stated:

There hasn't really been a strategic... an explicit approach to bring in cultural diversity.

That hasn't been expressed to say... "Our strategy will include this in a very robust and active way." That hasn't happened. It's more a scatter gun approach.

...We talk about diversity and inclusion and there is an overarching belief that diversity is important to this process. When the tire hits the road, it didn't get filtered down as effectively as it could have.

In a similar vein, it was also unclear in some interviews with city staff whether they were aware that inclusivity and diversity were part of the explicit mandate of NA. Participants across the neighbourhoods indicated that the inclusion of a diverse group of residents ought to be a goal of NA, but many did not feel that the project had accomplished that as of the time of this study. A city staff member expressed this sentiment:

Could diversity have been improved or enhanced in some of [the neighbourhoods]?

Yeah, it could have. Would that be a mandate? I think it should be, that there is a more inclusive and representative committee or planning team... Was that representation there on the planning team? Probably not to the extent that it could have been or should have been for meaningful consultation and input.

The use of language around inclusion and the commitment to diversity within NA was strengthened when the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) became more formally

involved. The SPRC began employing some NA support staff in 2013, and in 2014 took over the management of the community developers (CDs had previously been housed at various agencies throughout the city). The first duty listed in the job description for CDs is “to engage a *diverse* range of key neighbourhood stakeholders (residents, associations, services) in the planning process through *inclusive* outreach activities” (emphasis added). Similarly, the first qualification listed for CDs is the ability “to work with people of *diverse* backgrounds, cultures and perspectives”. In 2014, CD Assistants were hired in several neighbourhoods, who were tasked with the “outreach and *inclusion* of *diverse* community members, including newcomers to Canada, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities, children or youth, groups with social or employment barriers”, with the goal of contributing “to the *inclusion* of *diverse* community members that reflect the residents of [the neighbourhoods]”. Under the SPRC, the CD team were also involved in additional diversity and anti-racism training, which later extended to one neighbourhood planning team.

Following the SPRC’s increased involvement with NA, City management also began to refer to Neighbourhood Action as operating within an anti-oppressive, anti-racist (AOAR) framework. This was stated by City management at one of the public meetings I attended in early 2015, which was intended to discuss resident leadership within NA held. Prior to this meeting, NA had been described only as being guided by asset-based community development (ABCD). The change in management of the CDs to the SPRC, in addition to the hiring of additional CDs with different orientations to community development, prompted significant discussion about how ABCD and anti-racist practice might work together or be at odds with one another. These discussions continue privately among the CD team as well as publicly – this was the topic of a workshop at a community development conference held in Hamilton in June 2015, which was

facilitated by the CD manager (Wetselaar, 2015).

It is still early to assess whether the orientation towards anti-racist practice has trickled down to the planning teams or to other stakeholders involved in NA. In the data at hand (collected from 2013-2015), anti-racist and anti-oppressive ideals were not addressed explicitly by city staff or in any NA documents, nor by residents in interviews or focus groups. Discussion of anti-racism did occur in one neighbourhood (see chapter 5), and there has been a day of anti-racism training included in a resident leadership program called the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute (NLI) (which draws students from the NAS neighbourhoods and is supported by NA's other major stakeholder, the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF, 2016). As of fall 2015, there is one NA neighbourhood that was collectively involved in a four-month anti-racism training, which was mandated by NA management, though this occurred after the data collection period for this study.

Like the official Neighbourhood Action mandate, residents and planning teams involved in NA express an explicit commitment to diversity and inclusion. Similar to the City official mandate, almost all of the neighbourhood action plans identify "inclusiveness" or "diversity" (or both) in their list of core values in the neighbourhood action plans, or commit to engaging with a diverse group of residents. Again, the language used here is ambiguous and typically does not name classism, racism or other forms of exclusion. In the neighbourhood profiles presented below, I will detail the neighbourhoods' commitment to inclusion as expressed in official documents, which will serve as a point of comparison to both the NA mandate and the lived experiences of the planning teams as expressed through interviews and observation.

4.3 Neighbourhood profiles: a continuum with three prototypes

Before presenting chapters with neighbourhood-specific vignettes, here I present an overview of the ten NA communities outlining the size, population, history and distinguishing features of each planning team. I will also outline some general patterns that the ten neighbourhoods fall into as a way of guiding the reader. I propose that while all of the neighbourhoods are economically and socially mixed, they exist on a continuum ranging from more economically homogeneous neighbourhoods with many long-term residents and fewer new developments, to rapidly developing or gentrifying downtown core neighbourhoods. I suggest three basic prototypes that emerge along this continuum: 1) rapidly developing downtown core neighbourhoods (Beasley and Jamesville), 2) east-central mixed and developing neighbourhoods (Crown Point, GALA, Sherman, Stinson), and 3) more economically homogeneous neighbourhoods with little new development and many long term residents (Riverdale, McQuesten, Davis Creek, Keith). Understanding the commonalities across the neighbourhoods and the economic and residential patterns that characterize them will help to contextualize the work of the planning teams in each neighbourhood. These patterns influence not only who the residents are and who participates, but also why residents participate, what community priorities are guiding their work, and how neighbourhood groups address issues of inclusion and social difference. Framing the neighbourhoods in this way also helps to shed light on the nuances of the neighbourhoods and the broader social and economic forces that shape them. Situated within these three neighbourhood prototypes, I present detailed stories of one or two neighbourhoods for each prototype in the following chapters.

Demographic information presented with the profiled comes from neighbourhood profiles completed by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (2012), which are

based on 2006 census data, and from individual neighbourhood action plans compiled by the City of Hamilton between 2012 and 2014. Based on this data and my own observational data, I propose that the neighbourhoods fall into three prototypes. The upcoming chapters highlighting select neighbourhoods in detail (examples from each prototype), and I include complete profiles of the remainder in the appendices (6-11).^{iv}



Figure 4.3: Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy boundaries (Hamilton Spectator, 2014)

Prototype	Neighbourhood	Population (to nearest 1000)	Year of plan	Action Plan priorities
1 – Rapidly developing downtown core	Jamesville	9,000	2012	Community spaces and events, recreation, health and safety, transportation and accessibility
1 – Rapidly developing downtown core	Beasley	6,000	2011	Waste disposal, food security, road safety, recreation and cleanliness, social capital, mixed income housing
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Gibson-Landsdale	8,000	2012	Safety, communications, businesses and services, culture and education
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Crown Point	20,000	2011-12	Leadership, resident engagement, beautification and environment, recreation and education, employment and local economy, promotion
2– East-central mixed and developing	Sherman	21,000	2011-12	Safety, social services and recreational programs, cleanliness, housing, living wage, community engagement
2– East-central Mixed and developing	Stinson	3,000	2011-12	Public spaces, beautification, walkability, community relationships, education and training, poverty and housing, engaging with residential care facilities (RCFs) and businesses
3 – Economically homogenous, further farcore	Riverdale	7,000	2011-12	Housing, food security, education, recreational programs and resources, safety
3 - Economically homogenous, far from core	McQuesten	7,000	2012	Safety and security, economic opportunities and investment, health and well-being, pride and beautification, education
3 - Economically homogenous, far from core	Davis Creek	12,000	2011-12	Community centre, safety, social cohesion, beautification, programs and services
3 - Economically homogenous, far from core	Keith	2,000	2012	Beautification and pride, health, safety and security, education, business and local economy, and forming partnerships with businesses and educational institutions

Table 4.1: Summary of neighbourhood profiles

In table 4.1 above, I detail the three neighbourhood types and the NA communities of which they are comprised. I highlight the details of each of the neighbourhoods involved in Neighbourhood Action in order to clarify the differences and common threads between them, which I emphasize by proposing three prototypes along a continuum of economic and residential culture. The details of the social, demographic and organizational history of the neighbourhoods helps to conceptualize how NA is taken up differently in each of these communities. It also allows the reader to more easily digest the nuances between the three neighbourhood types, as opposed to taking in the details of 10 separate communities. Before I begin the neighbourhood chapters, I will briefly provide an outline for the chapters and remind the reader of the data sources being drawn on.

4.4 Preface to neighbourhood chapters

In forthcoming chapters, I will present neighbourhood vignettes to serve as examples of how NA participants understand and address issues of inclusion and exclusion in their community work. I use pseudonyms for the neighbourhoods to decrease the likelihood of participants being identifiable. The vignettes were chosen to highlight the nuances of the three neighbourhood prototypes presented above: 1) more economically homogeneous neighbourhoods with little new development and many long term residents exemplified by Glenville; 2) east-central mixed and developing neighbourhoods exemplified by Elmwood and Hillboro; and, 3) rapidly developing downtown core neighbourhoods exemplified by Centretown. The chapters do not offer an exhaustive account of the organizational, social and cultural details of each neighbourhood; rather, they are designed to highlight the broader context

of each community, document specific episodes that exemplify a neighbourhood's approach to inclusion and highlight moments of self-reflection around issues of inclusion and exclusion. I focus on addressing how NA participants understand their work, how the planning teams challenge or reproduce barriers to participation, and how participants address issues of inclusion within the broader community. These episodes or vignettes took place during the course of my observations from 2013 to 2015. I contextualize these moments within the broader patterns of each community and provide epilogues to situate the episodes in the neighbourhoods' evolving and still unfolding trajectories. While detailing small episodes and vignettes sacrifices some generalizability of the findings, these details offer a powerful way to convey complex interactions and relationships through the eyes of the researcher. This choice of narrative is in line with the ethnographic approach to the study, especially given Bruner's (1997) understanding of "ethnography as narrative" (Bruner, 1997; Tedlock, 1991). Further, the use of narrative and counter stories is understood as central in critical race research (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Delgado, 1989; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

By detailing NA participants' discourses of inclusion and efforts towards representative participation, I can offer a clearer understanding of how barriers to participation are perpetuated and/or challenged in community development work. Furthermore, by considering the broader social, cultural, economic and organizational patterns of the neighbourhoods, my analysis will shed light on how issues of inclusion and exclusion operate differently within distinct types of neighbourhoods. Vignettes will highlight primary social differences in each neighbourhood, the existing organizational culture within the neighbourhood planning teams, and will focus on moments of self-reflection – that is, moments where NA participants openly grappled with the lack of diverse representation within the planning team and/or addressed the social tensions

existing in the broader community. I will begin each section by reminding readers of the character of each of the neighbourhood prototypes, followed by the profile of one of the neighbourhoods (identified with a pseudonym), and vignettes highlighting resident interview responses and my own reflections as an observer (and/or resident) in the neighbourhoods. Selected NA communities will be explored in full chapters to exemplify neighbourhood prototypes. I will first present the commonalities and differences between the neighbourhoods of each prototype and explain why the profiled neighbourhoods were chosen. I start by highlighting the rapidly developing downtown core neighbourhoods.

Chapter 5: Prototype 1: RAPIDLY DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN CORE

5.1 Overview of prototype 1

Prototype	Neighbourhood	Population (to nearest 1000)	Year of plan	Action Plan priorities
1 – Rapidly developing downtown core	Jamesville	9,000	2012	Community spaces and events, recreation, health and safety, transportation and accessibility
1 – Rapidly developing downtown core	Beasley	6,000	2011	Waste disposal, food security, road safety, recreation and cleanliness, social capital, mixed income housing

Table 4.1a, extracted from Table 4.1

As per the social and economic continuum of neighbourhoods presented above, Beasley and Jamesville represent prototype 1, comprised of rapidly developing downtown core communities. These two neighbourhoods are adjacent and share many amenities and services, as well as a major thoroughfare (James Street North) that is in a process of intense development. Both neighbourhoods, as part of the downtown core, experienced a period of decline in the pattern of urban flight seen in many major city centres in Canada in the post war era (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Now, the downtown core is experiencing significant commercial and residential development, described as "on the cusp" of gentrification by Harris, Dunn & Wakefield (2014). The neighbourhood has also been experiencing an influx of what are often described as “new Hamiltonians”, often new homeowners and professionals from Toronto, who are coming to escape the very high cost of living in that city (Gee, 2015). The following vignette one of the

affected communities, which I will refer to as Centretown (a pseudonym) explores how *Neighbourhood Action* is operating and responding to inequity in this rapidly changing community.

5.2 CENTRETOWN: Hate crimes and halal hotdogs: responding to racism and gentrification

I think what we're visioning in my particular neighbourhood [...] is a real push to gentrification. There's a real mix of people, which is healthy - I support a really diverse community as a healthy community. But I worry that with the buzz that's being created in [the downtown core] will it become too unaffordable for people ... because this is sort of a real hub for recent immigrants. – City Staff

5.2.1 Centretown neighbourhood profile

Centretown is a historic community located in the downtown core, which since approximately 2010 has received growing attention as a site of rapid residential and commercial development, a hub for artists, as well as one of Hamilton's "arrival cities" (SPRC, 2012; CNA, 2012; Myrie, 2014; Pecoskie, 2015). Centretown is home to many social services and amenities, making it a regular settlement community for a large and growing number of recent immigrant and refugees, who are concentrated in several high-rise apartment buildings. One of the most racially diverse communities in the city, 4 of 10 Centretown residents identifies as visible minority (SPRC, 2012). The neighbourhood has also received a recent influx of what some participants call "new Hamiltonians" – that is, new homeowners and students, typically from Toronto or surrounding communities, who are increasingly moving to Hamilton for its more affordable housing market.

Organizationally, Centretown is quite distinct from other NA communities on a number of counts. The Centretown Neighbourhood Association (CNA) was organized with a neighbourhood charter before its involvement with Neighbourhood Action, which is a point of pride among Centretown residents (Centretown Neighbourhood Association, 2012). Its prior organizational history means that the CNA operates more independently from the City than most NA communities. Because of this distance and independence, it is also often in an adversarial position of the City, as evidenced by participant focus groups and interviews detailed in section 5.2.5, although its members do work alongside city staff on many projects. The CNA outlines in its action plan a commitment to addressing issues like waste disposal, food security, road safety, recreation and cleanliness, social capital^v, and mixed income housing. It works steadily towards these aims, but because of its distance from the City and broad organizing capacity, it also readily responds to emerging community issues that fall outside of plan priorities. This includes addressing the rapid residential and commercial development that is affecting the neighbourhood, as well as responding to the racial tensions and tenant housing issues in the community that came to light during my time of observation. During the 2013-2015 period, there were approximately 5-10 core members of the CNA, approximately 20 people attended monthly CNA meetings, and still others were involved in other less formal ways. The leadership team is well-organized with a significant media presence, and its members have actively and openly grappled with the fact that they did not reflect the diversity that exists in the broader neighbourhood.

During my time as an observer in the community (2013-2015), several events took place that would put issues of diversity and exclusion under the microscope for the CNA. In order to detail these events, it is necessary to highlight how NA participants I interviewed who were

working in Centretown (3 residents, 1 service provider, 2 city staff and 1 community development worker) conceptualized issues of inclusion and participation during interviews. Here, the case of Centretown serves as an example, in particular to the following questions: *Who are the participants involved in NA and how do they understand their role in it?* I will connect the participants' accounts to my own observations at monthly meetings and focus groups, which together will provide the foreground for the episodes that I will later detail. Those episodes will address my other research questions, namely: *How are participants redefining community development work, and how are participants addressing issues of exclusion in the broader community?* First, I will explore how the CNA approaches issues of inclusion and diversity in its official mandate, which will serve as a point of comparison to the NA mandate presented above and to the lived experience of CNA participants presented below.

5.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of Centretown's Action Plan

While this analysis focuses on the original Centretown Neighbourhood Association (CNA) action plan of 2011, it is worth noting that that the plan is nearly five years old and CNA members are involved in a year-long process to update it. As mentioned above, the CNA is distinct from other planning teams in that it developed independently from the city-initiated Neighbourhood Action process and it does not receive financial support from the Hamilton Community Foundation. Before the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the associated action plans Centretown residents put together a community "charter" – an agreement between residents, service providers and businesses, which is said to be the first of its kind in Canada (McNeil, 2011). The Centretown Charter guided the development of the Centretown Neighbourhood Plan, which was then endorsed by the City. Although it predated the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, the CNA's action plan (Centretown Neighbourhood

Association, 2012) expresses a similar commitment to community health, inclusion and resident engagement as the NA mandate. The plan identified the following goals: 1) increase sense of health, safety and security; 2) improve neighbourhood design; 3) improve social and cultural connections; 4) strengthen business and economic opportunities. These goals and objectives were developed through extensive community consultations with residents and community partners. The 77-page document is filled with attractive graphics in order to make the document more accessible to readers; it also includes academic references as well as a glossary including terms like *deliverable*, *engagement mechanisms*, *quorum* and *sustainability*. This makes the CNA plan distinct from those of other NA communities and likely reflects the high levels of formal education attained by many active CNA members.

The CNA action plan of 2011 also stands out in terms of tone and overall vision. Unlike the NA documents, the CNA action plan explicitly references a vision of neighbourhood change posited on economic growth, mixed residential development, and strategic marketing of the neighbourhood. On one hand, the plan promotes “intensification without gentrification” (p. 22) and proposes developing affordable housing, improving landlord/tenant relations, enhancing food security and improving accessibility for people with mobility issues. On the other hand, the plan also emphasizes the need to improve the perception of the neighbourhood in order to attract the “creative class” and make it “cool”. The document further emphasizes the need to “revitalize our neighbourhood and make it a destination for people to live” (p. 18). The use of the word “people” in the same sentence where the word “revitalize” appears, prompts one to ask, *what kinds of people?* Given that people already live in the neighbourhood and that it is densely populated, the sentence might imply qualifications such as “more desirable [people]” or “[people] different from those we typically see here”. There are other instances of vagueness in

the document similar to those in the NA mandate. For instance, the terms *marginalized* and *at-risk populations* are used in the document, but are not defined in the document or in the glossary. Under the objective of health and well-being, one action is named: “learn strategies to live with marginalized populations” (p. 39). The choice of the term “live with” seems to create a distance between CNA members and marginalized people. The goal is not stated as supporting, engaging or improving the livelihoods of marginalized people, but rather as allowing community members to learn how to live with (or perhaps, problematically “tolerate”) marginalized groups. The document further explains this action as follows:

In Centretown everyone is important and should have a voice. We want to make sure that we aren't pushing people to the fringe of society but instead would like to involve all people in the community. We strongly believe that by valuing all people and including them that we will create a mutual respect for one another. In order to do this we shall:

- *Help to foster a more accurate perception of the challenges faced by at-risk population*
- *Work with groups that are already doing this and together form strategies that will help everyone feel part of the community*

Interestingly, the plan to tackle this goal does not mention directly engaging with marginalized people themselves. Rather, the proposed strategy is to change the general public's *perception* of marginalized people and to work with *organizations* that serve marginalized people. The framing of this objective is problematic in that it creates distance between those who are involved in the CNA and those who are deemed to be marginalized.

Like the NA documents, the CNA action plan does not explicitly name race or racism in the document, aside from listing the number of visible minorities in the neighbourhood in the demographic information. Nevertheless, one of the major objectives outlined in the plan is integrating with social, religious and cultural groups within the goal of improving social and

cultural connections. The actions associated with this objective include: encouraging a cultural ambassador program, developing a directory of faith-based and cultural groups, and to host an international market/cultural festival. Here, the plan falls in line with the dominant Canadian discourse of viewing diversity as mainly about group cultural artefacts, which constitute exhibits of food, dress, and show and tell about country of origin. In this section, the text further states that Centretown is a hub for recent newcomers due to the affordability of the neighbourhood and expresses a desire to “celebrate the unique cultural diversity.” Newcomers are scarcely mentioned anywhere else in the document, and the specific needs of newcomers are not mentioned in the listing of the neighbourhood’s top five priority actions. Given the neighbourhood’s status as a hub for newcomers, the relative absence of explicit attention to the issues directly affecting new immigrants is surprising. The document’s failure to identify racism or define marginalization is similar to the treatment of such issues by the broader NA mandate at the time of its initial development.

Having presented an analysis of the CNA action plan and its mandate of inclusion, I now turn to vignettes based on my personal observations of the CNA from 2013 to 2015. My observations occurred at monthly CNA meetings in my role with the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation, though my interpretation is also informed by my position as a community member. I draw on my notes and observations, as well as on local media coverage where appropriate. These two vignettes follow the capacity development of the CNA in responding to episodes of exclusion in the community, addressing the research questions: *How are NA participants taking up and redefining community development work? How do participants address issues of inequity and inclusion?* The first episode explicitly addresses racial intolerance against immigrant and refugee residents in the neighbourhood.

5.2.3 “Until you clean the wound, you can’t heal the wound”: Responding to racist graffiti



Hamilton Spectator, Novak, 2014.

In the summer of 2014, the Centretown neighbourhood was making headlines and receiving much praise for the new flags being flown across the neighbourhood. The 50 multicoloured signs were bright and attention-grabbing, and were seen as motivational messages to Centretown residents: *BeDiverse*, *Belong*, *BeAmazing*, *BeStrong*, *BeProud*, *BeCourageous*. These signs stood in sharp contrast to the messages that often marked the visual landscape of some Centretown residents, in the form of racist graffiti – sometimes in their own apartment buildings.



CBC Hamilton, Carter, 2014.

In February of 2014, one resident of a high-rise building in the neighbourhood went public with reports of racist vandalism. The resident had come home to find what she called a list of racial slurs outside of her apartment. In an article published by the CBC, this resident and other partners spoke of the prevalence of racism and concerns about hate crimes in the community. The article noted that residents found the graffiti was shocking, but noted that it was not uncommon. They had previously seen a swastika, the N word, and the phrase “F--k Somalia” (Carter, 2014). This incident served as a wake-up call to Centretown residents around the reality of racial tensions in the community, despite the desire of many that it be a welcoming and diverse place. In response to the incident, the CNA, with support from the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI), posted a public statement, addressed to the property management and other partners. In the letter, they condemned the acts and called for action from multiple parties:

We urge the building owners and partners from the City and community organizations to respond to this dire issue that affects the quality of life in our neighbourhood. It is essential that subsequent conversations and efforts directly involve and empower our neighbours of colour and/or who are newcomers. Racialized residents who want to be involved must be enabled to take a lead in the discussions and planning that happen in

response to this issue. The changes that need to happen will not take place without their involvement every step of the way.

The Centretown Neighbourhood Association's vision is to improve the quality of life for people who live, work and play in the Centretown neighbourhood. Inclusion is at the forefront of our values and we do all we can to promote and create it in this community. One of our primary goals is to increase the neighbourhood sense of health, safety and security. We are thus moved to support the residents of this building and others in the neighbourhood who have been the targets of hate crimes and whose voices have been silenced or neglected.

In the CNA's response, they reassert their dedication to the value of inclusion espoused in their action plan and mission statement, and recommit to promoting the health, safety and security of all members of the community. Importantly, they also assert that during the process of responding to these acts, partners must prioritize the voices of the people of colour and new immigrants and refugees who are most affected by racial intolerance in the neighbourhood.

In publically responding to the racist acts of vandalism, the CNA solidified its partnership with the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) – a local organization dedicated to issues of equity and inclusion in all aspects of civic life, especially employment, education, health and housing. The HCCI itself formed out of a response to a hate crime that occurred just days after 9/11, when, mistaken for a mosque, a local Hindu temple was burned to the ground (Myrie, 2014). It was then fitting that the CNA would partner with the HCCI in their response to hate crimes and racial tensions in the neighbourhood. The CNA's residents participating in the collaboration later formed a group called the Centretown Inclusion Group in 2014. This group

worked closely with the HCCI to conduct a research project, which included a survey of residents in Centretown about their experiences with racism and culminated in a public meeting in Centretown called “Diversity Matters.”

Shortly before the public meeting, the executive director of the HCCI published an article in the Hamilton Spectator, where she contextualized the acts of vandalism in Centretown. Specifically, she acknowledged that these incidents were not isolated, but rather formed part of a pattern of broader racial tensions in the community.

Residents in parts of the ward, particularly in the Centretown neighbourhood, have expressed concerns about incidents of racial intolerance between newer Canadians and established ones. It is a well-known fact that race/ethnic-fuelled tensions between tenants in several apartment buildings [in this area] have led to police involvement on several occasions and residents on all sides want to see an end to the divisiveness.

[..] Surely, incidents of racism are not limited to this geographic area, but it is disconcerting that one of our most culturally diverse neighbourhoods appears to be experiencing unacceptable levels of racial intolerance incidences....

Despite the high numbers of immigrants living in the area, many have expressed a feeling of isolation from and disconnection to their local community including neighbourhood groups. This can also be attributed to language challenges. (Myrie, 2014)

Here, Myrie alludes to the findings of the survey conducted by the HCCI/CNA, which confirm that racial tensions are very prevalent in the neighbourhood. Significantly, Myrie notes that in addition to experiencing overt acts of racism, many participants expressed a sense of disconnection towards neighbourhood groups. This supports the views of resident participants

expressed above in interviews, and further indicates that local groups, like the CNA, may be failing to realize their vision of inclusion.

Further results from the collaborative research project were shared at the “Diversity Matters” event, held in September 2014. At this meeting, HCCI staff and a CNA resident-member presented the results of their survey, invited residents to share their stories of racism in the neighbourhood, facilitated small group discussions around neighbourhood inclusion, and had a panel discussion including partners who work in anti-racism and diversity. I was not a part of this collaborative research project, but rather attended as a community member and researcher with the evaluation team. The event served as a moment of public self-reflection for the CNA and other community members, who were provided space to openly acknowledge racism in the broader community and to address exclusion within the CNA itself – an opportunity seldom present in other neighbourhoods. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people – most were residents, but the audience also included a few service providers and a local translator from the Somali community. The meeting began with a CNA resident-member informing the group of the history of the collaboration between the CNA and the HCCI and the development of what would be called the Centretown Inclusion Group, which had been operating for 3-4 months at this time. The resident host of the meeting reminded attendees of the CNA’s commitment to grassroots activism and its action plan goals of promoting diversity, cultural awareness, solidarity, celebration and empowerment of diverse voices. From here, HCCI staff and the Centretown Inclusion Group representative introduced the research project. They explained that the research project included a survey of neighbourhood residents about their experiences with racism. The input they received from 101 tenants confirmed that racial tensions are high in the neighbourhood and spoke to the hidden prevalence of racism in the community. Approximately

one-third of the respondents identified as white, one-third as black, and the remaining third identified as East Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, Aboriginal, or did not answer. The vast majority of participants agreed that racism existed in the neighbourhood and confirmed that racist acts and interactions are prevalent in the community. Many newcomer or racialized tenants reported experiencing incidents of racism personally – including disrespectful comments, slurs, being told they don't belong in Canada, being verbally harassed in public, or having things thrown at them. Echoing this finding, attendants at the meeting shared examples of racist interactions in the neighbourhood, as well as a general sense of disconnect between newer Canadians and more established Canadians, and between white and non-white residents. A community developer (CD) mentioned that verbal, public displays of racism in the neighbourhood are not uncommon. The CD recounted that during a public consultation on a local park, being told by a white resident: “The only way you're going to clean up that park is if you get rid of those f---ing Somalis.” A local translator at the meeting mentioned that the Somali community often feel particularly targeted by racism in the neighbourhood. For example, the translator recounted stories of white residents using dogs to intimidate Somali women and children, taking them off leash in elevators. One white resident stated that hateful, intentional incidents represented a “skinhead/redneck” minority, and suggested that perhaps the reported offenders did not realize that many Somali people were uncomfortable with dogs – rather, it was a matter of lack of education. The local Somali translator asserted: “If you see a small child hiding behind his mom, you know that is fear. It's not a matter of education – you can see it and feel it.” The translator disagreed with the idea that these kinds of interactions were accidental or isolated, reminding the group that such acts are intentional and very prevalent in the neighbourhood, as supported by the survey results and the personal accounts of many.

Interestingly, while education or ignorance are often cited to explain why the dominant group fails to include 'others', they are also often cited to explain why 'others' fail to participate in public processes like NA. This suggests that there is a loaded ambiguity around terms like education and ignorance, as there is about terms like inclusion and diversity.

During small group discussions, participants brainstormed around questions like: What does a neighbourhood that values inclusion look and feel like? What can be done to make this a reality? Here, residents and partners discussed creating a neighbourhood that is free from violence, from ranging from physical aggressions to more subtle micro-aggressions. They stressed the need to move beyond reliance on cultural festival and events, which the participants believed were framed by discourses of multiculturalism and prone to tokenism. Residents distinguished this from full participation in the neighbourhood, which centres around having an active voice and leadership in decision-making processes. Participants at the meeting agreed that openly acknowledging racial tensions in the neighbourhood was a first step in challenging them. The local translator stated: “Until you clean the wound, you can’t heal the wound.” Cleaning the wound, the group agreed, must include all parties in the neighbourhood – not only racialized residents. The role of the CNA was seen as particularly important in this process, since it is in many ways the face of the neighbourhood, even though many agreed that its participants did not reflect the diversity that exists within the broader community. One white resident insisted the CNA was dominated by “WASPs” and lacked representation from a diverse group of residents. Suggested reasons for this limited representation were named by the participants at the meeting as follows: linguistic barriers and lack of translation at meetings, lack of child-care at meetings, time and settlement demands of newcomers, and lack of trust due to missing community relationships between the CNA and newcomer residents. To combat this, participants suggested

investing heavily in long-term, significant relationship-building, conducting extensive and ongoing outreach in the high-rise apartments, and allowing multiple ways to voice opinions since many people will never attend meetings (which currently represents the core of NA participation in all neighbourhoods). Participants also suggested that CNA members should: participate in mandatory anti-oppression workshops (which should also be open to all Centretown residents), actively recruit racially and linguistically diverse residents, conduct multilingual outreach, and support the Centretown Inclusion Group to connect with supportive partner agencies.

The “Diversity Matters” event acted as a space where the CNA, other residents and partners could come together in a moment of self-reflection around racism and exclusion in the neighbourhood. Such an intentional and coordinated response to issues of racial difference was unique to NA communities during my two years of observation. In carving out time and space to actively respond to acts of racist vandalism (and the broader patterns of racism in the neighbourhood), the CNA and their partners acknowledged the “wound” of racism, committed to cleaning the wound, and brainstormed the best ways to heal and move towards the creating a neighbourhood free from physical and symbolic violence. As of mid 2015, the Centretown Inclusion Group is active and growing. They continue to work with the CD and other partners to broaden outreach efforts, particularly towards high-rise tenants. The group also hosts a monthly potluck and conversation cafe, where participants share food and discuss issues that affect racialized and otherwise marginalized residents. Although the CNA acknowledges that they have much progress to make in terms of having diverse membership, the Inclusion Group knows that this will not happen overnight. Nevertheless, the group hope to pave the groundwork for broadening participation and fostering feelings of belonging in the neighbourhood. The Centretown Inclusion Group continues to evolve and respond to emerging community concerns –

including an urgent housing issue that struck the neighbourhood in early 2015, which will be explored below. This vignette addresses how the CNA continue to evolve in their response to instances of exclusion in the broader community.

5.2.4 “This is wrong and we are here to support you”: CNA responds to “mass gentrification” effort

In February 2015, the newly formed Centretown Inclusion Group informed the broader Centretown Neighbourhood Association of an urgent development affecting tenants of two local high-rise apartment buildings. These buildings, which include a total of 380 rental units, are two of four high-rises that mark the landscape of Centretown. They are known as the home to many newly arrived immigrant and refugee families (especially from the Somali community)^{vi}, as well as many residents on social assistance or with disabilities. The Centretown Inclusion Group, headed by tenants of the buildings, informed the CNA that the high-rises were undergoing a “mass gentrification project” – “nasty campaign to extricate as many residents as they possibly can” with the intention of raising rents and attracting new tenants. Specifically, tenants were receiving letters and being offered \$2000 plus back rent to leave by the end of the month, on the premise that there would be major renovations on the site that would unduly inconvenience the tenants. Many tenants were signing the agreements, not realizing that by changing residences, they would be forfeiting the rental subsidy that some receive from the City. The Inclusion Group residents also reported evidence that the property management company had applied to exceed provincial limits for rent increases. Meanwhile, residents reported being informed that rent increases would be required to pay for already completed renovations, which the tenants did not believe had taken place. By offering incentives for the current tenants to leave, residents believed

that the property management sought to especially force out newcomer tenants, who frequently reported racist interactions with the management. One Inclusion Group member called her buildings diverse “vertical villages”, and emphasized how this process would unduly affect immigrant and refugee tenants, most of whom are recently arrived newcomers who may not legally know their rights or have the resources to relocate. This resident expressed that she embraced the diversity of the residents she lives with, including many of different ethnicities and those with mild to severe disabilities. In spite of the fact that the apartments at times seemed separate from the Centretown neighbourhood in general and lacked interaction with the CNA, the Centretown Inclusion Group urged the CNA to rally around the tenants.

One week later, the CNA hosted a public information event in collaboration with the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) in direct response to the property management’s actions. The resident organizers, with the support of CD and other staff, invited representatives from legal and housing support agencies to provide information to tenants. CNA residents and the CD went door-to-door in the apartment buildings to inform tenants of the meeting, which led the management calling the police on them for trespassing (despite the fact that the residents lived in the building). Nevertheless, the meeting was standing room only, drawing a large crowd of approximately 80-90 people. This was a significant turn out given that most CNA meetings I attended had no more than 20 people. Most attendees at the event were tenants from the buildings, but also included the above mentioned legal and housing officials, NA staff, community supporters, and local media. A local Somali interpreter was also present to provide simultaneous translation to the many Somali residents in attendance. The CNA chair welcomed the audience, introduced the guests, and assured the residents: “This is wrong and we are here to support you.”

Tensions ran high at the meeting, which ran partly as an information session and partly as a town hall-style free-for-all. Many tenants were panicking after signing the agreements to leave without realizing that they were optional, and not aware that they would be forfeiting their rent subsidy from the city. Others were still unclear about whether or not they had to sign the agreement, as many residents reported being pressured during private meetings with building management. Residents at the meeting referred to the property management's actions as a "mass gentrification project" to raise rents and force out "less desirable" tenants, including new immigrants and refugees and those social assistance. On several occasions, tenants and other residents referred to the overt racism espoused by the building management towards racialized and newcomer residents. A partner from the local mosque spoke to the crowd, announcing that he used to be a tenant in these buildings and expressed deep concern about the actions of the property management. He was quoted in the Hamilton Spectator: "After all, if all of these tenants are evicted, where will they go? This is a form of bullying the tenants." (Nolan, 2015) Other tenants told stories about the poor building conditions, the lack of responsiveness of landlords, and experiencing subtle and overly racist interactions with building management. One Somali woman with a physical disability mentioned that having the elevator constantly out-of-order was a violation of her rights – but when she told this to the building management, they told her that using the stairs was "good for her", despite having a disability and living near the top of the high rise. Another tenant, an older newcomer man, warned the crowd: "It is not a random act. This is a very well-crafted scheme." In addition to being able to voice their experiences, residents were allowed to direct questions at the service providers present, including representatives from city housing, a community legal clinic and the local councillor. Many residents were overcome with frustration, which was at times directed towards these representatives.

Although palpably tense, the meeting was nevertheless successful in educating a large number of tenants about their rights, serving as a space for residents to voice their concerns and experiences, and allowed the opportunity for tenants to connect with services and collectively brainstorm solutions alongside them. In this way, the CNA served as a site of mobilization, drawing on wide local social networks forged over many years between residents, service providers and city staff. Centretown Inclusion Group residents who were tenants themselves organized around an issue that directly and immediately affected them. Meanwhile, the CNA executive and other members aligned themselves with the needs of those residents and showed their solidarity by rallying around them (both organizationally and emotionally), and publically denouncing the actions of the property management. The CNA used this opportunity to publically respond to rapid changes occurring in the neighbourhood and to make clear their stance on coercive and exclusionary redevelopment efforts. The group continues to respond to these residential and commercial changes through a sub-committee on planning and development, which regularly communicates with the city and local developers on any new developments and supports the expansion of affordable housing.

Having explored in the above vignettes two instances of the CNA collectively responding to patterns of exclusion in the neighbourhood, I now turn to in-depth interviews to explore how individual members conceptualized issues of inclusion within the planning team.

5.2.5 *“We’re all WASPs here – look around!”*

There are a lot of stakeholders who come in and often there is still a middle income, university educated leadership happening in this neighbourhood and we are not representing demographics of the neighbourhood we are in. – Resident, focus group

While many *Neighbourhood Action* communities struggle with resident participation and turnover, the Centretown Neighbourhood Association (CNA) has a fairly consistent pool of resident participants. Nevertheless, one of the most consistent threads that emerged throughout my experience with the CNA was the open acknowledgement that despite being the face of an incredibly diverse neighbourhood, CNA leadership and active team members did not reflect the diversity that existed in the broader community. While a diverse range of participants took part in CNA events and sometimes attended meetings, the leadership team was perceived as primarily young, middle class and white, and therefore not reflective of the large population of low-income individuals and newcomers in the neighbourhood. NA participants often grappled with this openly, and this concern was articulated clearly and expanded upon during the participant interviews with both residents and other partners. Here I will present a) resident respondents and b) service providers and other partners.

a) CNA resident participants

Three CNA resident-members were interviewed during the summer of 2013. The members varied in their level of involvement, but all had been involved in the CNA since at least the beginning of its involvement with NA. Their length of time in the neighbourhood ranged from a few years to more than 20 years. The residents who were interviewed conceptualized the CNA as at a point of evolution away from its origins as a neighbourhood watch-style committee and moving towards becoming a reflective, inclusive voice representing diverse community interests. The first resident I interviewed, C1, described the organization that preceded the CNA as follows:

...[it] stemmed from a neighbourhood watch but a bunch of the members realized that the neighbourhood watch was quite negative and it was all crime focused. So it was about looking out for neighbours, but in a very specific way. And a few people were like, no, we actually want to build a neighbourhood that we want to live in and that we love.

Here, C1 highlights the specific and exclusive way that the previous, deficit-based association promoted community interests, posited in contrast to the current CNA. This resident further acknowledged that this transition away from a more exclusively neighbourhood watch-style organization has not always been easy; in addition, C1 insists that the value of inclusion should always be at the forefront of this kind of community organizing. The challenge is not allowing certain voices and interests to dominate.

That diversity of voices is really, really important. So not having people who are all homeowners with the same interests who are only advocating for those interests.

Realizing who's in your neighbourhood and how do you try to hear from everybody and it's really hard. It's almost impossible but I think that should always be what neighbourhoods are aspiring to, is to be inclusive and not avoid the tensions.

Here, C1 refers to the tensions that can emerge when overtly addressing issues of inclusion, which can at times be understood as a zero-sum game where, for example, existing leadership and/or homeowners may have to give up power to make room for other voices. This resident may also be alluding to the racial tensions that exist within the broader neighbourhood and the reluctance for some to address them. Referring specifically to the racial and cultural make-up of the CNA, C1 gives the example of the disconnect between the existing CNA and the high-rise

apartment buildings – known as arrival sites for many recent newcomers, particularly from the Somali community.

We've had a goal in terms of housing and connecting with the apartment towers because our neighbourhood association does not reflect the neighbourhood. We're all white people and we're all pretty ... not everybody but many of us are educated, middle class with the best ... I think we have the neighbourhood's interest at heart, not our own interest and we love Centretown in all its diversity, but we're still not seeing as much participation from people, from a wide variety of people. I think we have an age range, which is really great and social demographic a little bit but in terms of cultural background, there's still a lot of work to get a healthy mix on our neighbourhood association.

When C1 says that “we’re all” white and formally educated, this resident refers to the active leadership in CNA, who form the core membership and generally lead the decision-making process. Similarly, another resident once exclaimed at a meeting, “We are all WASPs coming to the meetings. Look around!” Although leadership switched a few times, C1 noted that the group “still had continuity in terms of some core people”, so the culture of the group stayed fairly consistent. While more peripheral members may be less formally educated, C1 said that culturally (racially) the group remains quite homogeneous. The resident went on to describe how when she started living in the neighbourhood and working with the CNA, they had a vision of inclusion that was perhaps unrealistic and did not take into account the barriers to participation experienced by many of her neighbours, particularly those who are newcomers and live in the high-rise apartments.

I was very positive and idealistic about [Centretown]. And the longer I've been here ...the more I have understood the reality that many of our neighbours are facing and that for many of them, coming to a neighbourhood meeting is just out of the question and people spend so much time just getting by that community engagement is not their priority. So I think that's a barrier but at the same time ...some of those parents [in the apartments] will probably never ever come to a meeting and that's fine but they know that there's a neighbourhood association out there and they know that there's people who care about the park and care about their building.

While the leadership and executive structure may remain unchanged culturally, C1 asserted that there are alternate ways to elicit involvement from a diverse group of people, acknowledging the life struggles experienced by many of her neighbours and unappealing nature of meetings to many. They also emphasized the need for long-term relationship building to take place between the CNA and the broader community. C1 credited the community development worker (CD) as being essential in this, especially in conducting outreach to the apartment complexes and slowly building relationships. In part, the CD had done this by connecting with children and families at the local parks and organizing events that attract newcomer youth like a soccer tournament.

The second resident interviewed, C2, similarly acknowledged the role of the CD in conducting outreach with neighbours in the apartment buildings. C2 said, “for me to go canvassing at 3pm on a Tuesday cannot happen.” The full-time hours of CDs allow them the time and energy to dedicate to issues of outreach and relationship-building, which may require significant long-term and one-on-one interactions. Here, the CD plays a role in supporting and supplementing the tasks that the residents cannot do – especially when they feel overburdened by other actions and tasks. In Centretown in particular, there is a sense that much resident energy is

required to deal with disagreements with the City and some service providers, which takes energy away from conducting outreach and actively addressing issues of inclusion. C2 explained:

There's no problem, I would say, internally with the CNA. It's more often our relationship with the City or the [service] providers that ends up being that sort of tension point.

Tensions arise in particular when the neighbourhood association is pitted against service providers for funding or resources. A sticking point in Centretown is access to meeting space, which is in short supply in the neighbourhood. C3 describes an ongoing tension between the CNA and some local service providers, which he reluctantly called part of the “poverty industry”.

I would say that that's been one of the struggles is getting some of these ingrained ... I hate to use the term but it is. It's, you know, poverty industry players that don't have an incentive to really ameliorate some of the conditions there because their funding is reliant upon it.

All of that space ... should be available for community use. Here we are struggling just to even get a booked roomlet alone, you know, the idea that we might be able to... provide daycare during CNA meetings. It would be nice one day to be able, so more people could come, to offer childcare upstairs of the two hour meeting... All these things are not available to us so long as those areas are out of our domain.

When neighbourhood organizations are pitted against the City or service providers, it takes resident energy away from addressing issues of inclusion within the group. Furthermore, the

difficulty gaining access to resources and space prevents the CNA from offering services like child care, which they believe would make their meetings more accessible. C2 further detailed barriers to broadening engagement, particularly with the Somali community:

We recognize, full on recognize we have a long way to go to engaging... the east African community that lives in Centretown. We're stuck in a place where we don't have the resources to offer simultaneous translation or anything like that. We do have some connections with the community, specifically with the mosque.

Part of the challenge this resident mentioned here is lacking the resources to provide simultaneous translation so that recent Somali newcomers could attend comfortably, understand and contribute to CNA meetings. C2 acknowledged that "...there's nothing worse than sitting in a long meeting where you're not even understanding what's going on." One thing the executive has tried to do, C2 explained, is to cut the meeting time down from two hours to one hour. A shorter meeting may be less intimidating and leaves more time for participants to stay and connect with other members or partners, or to leave to attend to family or other commitments. Nevertheless, C2 noted that to date, the CNA had struggled to attract a diverse group of people to meetings. "People" here refers to new immigrant residents.

I can't say we've been super successful in getting people out on a consistent basis. We've had people come out but the consistent group of core volunteers that keeps coming out, I would say, is more representative of what Centretown used to look like than what it is now.

They've really been concentrating on trying to get young people that move into the neighbourhood to show up and that's more not for representative sake but because those

people tend to have more energy ... in order to be representative, I would say we would need to see a lot more, you know, visible minorities around the table. We need a lot more people that don't speak English as a first language around the table.

One of the struggles is that the CNA is a small group of dedicated residents who are often over-worked and require more bodies to help them complete their actions and goals, and to deal with day-to-day administration. The people with energy, time and the social capital to easily fit into this organizational culture are often young people – particularly, university students. Recruiting such members may help with easing the workload of residents, but as C2 notes, it does not address, and often perpetuates, the lack of representativeness of the CNA. What is needed are more concerned efforts towards outreach to cultural and linguistic minorities to counter the unequal patterns of participation. C2 did note that the CNA has some social connections with culturally diverse residents and groups in the neighbourhood, even if they don't participate in monthly meetings. Larger CNA events, such as their annual summer BBQ and fall fest, are well-attended by a large number of residents, including newcomers and those from the high-rise apartments. This is in part due to the CNA's relationship with the local mosque, which C2 described as one of the most well-organized groups in the neighbourhood. The mosque has helped to spread the word about events and has connected the CNA with community members who have provided translation at some events. The CNA are also committed to providing halal food options for Muslim residents, and are conscious to not host events during major religious observations like Ramadan. C2 continued:

I would say at our events ... our events are super representative because everyone can participate. Whether or not we are going to find the same interest among some of these communities into the actual day to day stuff that the CNA talks about at our meetings...

If the challenge is interest in the meetings, one might ask whether the CNA's day-to-day actions represented the interests of the broader community, or if they still only reflected the interests of the core group. C2 also mentioned that CNA members felt unprepared in many ways to deal with cultural differences, such as gendered participation patterns within the Muslim community.

And we are no way equipped to deal with some of these things, right? Like we come from a very open, very transparent, very like neighbourly approach ...you should be able to talk to your neighbour about anything. But we're not really in the position where we can talk about cultural and religious differences that are very deeply ingrained, especially with first generation immigrants where I'm not ... no one at the CNA wants to sit here and try and create a perfect world in the CNA overnight.

C2 here addresses the tensions CNA members experience when trying to engage with different cultural and linguistic groups, but not wanting to overstep the boundaries or impose their values on others. This resident also acknowledged that this is delicate work that the CNA felt unequipped to deal with. At this time, *Neighbourhood Action* as a whole had little administrative structure or support in place for neighbourhoods to address issues of inclusion. Indeed, concerted and sincere efforts towards inclusion require significant training, education, resources and overall vision to accomplish, which were not readily available to the CNA at this time.

The third resident, C3, had been involved in the Centretown Charter that predated the

CNA, but rarely attended CNA meetings and was not very actively involved during these years. This resident did not make clear why their participation had waned. The participation of this resident was much more limited than the previous two, which likely accounts for C3's less robust responses to questions of inclusion. Moreover, the span during which C3 was not attending meetings coincided with several group discussions about diversity within the CNA. For this reason, C3 may have been less aware of the ongoing issues and discussions on this topic. C3's response to questions of inclusion focused only on socio-economic differences and power differences between residents and the city and service providers. When asked if the CNA's members were representative of the broader community, this resident responded:

The whole Centretown association ... we run the gamut of low income to middle class and also some very high income people. So we're fairly representative ... And they have a lot of respect for differing points of view. So they really do try and accommodate everybody from all the socio-economic backgrounds.

C3 found that the CNA was welcoming to the socio-economic differences of its members and saw advocating for those who live with the effects of poverty as one of the major aims of the CNA. C3 stated that "our biggest priority is making [Centretown] livable for people, for everybody." He particularly focused on the homeless community who live in Centretown:

Whenever you walk down the street and you see somebody sitting on the sidewalk asking for money, that person is in pain – psychologically, mentally, emotionally, health wise.

This stance as an advocate for livable wages and sustainable communities, C3 mentioned, often put the CNA in an adversarial relationship with local service providers, who they called part of

the “poverty industry.” C3 expressed that some of these players operate with exclusionary practices and argued that some service providers appear more concerned with securing funding for their operations than with assisting residents. This participant felt that the practices of some service providers did not mesh with the CNA’s mandate of advocating for the elimination of social and economic disparities. The perceived differences in vision for the neighbourhood and mandates of inclusion led to the feeling among some CNA residents that they must work against certain service providers, who are supposed to be major partners. This was expressed by C3 explicitly in the interviewed, as well as by many other residents in the 2014 focus group. C3 reported a similar tension when working with the City, noting:

...your concerns are not viewed as being within the city's interest because ... city hall has their agenda and it doesn't seem to reflect what the citizens actually want.

C3 further argued that when resident input goes to city hall, “...it hits a brick wall and there's nothing that you can say, do or recommend that [they]'re going to listen to.” No matter how dedicated the CNA is to certain issues, C3 asserted that as a group of unpaid residents they often do not have the energy or power to deal with city politics.

The Centretown association, they are in one word enthusiastic. Now, their enthusiasm again gets shot up and side swiped by what city hall's agenda is...

In the Centretown focus group held in 2014, other CNA members echoed this sentiment strongly. As an example, the group reported that two proposals for affordable housing they supported were “killed” by different branches of the city. One resident stated:

We are a group of neighbourhood activists working on their own time going against people who are paid and have resources.

In this example and others, it is clear that significant institutional barriers limit the work of the CNA and other neighbourhood groups. That is, while the CNA aims to be inclusive and supports actions and projects that respond to the needs of those who live in poverty, their efforts can be derailed. Importantly, these conflicts with the city and other partners can distract neighbourhood groups from directing energy towards addressing issues of inclusion within their own group. Conflicts can also limit the resources the CNA has to make their meetings more accessible. Nevertheless, residents mentioned that the CNA does have strong and supportive relationships with many community partners who are dedicated to the same goals and priorities as the residents. One focus group participant explained:

It is motivation to know that we have strong stakeholders in the community and [a] strong CNA that will actually back a lot of these things to help up together to get things done. It actually keeps you from being apathetic because you know there are other people who are going to work as hard as you are.

The community partners and city staff who were regularly engaged and consistently worked together with the group were regarded quite positively by residents.

b) *CNA service providers and city staff*

The service providers and city staff interviewed expressed a commitment to working alongside the Centretown Neighbourhood Association on their priorities and goals. They also expressed similar concerns to C1 and C2 about the lack of diverse representation within the CNA. Part of the issue, according to one service provider, is simply the lack of numbers. The CNA, like many neighbourhood groups, struggled with resident engagement and to have enough

people present to do the work required and contribute different opinions to the process. One service provider, C-SP1, explained:

If there's 5,000 people living in one community and only 20 people are coming out to each meeting, that's a very small proportion of people. ... It's great to have these people engage, but a lot of the residents say as well – you'll hear them at meetings – it's the same ten people, it's the same 15 people. So it's great that they're involved but it's not really reflective of the larger community.

With a small pool of participants in addition to barriers to participation that disproportionately affect some individuals, it is unlikely that a group of 15-20 people will be representative of the larger community. However, C-SP1 would not go as far as saying that anyone had been excluded.

From what I've seen, if you look in the Centretown community, for instance, they have representatives that come to the meetings that really work to engage, you know, residents that don't speak English or ESL; they really work towards that group. I think that the neighbourhoods are very aware of their demographic breakdowns and things like that and I think they're very aware of having to engage them.

Importantly, this participant states that the CNA meetings have “representatives” (service providers) who engage newcomer communities in their work, which is very different from having a representative group of residents as members of the CNA. Nevertheless, C-SP1 insists that the CNA and other neighbourhoods are conscious of the need to do outreach to diverse communities. A city staff member, C-CS1, who had worked closely with the CNA agreed that

being representative was something the group was aware of and tried to address. This staff member stated:

...from my perspective the group that comes in here to work on the action plan and the community issues is different than the group I see come in here day in day out to use the services. With the group that come in ... would they come to meetings? Probably not... Number one there's language barriers. Number two, they're pretty intimidating these meetings. And then they've got busy lives, they don't see it as a meaningful activity for them. They don't, you know, for whatever reason it's not their forte.

Language differences, time commitments and the intimidating professional culture of monthly meetings are significant barriers to participation for many residents, particularly those from newcomer communities. Recognizing the barriers to attending meeting, which form the core of NA participation, C-CS1 suggested envisioning new forms of engagement.

You have to engage people differently and you have to always work on engagement. And although they may not come to meetings you have to be very diligent about talking to them and getting their input. I think that happens to some degree. Could it happen more? Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think if the CNA wants to aspire to be the voice of the neighbourhood they need to really make a very big commitment to doing that. I think they try to be reflective to varying degrees of success.... I think it's always going to be something they need to work on.

Another city staff, C-CS2, who worked with the CNA on a park redevelopment project, noted that they learned many lessons in outreach to local apartment residents, many of whom are

newcomers from the Somali community. This staff member mentioned effective and culturally appropriate communication, not simply translation, as a lesson learned.

As staff we should understand the culture and the religion, the culture and the people in the community before we start throwing drawings and ideas in front of them. It's where they come from and how we can communicate with them effectively and how we can get comments and information effectively back from the community.

The community developer (CD) has also been working with the CNA to do targeted outreach to the apartment towers. The CD facilitates a tenant group for the apartments, and noted that the tenant group is socially very different from CNA members.

...most of the people around [the CNA] are university educated, [work] full time, young families. There's a few seniors. But with the apartment meeting, it's mostly lower income, [social assistance] recipients, people living kind of [precariously]. ... definitely very different demographics.

Recognizing that the tenant group members may never attend the larger CNA groups for various reasons, the intention of the planning team is to build capacity among those residents and promote communication with the CNA, with the community developer acting as the facilitator. At the time of our interview in 2014, the groups were quite separate, but the CD believed that the CNA supported the work of the tenant group and would support the group if the tenants requested it.

For example, if something was to come up around the apartment meetings about, you know, some policy change, or some advocacy work that needed to happen on behalf

of the renters, the CNA would be there to support them. I know they would be there to rise up to whatever [the tenant group] are saying.

Indeed, the CNA indeed were very active in supporting the tenant group when the housing crisis occurred later in 2015, a part of the group's evolving responses to supporting and connecting with low-income residents.

5.3 Centretown: Summary of findings

In the above section, I provided an account of a rapidly developing downtown core community – Centretown. Based on participant interviews and my own observations during key events, I explored how *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) participants in Centretown addressed issues of inclusion and responded to processes of exclusion. Using the case of Centretown as a rich example, I explore the following research questions: *Who is participating in Neighbourhood Action? How are participants taking up community development? How are NA participants addressing inequity? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation?* I identify the major findings as follows:

1) Despite the significant ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood and the official mandate of inclusion, CNA membership patterns did not reflect the diversity that exists in the broader community. In particular, resident members and other stakeholders struggled to continuously engage immigrant and refugee participants, who comprise a significant population in the neighbourhood. While the CNA had connections with a wide range of organizations in the community and its public events were well-attended by a diverse group of residents, active membership remained largely white and middle-class. The strikingly unequal patterns of

participation prompt questions about the CNA and NA mandates of inclusion expressed in official documents. The reality of unequal participation also prompts concerns about the legitimacy of resident-led participatory processes, which are intended to address issues of poverty and exclusion that disproportionately affect newcomer residents. If those most affected by poverty and exclusion are not continuously engaged and central to the planning process, it is reasonable to conclude that the process itself may perpetuate exclusion despite the inclusive mandate of the neighbourhood group and the NA larger project.

2) There are persistent institutional barriers that residents face in accomplishing their goals of fostering inclusion, which limit the potential of neighbourhood-level organizing. Specifically, conflicts with some stakeholders can a) take energy away from addressing issues of inclusion and b) impede neighbourhood groups from accessing the space and resources needed to be more accessible. When engaged in power struggles with the City and service providers, the CNA had to “work against” the very stakeholders who were supposed to be its closest allies. Some residents saw themselves as neighbourhood activists working against people on “paid time”, creating an uneven playing field. In addition, some CNA members were concerned with what they named “poverty industry players” (certain service providers) who were perceived to not share the same commitment to addressing inequity and were seen to benefit from a perpetual need for service provision. Not only did the CNA’s conflict with stakeholders deflect attention away from addressing unequal patterns of participation, but the group also experienced barriers to accessing space and resources necessary to make the planning team more accessible. For example, the group struggled to secure space to provide childcare and lacked the consistent funds to provide translation at all CNA meetings and events. The residents’ experience of an unequal

relationship with other partners therefore impeded the CNA's energy and ability to address issues of inclusion on the planning team.

3) In the absence of overt and public acts of exclusion, patterns of racism and unequal participation can go unexamined and unaddressed. Even though participants (including CNA members and NA support staff) had been aware of racism and practices of exclusion in the neighbourhood for some time, it took two serious incidents to prompt the CNA to directly tackle exclusion and reflect on its own practices. In a rapidly developing community like Centretown, unequal patterns of participation were to be expected due to the well-known barriers to civic engagement facing low-income and newcomer residents, and due to the nature of rapid change in the neighbourhood. Given the increasing number of "new Hamiltonians" – primarily homeowners and students with the time, energy and capacity to participate in the professionalized environment that is central to NA – it is not surprising that these kinds of individuals do not experience the same kinds of barriers to participation often experienced by newcomers and low-income residents. In the early days of NA, NA management, stakeholders and residents underestimated barriers to participation experienced by many residents in participation in neighbourhood activities like the CNA. In the particular case of Centretown, NA management and participants could not have anticipated the rate of residential and demographic change the neighbourhood would experience, which affected patterns of participation. Although the community developer, other stakeholders and residents did work significantly towards outreach efforts, the Centretown action plan itself does not identify barriers to participation or propose a strategy to meaningfully engage with newcomer residents or other marginalized populations who may be less likely to participate in a process like NA.

4) When official mandates fail to name racism or reflect the needs and interests of new immigrants and racialized residents, opportunities for diverse and meaningful participation will remain limited. By not explicitly addressing the specific needs of newcomer communities, who make up a large and growing part of the neighbourhood population, the action plan itself narrows the scope of participation. While tackling issues like food and housing insecurity may indirectly benefit newcomer communities, the action plan does not frame these priorities in culturally/linguistically-specific ways that speak to newcomer interest. As a result, newcomer residents may not have felt that the CNA reflected their interests or may not have felt called to participate. Moreover, the academic tone of the CNA mandate may alienate long-time and newcomer residents who may not share the same level of formal education or English-language literacy. While it is understandable that the CNA document uses scholarly references to justify its mandate to an audience of city staff and other stakeholders, this language made the action plan less accessible to a large proportion of residents who the CNA was trying to reach.

Conversely, when racism and exclusion were named and interrogated, and when the CNA's actions reflected the needs and interests of newcomer and racialized residents, diverse and meaningful participation were enhanced. This was exemplified by the two episodes of self-reflection, which were prompted by racist vandalism and exclusionary housing practices in the neighbourhood. The vignettes demonstrated that racism and exclusion are alive and well in the community, and highlighted how the CNA's responses to inequity are evolving. Key to this evolution was the establishment of the resident-led Centretown Inclusion Group, who took the lead on the Diversity Matters event and pushed forward the tenant protection action. If the CNA continues to reflect the interests and needs of more marginalized residents in the neighbourhood (including newcomer, racialized, disabled and low-income residents), the Inclusion Group may

be helpful in consistently eliciting the participation of a more diverse group of residents and better responding to the pressing needs of the community.

5.4 Connection to the literature

Findings about who is and is not participating in *Neighbourhood Action* in Centretown are consistent with the broader literature on patterns of participation in civic activities. Extensive literature particularly from the U.S. and Canada has examined unequal civic involvement, confirming that low-income and racialized individuals are under-represented in civic activities. Participation in civic activities has been found to be “fuelled by high levels of education and wealth” (Portney & Berry, 2010), and highly favouring the participation of middle class citizens (Church et al., 2002; Stolle & Cruz, 2005). In part, self-selection, and/or the selection of the “right kind of people” by those directing the process contribute to unequal participation in civic activities (Martin, 2008). Specific research on neighbourhood strategies has also confirmed patterns of participation where low-income and racialized individuals are under-represented and/or overpowered, even when the strategies take place in low-income and racialized communities (Zagofsky, 2013; Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Low-income and racialized residents in Centretown were observed and reported to be especially unrepresented in the leadership on the CNA.

The case of the CNA sheds light on how existing power imbalances between partners can disempower community members even in processes that are deemed participatory or citizen-led (King & Cruickshank, 2010; Fisher & Shragge, 2000; Jones, 2002). In terms of the relationship between residents and other major stakeholders, residents often felt at a disadvantage and that they were on an unequal playing field against other partners. The members’ opposition to

“poverty industry players” relates to the observation that needs- or deficit-based approaches can be used to justify the intervention of service provision, That is, some service providers can develop a vested interest in maintaining the need for services to justify their own existence and continued funding (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). As a result, while NA as a process may operate within an asset-based framework (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), some partners may continue to operate under a deficit- and needs-based model. This can in turn lead to conflict when major partners do not share a similar vision of neighbourhood change and development, and differ in their approaches to serving communities in need.

The findings presented here from Centretown Neighbourhood Association (CNA) highlight the complex ways that barriers to participation play out in settings that are designed to be inclusive. Similar to Young (2000), the account of the CNA highlights the challenges of democratic processes under conditions of structural inequality. Namely, where racism and classism exist in the broader community, they will be reflected in patterns of participation and power imbalances between actors will affect the process. Urban planning and processes, no matter how participatory, have been identified as possessing a problematic binary; namely, they can be profoundly empowering or disempowering to communities (Forester, 1999). Moreover, resident and community groups face significant barriers to achieving their inclusive mandate and must work within heavy structural and institution constraints. Neoliberal restructuring, coupled with the dismantling of social supports and the downloading of state responsibilities onto citizens “limit the possibility for liberation”, particularly for citizens in urban centres (Therborn, 2008). Under these constraints and the proliferation of structural inequalities, it is unsurprising that the CNA was found to be a site of exclusion, granting voice to a select few – in many cases, those who already had significant power in terms of race and class privilege. Nevertheless, the CNA

also established itself as a site of mobilizing against exclusive practices in the neighbourhood. As sites of inclusion or exclusion, NA processes, in particularly the planning teams, indeed have the power to create change by either resisting or supporting exclusionary visions of neighbourhood development.

If pedagogy is about “linking learning to social change, education to democracy, and knowledge to acts of intervention in public life” (Giroux & Searls Giroux, 2006, p. 28), the example of Centretown can certainly be considered a pedagogical process. For one, NA participants underwent ongoing processes of personal and group development over the course of the observation period, particularly in regards to addressing racism and inequity in the neighbourhood. Certain public acts of exclusion served as prompts to engage in self-reflection, learning to more openly acknowledge and interrogate racism and exclusion. In this way, the planning team engaged in *praxis* (Freire, 1970), or collective reflection and action in order to create progressive social change. In this process, residents enacted public interventions and mobilizations – in this case, against racism and processes of gentrification. This was supported by the role of the community developer, who worked to connect residents to crucial resources, negotiate relationships between partners, and foster resident leadership. The resident leadership skills developing in the group is powerful in the two vignette stories, particularly as more low-income and racialized residents begin to participate actively in the leadership of the CNA.

In addition to being a site of social change and collective learning, Centretown is an especially rich site for developing insights on how processes of racism, classism and power operate at the neighbourhood level. Given the many racist incidents reported by residents, the lack of attention to this issue in a public process like NA could be seen as complicity in systemic racism. In so much as civic participation is a manifestation of belonging (Best, Dustan & Breton,

2006), if low-income and/or racialized Centretown residents experience discrimination and do not feel welcome in the neighbourhood, it is unlikely that they will participate in neighbourhood activities. Dei's (1997) work on secondary school drop-out among black youth reconceptualizes patterns of non-participation in terms of being "forced out" by patterns of exclusion and a failure to acknowledge racial difference or reflect the needs or interests of those youth. Similarly, racialized residents and low-income may be "forced out" of participating in NA when the process is dominated by bureaucratic structures, fails to acknowledge racism or classism, and is seen to reflect the needs and interests of more privileged groups. Examples of racist interactions and behaviours in Centretown remind us of the persistent and pervasive nature of racism. Yet, as predicted by many critical race scholars like Delgado & Stefancic (2012) and Dei (2005, 2012), the denial and erasure of exclusion often observed in Centretown is equally a part of the reality of racism. The erasure of racism can be considered part of what Essed (2001) calls "everyday racism", referring to the ways in which systemic racism is reproduced through routine and taken-for-granted practices.

Another aspect of addressing racism includes an institutional component. One stakeholder working in Centretown highlighted the lack of strategic vision regarding racism and inclusion in NA and emphasized the need to "bring everyone in the tent upfront" at the beginning of the process to create a sense of ownership. This stakeholder may have indirectly or accidentally been referencing Galabuzi (2001), who warned of tokenistic models of inclusion where racialized people are "[brought] into the tent but damned to the margins." The margins of the "tent" of NA might include instances when racialized and low-income people are "included" in large public events and "engaged" at a distance (i.e. through service providers), as opposed to being directly and actively involved in leadership structures. Official CNA documents, like the

NA vision, often reflected a “feel good” multiculturalist approach to diversity (Kymlicka, 2012), with an emphasis on cultural events, distant engagement and a declared openness to everyone. Such an approach can obscure differences, deny marginalization, and fail to address the social, political and economic exclusion that face immigrant and/or racialized residents (Galabuzi, 2001). It took responding to two egregious instances of exclusion for the CNA shift to a more anti-racist approach to diversity, seeking to explicitly confront and eradicate racism (Dei, 2005; Razack, 1998, Bannerji, 2000; Galabuzi, 2006; Bonnett, 2000). As the broader NA mandate is now operating within an anti-racist framework, and the CNA has neighbourhood racism on its radar, it is possible that the work of the planning team and the project may continue to shift towards reflecting anti-racist ideals and practice.

Importantly, Centretown demonstrates the strength of common discourses on race and the ways in which language can obscure the reality of racism and exclusion. Linguistic choices not only reflect existing power relations, but speech and texts can also create and sustain them (Fairclough, 1992). For instance, language used in the Centretown plan and by Centretown participants around “social mix” and attracting “new” residents and the “creative class” can hide processes of exclusion that are operating in the neighbourhood. It has been observed that supporting a healthy “social mix” in urban neighbourhoods can obscure the reality of gentrification and displacement (Evans & Gidley, 2010; Rooke & Taylor, 2010). When residents talk about promoting a “social mix” and making the neighbourhood a “destination” (for new residents), it implies that there is something undesirable about existing residents. This is especially apparent when marginalized groups are ignored in public discourse, or are portrayed as difficult to live with and/or in need of constant service provision. The issue of race was often skirted by NA participants as well during the earlier phase of observation and data collection.

Young (2000) argues that when racism exists, it must be named. Indeed, in Centretown public acts of racism forced the group to acknowledge existing racial tensions, and to name and interrogate their own responsibility in the process. Once racial tensions were named and interrogated, only then could Centretown residents begin to “clean” and “heal” the wound of racism, in the words of one CNA participant. The active and public naming of the existence of racism in the neighbourhood is therefore a powerful first step in countering processes of exclusion and ensuring that they are not perpetuated through the NA process. Importantly, the narratives and knowledge of people of colour were considered “legitimate, appropriate and critical” to understandings of racism in the community (Yosso, 2005, p. 74). The public naming of racism in the neighbourhood, and the centralizing of the narratives and knowledge of racialized residents, have shifted the dominant discourses of race in the CNA from a superficial multicultural celebration of diversity, to an anti-racist interrogation of racially-motivated aggressions and exclusion in the neighbourhood.

In this chapter, I have explored how Hamilton’s *Neighbourhood Action* is operating in Centretown, a rapidly developing downtown core community. Specifically, I highlighted patterns of participation in the Centretown Neighbourhood Association (CNA) and defined how participants conceptualized and responded to issues of inclusion and exclusion in the neighbourhood. In the next section, I will move on to explore how other NA communities address issues of inclusion and confront patterns of exclusion in the neighbourhoods. I turn now to two mixed and developing central-east neighbourhoods.

Chapter 6:

WHOSE MIX IS THIS? *Neighbourhood Action* in mixed and developing communities

Prototype	Neighbourhood	Population (to nearest 1000)	Year Plan Developed	Action Plan priorities
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Gibson-Landsdale	8,000	2012	Safety, communications, businesses and services, culture and education
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Crown Point	20,000	2011-12	Leadership, resident engagement, beautification and environment, recreation and education, employment and local economy, promotion
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Sherman	21,000	2011-12	Safety, social services and recreational programs, cleanliness, housing, living wage, community engagement
2 – East-central mixed and developing	Stinson	3,000	2011-12	Public spaces, beautification, walkability, community relationships, education and training, poverty and housing, engaging with residential care facilities (RCFs) and businesses

Abbreviated from Table 4.1b, extracted from Table 4.1

6.1 Overview of prototype 2

As indicated in the abbreviated table above, I categorize four of the *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) communities as mixed and developing neighbourhoods located in east-central Hamilton.

Though varying in size and organizational history, these neighbourhoods share similar demographic profiles and a similar housing stock of larger old homes. These are socially, economically and residentially mixed communities, and are currently experiencing some resident and economic development, though not to the extent of the rapidly developing downtown core communities profiled above (likely due to their relative distance from the downtown core). The

shared demographic patterns, and shared borders, of these neighbourhoods mean that they tend to have similar goals and priorities in their action plans and similar patterns of participation. I have chosen to highlight two neighbourhoods in the chapters below in order to exemplify the mixed and developing prototype. I chose to profile both communities in order to highlight how even adjacent communities with similar demographic profiles can differ greatly in resident organizing efforts and patterns of participation due to organizing history, outreach, conflict and other factors. Profiled together, these communities also highlight how patterns of participation and non-participation are portrayed and addressed differently even in demographically similar areas. Importantly, these neighbourhoods as a whole do not have the same level of ethnic diversity found in Centretown or Glenville. Specifically, 12% and 15% of residents identify as visible minorities in the community profiled below, compared to 39% in Centretown and 43% in Glenville (SPRC, 2012). As a result, when participants in these neighbourhoods refer to the notion of “mix” in the neighbourhoods and the planning teams, it is primarily socioeconomic. In these neighbourhoods, the relatively small number of visible minorities can mean that ethnic diversity is overlooked in outreach, meaning that low-income (white) residents remain the targeted population for promoting ‘diverse’ outreach. Nevertheless, profiling these communities will help to address my research questions: *Who participates in NA? What are the barriers and enablers to diverse and meaningful participation? How are barriers challenged or reproduced?* I refer to the first community as Elmwood and the second community as Hillboro (both pseudonyms)

6.2 ELMWOOD: Supporting neighbourhood change with/out displacement

The Elmwood hub, originally called South Elmwood, is one of the mixed income neighbourhoods located in the central-east part of Hamilton. A historic community that stretches from the escarpment to the northern part of the city, it is economically and residentially varied, with a mix of large estates and single family homes, as well as converted multiplexes and residential care facilities. Unlike Centretown, there is not a large newcomer population in Elmwood and 85% of residents identify as white (SPRC, 2012). However, nearly 37% of residents live below the poverty line, which is concentrated in the northern parts of the neighbourhood (Wong, 2014). The north-south stratification of wealth is a significant feature in the neighbourhood, which, as will be demonstrated below, was openly acknowledged by the hub planning team and other NA participants during interviews and my observations. Further, Elmwood is the largest NA community in population with 21,000 residents, and it is one of the largest in size, spanning approximately five square kilometres (SPRC, 2012). However, its boundaries overlap with two other NA neighbourhoods, and due in part to the lack of engagement with residents in the northern part of the neighbourhood, there have been ongoing debates about defining the official boundaries (Elmwood Hub, 2015). The active membership in Elmwood is quite extensive, with approximately 50 residents regularly attending monthly meetings during my time of observation and many more working on various actions behind the scenes. The primary actions in the hub over this period included a bimonthly newspaper, a neighbour-to-neighbour engagement program called the Spokes, neighbourhood cleanups, community barbeques and historic tours (Elmwood Hub, 2014). While the hub is organized tightly around its action plan, members also frequently respond to emerging issues in the

community, including a recent school closure and a proposed incineration plant (Craggs, 2014; Coleman, 2014).

During my time of observation in the Elmwood hub planning team from 2013 to 2015, residents and other participants consistently expressed a commitment to the values of inclusion, recognized the vast economic differences that mark the neighbourhood, and grappled with how to be a representative public voice for a changing community. Below, I will outline how NA participants in Elmwood (5 residents, 3 service providers, 3 city staff and 1 community developer) understood their work and how they addressed issues of inclusion in the neighbourhood and within the planning team. As in the previous chapter, emphasis will be placed on resident experience. Before delving into the experiences of NA participants in Elmwood, I will first present an analysis of the Elmwood hub's official commitment to inclusion, which will serve as a point of reference and comparison to the on-the-ground reality of NA.

6.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of the Elmwood action plan

The Elmwood hub developed its action plan (South Elmwood Hub Community Planning Team, 2012) through a series of meetings, community consultations, and public asset mapping and visions activities that took place between 2010 and 2012. The plan outlines a mission, vision and values, lays out a terms of reference, and six priority goals, each with a list of associated actions. The plan also includes information on the history of the neighbourhood and the hub, demographic data on the community, and the partnerships that facilitated the NA planning process. Throughout the plan, the document confirms a commitment to fostering inclusion and community cohesion through the use of an asset-based model of development. The action plan defines the mission of the Elmwood hub as follows:

Using an asset-based community development model, the local planning team forges relationships (with residents and partners) in working together to decrease barriers and increase opportunities that enhance the quality of life for people living and working in the South Elmwood neighbourhood. (SECPT, 2012, p. 10)

Like the overall NA mandate, the Elmwood hub document emphasizes improving the quality of life for people living in the hub through decreasing barriers and increasing opportunities. It further defines its values as: *respect, inclusiveness, stewardship, caring, community strengths, and fun*. The priorities for the hub are: 1) community safety, 2) access to services and recreation, 3) creating a clean, safe and comfortable environment, 4) affordable and dignified housing, 5) promoting a living wage, and 6) building an engaged, caring and inclusive community. In turn, some examples of actions include neighbourhood clean-ups, traffic safety improvements, large social events to build on assets, supporting property repairs, improving recreational opportunities for youth, and promoting a community kitchen. The actions reflect a desire to support those living in poverty, through food and housing security and supporting a living wage, and also a desire to make the neighbourhood clean and attractive.

Interestingly, the plan defines residents in the neighbourhood as “salt of the earth” and “blue collar” Hamiltonians (SECPT, 2012, p. 1). It is important to note that this plan was devised between 2010 and 2012, and as noted in the sections below, the resident participants involved in the early planning activities in Elmwood were described as largely working-class or lower-income. As the plan evolved and the demographics of the neighbourhood began to change, participants noted that more “new Hamiltonians” (recently arrived homeowners from other communities) were participating in NA, which at times appeared to displace lower-income residents. In other words, at the time of the origin of the action plan, the document’s description

of the residents as working-class was likely reflective of the kinds of people who were actively participating in NA at that period, according to the CD and other participants interviewed. The actions, in turn, seem to largely reflect the interests and needs of working class residents (e.g. living wage, affordable housing, and food security). Another note of interest is that the plan mentions the north-south continuum in the neighbourhood, but only in descriptive terms with reference to the difference in housing stock between the two ends of the community. That is, the socioeconomic differences are not explicitly named and planning team members did not anticipate that northern residents would be markedly underrepresented in the process. Only in later years would outreach and engagement with northern sections of Elmwood become a declared hub priority.

With the Elmwood hub's mandate and action plan in mind, in the next section I focus on how participants addressed the south/north economic divide, geographic boundaries, and the lack of representation from northern residents, as well as how participants understood neighbourhood change and gentrification. While many participants expressed a desire to be inclusive to northern neighbours and supported "mixed" neighbourhood development, some simultaneously espoused a highly exclusive vision of the neighbourhood.

6.2.3 Wrong side of the tracks: who's in and who's out?

The north-south economic divide that characterizes the Elmwood hub is one that is obvious to those who live here, and was the primary difference that participants referenced when asked about inclusion and exclusion in the neighbourhood. When asked about who had been left out of the organizing activities in the Elmwood hub, residents and other NA participants were

quick to point out the under-representation of residents from the northern parts of the neighbourhood. This stems from broader neighbourhood social and economic patterns and in other adjacent communities, where wealth is concentrated in the more southern parts (towards the escarpment), while poverty is concentrated in the north (towards the water and industry). Participants frequently mentioned that the economic divide was a geographic one, though many had differing definitions of what constituted the “northern” part of the neighbourhood. The unofficial dividing line was alternately named by NA participants as north of King Street, Wilson Street, Cannon Street, Barton Street, or the CN tracks just above Barton Street. The divide is probably best defined as a continuum from a wealthier south end to a poorer north end. However, this description does not help in the planning team efforts of defining the parameters of the neighbourhood, which was at times an all-consuming question for the Elmwood hub. The question of borders often overlapped with questions of engagement – specifically, around who was or wasn’t participating in the hub and who should be targeted for outreach.

The planning team’s efforts to engage with northern neighbours were officially recognized with a name change in 2013. When the hub began, it was called *South Elmwood* – even though the south part is only approximately the bottom third of the neighbourhood. At a neighbourhood meeting in August 2013, one resident brought up the irony of the neighbourhood naming itself after its most affluent part when the hub given that its involvement within NA began as a poverty reduction strategy. After some discussion this resident moved that the neighbourhood strike the “south” from its name and the residents unanimously voted in favour. The next day, the hub posted the following on its website:

We are very pleased to pass on this news: after a number of months of discussion and subcommittee work, the members have chosen to rename our hub, The Elmwood Hub.

This change reflects our desire to engage more residents in the northern part of our hub.

While there had been consensus among the group about the intention to engage with northern neighbours, there was little consensus about what constitutes the northern part of the neighbourhood. Defining the northern boundary of the neighbourhood was particularly troublesome in Elmwood for a number of reasons, and as stated, was a frequent topic at monthly meetings. The hub even had dedicated meetings to address this topic in isolation because it would generate so much discussion and strong opinions that it derailed regular meetings. One point of contention was the overlapping boundaries with two adjacent NA neighbourhoods. This is partially a question of identity formation for the neighbourhood, where the residents reflect on which areas “feel” like parts of their neighbourhood. While residents recognize that the boundaries are in many ways arbitrary and do not reflect the fluid ways in which people navigate urban spaces, the NA boundaries are a source of contention for two reasons. Firstly, they create a fixed ownership or claim on certain neighbourhood “assets” – for example, a park, a cafe, a social service centre, or community space. This becomes particularly salient in the “asset-based” nature of NA planning teams. Secondly, the boundaries dictate the scope and range of engagement efforts for each neighbourhood. In other words, which areas and residents are “fair game” for recruitment to which neighbourhood association? Which newspaper should be delivered to which residents?

This boundary issue also sparked internal reflection for the group, since where they place their boundaries defines how they measure how representative the hub is of its residents.

However, regardless of how the northern boundary is defined, participants largely acknowledged

that the hub participants largely come from the southern parts of the community. When asked if anyone had been left out of the planning process in the Elmwood hub, one resident (E3) stated:

Definitely north of, I would almost say north of King. I wouldn't even say Cannon or Wilson, I would say north of King. And I don't know why. ... I'm not sure if it's just the location of where the meetings are held or if it's just maybe a difference in belief or what they want to see accomplished, but really, the assets stop at King Street.^{vii} There's a huge representation south of King and there's little to no representation north of King.

The geographic location of the under-represented residents is often used as a euphemism for social and economic differences that mark the neighbourhood. Another resident, E5, put it more bluntly as follows:

[The planning team] are very well intentioned, but I mean Hamilton is known for mental health issues and social service needs and stuff like that. But that is not what you see at the Elmwood Hub. And I know that there is work being done to try and include people, but I think part of it, and this was one of the first things we talked about was that maybe we would have to move our meeting place somewhere closer in the north.

The lack of representation from more northern residents was a very frequent topic of discussion at monthly meetings and in certain subcommittees. One city staff member (E-CS1) credited the team for being self-reflective and asking themselves: “how do they at least recognize that they don't have people that physically live geographically in the north and what are the barriers?”

While recognizing the lack of engagement with northern neighbours, some residents

nevertheless felt that the planning team was fairly mixed in some ways. Three different residents expressed this sentiment:

E2: I think we have in terms of our probably economic scale we have a mixed bag even in the planning team right now...

E3: I think the best part about that group is that there is a mix of everything – different socioeconomics, different ages, different races, just everything. So when you look at the group, it's true.

E1: I think we would probably be surprised at how many people we have who their income would be very, very modest but you know they are people who have talents and skills and they bring them and they're just there like everybody else. So I don't think it's all about people with finances ...

Nevertheless, the issue of boundaries and northern engagement was pervasive in the planning team and represented a point of ongoing reflection for many. The issue raised an important question for residents – namely, can the hub claim to represent northern parts of the neighbourhood, when residents from those neighbourhoods are not yet present and engaged in that decision? In the words of one resident (E5), “you can't make any decisions on behalf of a person until you talk to them.” In a way, this is a chicken-egg situation where the group wants to engage the northern neighbours, however, it does not feel that it is appropriate to make that decision without input from those residents. Part of a compromise was residents granting permission to the community developer to engage in relationship-building in the north.

Meanwhile, the group would continue to engage in self-reflection and wonder together why some groups of residents were under-represented on the team.

6.2.4 On the agenda: Getting things done, leaving folks behind

I don't know how far you want to go back but initially there was very little interest and I don't know how to put this but it was very grass roots and it's great. There appears to be some impression of what is properly described as gentrification where the voices have changed. The original voices that were at the table have not remained. What we've had in the neighborhood I'm involved in is a new set of faces. A very articulate group of people, professionals, who want to get involved in their community, which is good. At the same time, it appears that there's a pull back from the most needy... – Service provider

Participants in the hub openly acknowledged that residents from the north face a number of barriers to participating in NA – chief among them, class differences and feelings of intimidation, exclusion and a lack of ownership in the process. This was felt strongly in Elmwood due to its increasingly professional meeting structure and culture, observed by residents, city staff and service providers alike. Some participants – particularly service providers and NA staff – expressed that as the neighbourhood has been changing and has become more populated by affluent homeowners, the active membership of the hub has changed. Not only have more homeowners been participating, but some described a parallel “retreat” from residents who are affected by poverty. The professional, white-collar work expectations that many more affluent participants bring to table at the planning team was observed to be intimidating to some residents. As in other NA communities, the structure of NA requires a reliance on: formal meetings based on Robert’s rules of order, an executive leadership structure with sub-

committees, grant applications, and the presence of many service providers. As the Elmwood hub grew in numbers and formalized under NA, some noted that the hub became highly organized and institutional. With so many members and a large number of ongoing projects, the meetings grew to have packed agendas that the group had to rush to get through. While on one hand, this structure makes the work go faster or more efficiently by some definitions, at the same time, it can alienate other residents who may not be used to such organizations and arrangements. New residents, particularly homeowners, in the neighbourhood are also sought after by the planning team to engage in the hub due to the enthusiasm and energy they are seen to bring. Several residents expressed similar sentiments indicating that lower-income and less educated residents are seen as less competent and unable/unwilling to participate in the structure of NA:

...most of the people who come to the planning team meetings now are people that have lived in Hamilton five years and less and there's just a real enthusiasm about wanting to get involved and it's usually ... an educated group of people and they work in responsible positions and they know how to get things done in their work life and they're just kind of transporting those skills into their volunteer life and that's why we're seeing people, when they get together in subcommittees, it's like they kind of have an idea of what we need to do to have this move forward.

...people that are affluent tend to have a different mindset because they're not really bogged down. They have more free time or they have more ambition, or they have more critical thinking. And so they're able to do more.

I don't think that people are so much left out as this type of thing appeals to a certain type of person, right? People who want to come to meetings.

Given the workload and the time-sensitive nature of the work they do, it is understandable that hub members would seek out energetic and fast-working residents who understand the demands required by the city structure that frames NA (and the need to “get things done” and “move forward” quickly). However, the seeking out of professionals with desirable “assets” can leave many behind, and also portrays lower-income residents as less competent and having less to offer than more affluent residents. While some residents suggested that lack of interest can explain the disproportionate lack of participation, others suggested that it stems from something deeper – namely, a feeling of intimidation or lack of belonging. Resident E1 defined this as follows:

There's kind of a circular problem and that is that if you don't feel that you have much to offer you don't feel so inclined to get involved and if you don't have much to offer or believe you don't, you may find that you are much more focused on just your daily needs... how am I going to keep food in the fridge for the kids and how are we going to make sure that the rent is paid this month and when you're pressed with all of those kinds of concerns going and volunteering for some pie-in-the-sky endeavour is you know not even on your radar.

In addition to the daily stresses that face those living in poverty, some lower-income residents may not participate because they feel that they “don't have much to offer”, in the words of this resident. I would add that residents also might not participate if they feel that the group does not

expect them to have anything to offer (e.g. that they do not have the “critical thinking” skills or “drive” necessary to do this work). However, residents deny that this sentiment is ever conveyed at meetings. One resident, E3, stated:

People who may not come from, who may come from, I guess it's bad to say, but lower classes, may feel intimidated to enter a group, whether they cannot relate to the group. But at the same time, in the settings in the meetings, we never speak about anything like that. It's literally how do we better the neighbourhood for everyone.

While residents at hub meetings may never explicitly state that certain residents would be excluded, some participants may nevertheless experience feelings of isolation or exclusion. Resident E1 stated that there is a need to explicitly welcome the contributions of a wide range of neighbours in order to counter the feelings of intimidation some may experience.

...we need to find ways to help people who are in the neighbourhood and who are struggling and then we need to also help those folks see that they have things to offer, they have personal assets and that they too have an opportunity and a responsibility. It's not all about receiving it needs to go all the way around, receiving and giving.

While participants involved in Elmwood identified the many barriers facing northern and lower-income residents, they also expressed a desire to challenge these barriers and open up multiple ways for a wide range of residents to participate. On top of an intimidating and at times exclusive professional culture, participants in Elmwood also noted that communication and outreach to northern neighbours needed to expand greatly.

6.2.5 Lost in delivery: incomplete outreach and two-way intimidation

Compared to other NA communities, the levels of participation in the Elmwood hub were quite impressive, with approximately 50 residents attending monthly meetings, countless others working behind the scenes, and a very active online community. The high levels of participation were often attributed to the wide distribution of the Elmwood Hub News, a bimonthly publication that is delivered door-to-door across the neighbourhood. One resident, E2, explained:

...people started to read it and it came out on a regular basis... this is something that ... went to all the houses in the hub so people could see what was happening and then there was the action plan.

The hub news helped to spread the word to neighbours about the action plan, which sparked the interest of more residents who got “hooked” by certain actions of interest. However, as noted by the resident above, the paper gets delivered to “all the houses” in the hub – not necessarily the apartments, multiplexes or residential care facilities. Another resident, E3, who was involved in the delivery of the paper tried to make every effort to deliver to paper to all residences, but didn’t believe this was true of everyone who was involved with delivery.

I’m pretty sure a lot of those apartments, the newspaper doesn’t reach the majority of the people. And we spoke to one of the people who’s responsible for delivering the newspaper, organizing it. And they were still not sure of how do we reach the apartments. ...How many apartments that we cannot open the door to, how do we get it to them, or do we just walk past that apartment? And you know, there could be even five, ten people who would be very interested in changing their situation and they just don’t know what

the first step is. And they never get to learn [about] it. ...I think for the majority of people, that's their first point of contact.

If the newspaper is the first point of contact for many residents, and it is not reaching those who live in multi-unit dwellings, this presents a missed opportunity to reach more residents who are not homeowners. E3 noted that lower-income residents may be intimidated to attend meetings, but also argued that some hub members may equally be intimidated to approach certain lower-income areas or individuals, who may in fact be very interested in the hub.

I think it's people who are part of the committee or people who are helping, delivering the newspapers in particular, maybe they're intimidated to approach the apartments on the contrary. So the houses and the nicer areas of this neighbourhood, they probably see the newspaper every single issue. But if you go to an area where you don't feel comfortable being in, you probably won't deliver the newspaper. ... it's a two-way street, it's never a one way thing. It takes two to tango, so in one sense it's probably intimidation on their end, and on the other sense, it's probably intimidation on the other people's ends as well.

The notion of intimidation here is two-fold. On one hand, more economically privileged residents feel intimidated to approach lower-income people or areas due to imagined associations of poverty and the danger of violence. On the other hand, lower-income residents may feel intimidated to come to a meeting, feeling that they do not belong or have the appropriate capacities to participate.

Equally important in the above quotation is this resident's acknowledgement that not all residents receive the paper, given that it is seen as the first point of contact for many active

participants. It challenges the idea that everyone knows about the hub, which is a common sentiment among active participants. Accordingly, the reasoning is that, if there are active, meeting-attending, paper-receiving, and very engaged participants then it is unimaginable that some could be unaware of the hub's activities. When asked if anyone had been left out of the hub planning process, one service provider stated:

No...I think the newspaper is delivered to, they say, everybody in South Elmwood and that ... it's in there every week, come to the meeting. If you sign up ... it's a very friendly e-mail you get every month that says please come out and it's great to see these people making a difference. I would think that if I was, you know, inclined that way...I'd be motivated to go just to see.

The idea that everyone in the neighbourhood gets the paper and that everyone is connected to the online communications of the hub is widespread, which obscures the reality of incomplete outreach efforts and barriers to accessibility. Specifically, the reliance on digital communications may unintentionally exclude lower-income residents, some of whom may have difficulty accessing computers or internet access. This can create what is often referred to as a “digital divide” between low-income and higher-income individuals (Norris, 2001).

In addition to the newspaper and online communication, other participants talked about other forms of outreach to more northern parts of the neighbourhood, including more general relationship-building. Another resident mentioned that part of the problem was finding more residents to do outreach who “aren't afraid of that area”. The obvious stigma associated with some areas can only heighten feelings of disconnection between northern and southern neighbours, and between tenants and homeowners more generally. In this quote, resident E3

mentioned the intersection where I lived, noting the differences between those who attend meetings and those who are tenants:

So even if you look at the building right there [at this intersection], there are apartments. There's obviously some people who live there who have difficulties whether it's with substance abuse or maybe lower incomes, but I doubt any of those people are at the meetings.

Meanwhile another resident, E4, discussed tenants more favourably, perhaps influenced by my own status as a tenant in the neighbourhood.

...It's not like I have ever taken a survey and seen who is a homeowner resident and who is a tenant. I know that you yourself are a tenant. But I would say that for some reason, it seems like the majority of people who attend the meetings are homeowners and not tenants ... I think it would be great to see the viewpoint of tenants, because these are the people who, you know, you're living here temporarily and maybe this is a neighbourhood you love and you end up buying and living here and raising your family.

Here, it is clear that my status as a tenant may have shaped the response of the resident, who may not have expressed such favourable views of renters otherwise. Nevertheless, this resident and others mentioned valuing the input of tenants, particularly when those tenants may be potential homeowners in the neighbourhood. This may stem from the idea that homeowners are more valuable and contributing members of the neighbourhood, whereas tenants are seen as more transient, less committed to the neighbourhood, and in some cases, a source of trouble, as will be seen in the case of Hillboro.

6.2.6 Who is in the mix? Far from a shared vision...

While participants in Elmwood consistently expressed a desire to help others in their community, to contribute to positive change, and to be inclusive in neighbourhood planning, it is clear that many have vastly different visions for the hub and varied definitions of success. For some, success can be measured in terms of how inclusive the planning team is to a diverse range of voices and how much it fosters integration in the broader community. One resident (E1), acknowledging the deep economic divide in the neighbourhood and the parallel patterns of participation, stated:

[We have] a fairly educated group of people and I think that that's true and I think that that's fine to this point but I think we really need to keep in mind that we are part of a mixed neighbourhood and we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to share those assets that we bring and to find out what the assets are that others bring who may not have had perhaps the benefit of as much education for example or may not have as much in terms of financial resources and we need to help that integration happen so that these opportunities...get shared and then that lifts the whole neighbourhood and makes everyone's life in the Elmwood hub better.

The vision expressed here is one in which all residents can help one another to realize and use their assets, to assist in the social integration in the neighbourhood, and to break down barriers to full participation and feelings of belonging in the community. While other residents expressed similar sentiments to broaden outreach and welcome all neighbours, they also expressed a vastly different vision of the neighbourhood than that expressed in the above quotation. Specifically, some residents posited a vision and model of development that may be exclusionary towards less

affluent, non-home-owning residents. Residents referenced a sense of camaraderie between “new Hamiltonians” who come from other cities like Toronto, who are excited about the neighbourhood and share the same goals of trying to “...not gentrify, but make it a safer place to raise, grow a family...” Some residents made direct comparisons to neighbourhoods in Hamilton and Toronto that have already undergone processes of gentrification, or are simply located in more affluent areas. These communities were posited as development models for Elmwood.

Resident E2 stated:

One thing that I would love for [Elmwood] to become, and I think slowly but surely it is becoming, is just having a name on the map. You know when people are looking at Victorian homes and when people speak about areas of Hamilton that are very, very, very similar to this one, you know, realtors and people buying a home will say, “Oh Durand, oh my gosh, Locke Street, oh my gosh, Westdale.” I want people to have that impact on this neighbourhood.

For this resident, the goal of neighbourhood change was to put Elmwood’s “name of the map” that is, having it widely recognized by, for example, realtors and home-buyers as a desirable location. Another resident, E5, emphasized the need to “revitalize” a particular street in the northern part of the hub:

...One of the ideas that came out was that we sort of find ways to revitalize Barton Street. So either find a way to help clean up some of the storefronts or find ways to provide grants to people that, you know, can do things to just kind of make it a little bit of a prettier area. It’s just like anything. It just needs a bit of money.

This resident also brought up the approaching Pan Am Games, which sparked a number of “clean up” efforts in the city, particularly in areas around the stadium (including the Elmwood hub).

...I know that with the Pan Am Games, that’s going to help bring some kind of, I don’t know if it’s life flow, or whatever the word is, when you kind of just sweep out all the old stuff and just kind of influx it with new blood. Yeah, it’s kind of like Parkdale in Toronto. Like it took not very long, maybe five or ten years, but they were able to, they’ve revitalized it completely. It’s all beautiful condos and you would hardly even know that it used to be what it used to be.

For this resident, a vision of positive neighbourhood change includes a process of “sweeping out the old stuff” and infusing the area with new commercial and residential developments.

Similarly, although referring to a different element needing “sweeping out”, another resident, E3, made reference to redevelopment of a commercial corridor, noting the potential of the street to be a desirable location for residents and consumers.

I think this neighbourhood could ...really become an area where people want to go and stroll through...because there’s a coffee shop or something to really draw them. I think that’s the vision that we would love of this neighbourhood, and no longer seeing, you know, transient individuals. If there are transient individuals, they know that there’s free services at [a local service provider] where they could go and try to fight their...their demons. And maybe they start renting or they have the opportunity to buy a house or whatever, but really make this into a neighbourhood very similar to those others that are very highly spoken of, Locke Street and all of that.

Here, the resident posits a vision of a neighbourhood where some residents can enjoy commercial development, without “seeing ...transient individuals” (e.g. homeless, sex trade workers, and/or people living in residential care facilities). While he mentions that these individuals can receive support in the neighbourhood, it appears that they will only be included in this vision of the neighbourhood if they become renters or homeowners. In other words, they are not included the “mix” of proposed mixed income development. The vision of neighbourhood change expressed by these three participants clearly stands in sharp contrast to that expressed by resident E1 above, who named being inclusive as an opportunity and a responsibility. That resident posited a vision of neighbourhood change not marked by residential and commercial development or the “sweeping out”/ removal of transient people, but rather by the social integration of all residents into the hub and all aspects of neighbourhood life. Such a sentiment reflects the values of inclusion and outreach outlined in the Elmwood hub’s mission statement and action plan, and includes a commitment to working alongside, rather than excluding, more marginal members of the community.

Service providers and NA staff similarly express varied visions for the neighbourhoods and differing understandings of inclusion in Elmwood. One city staff member, E-CS1, expressed an appreciation for the outreach efforts in Elmwood and believed that it had been successful in bringing together “two voices” – those who were already engaged and active, and those “who felt disenfranchised or people who felt too busy to voice their opinions.” While they expressed that there would always been more room to engage additional people, they believed that this would come in time – a thought which was echoed by other service providers as well. An NA staff member commended the neighbourhoods’ efforts towards inclusion, with specific reference to Elmwood.

... neighbourhoods are taking on [a commitment to inclusivity] and they're saying to each other as residents 'we can't set up a situation where it's us and them, only certain people can be part of this'. They don't want to gentrify in a bad way. They want their neighbourhoods to be mixed neighbourhoods.

From the NA administration, there is a vision that the planning process is inclusive, and the staff reference specific examples of inclusion. One example from Elmwood is an ongoing engagement project with the local community of sex trade workers. Nevertheless, the NA staff member noted the group still has some work to do in terms of representation:

So you know the challenge is probably not to bring everybody to the table. I'm not sure how you ever get a committee or a planning table that's completely representative of the neighbourhood. But we have to be very intentional about how we're reaching out to folks and making them aware of the activities that are going on in the neighbourhood and ensuring that our processes are welcoming to that. And I don't think we're quite there yet so there's some work to be done.

...By the same token, I wouldn't want to suggest that the neighbourhoods themselves are somehow exclusionary by design. I don't think they are. And in fact, if we look at some of the neighbourhoods where we're working, they have really wanted to find ways to reach out in ways that make sense and not naïve ways.

Meanwhile, another service provider agreed that neighbourhoods like Elmwood have made considerable efforts to do outreach, but still have significant work to do. Specifically, this service provider attributed this to the belief that NA's desire to be inclusive was not articulated clearly enough from the beginning and was lost in delivery in many of the neighbourhoods.

We talk about diversity, inclusion and there is an overarching belief that diversity is important to this process. When the tire hits the road, it didn't get filtered down as effectively as it could have, so I think that is a very clear statement...so people don't walk away from the table feeling marginalized.

...I would say to all the neighborhoods, bring everyone in the tent upfront. It's better to bring people, and it may take time to do that, but get people in the tent at first it's a sense of ownership is established in the beginning as opposed to "Well, we'll do that later on."

As mentioned in a previous section, the commitment to inclusion expressed by NA has developed considerably over time, particularly with the addition of the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC)'s addition to the NA management and the subsequent commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppressive practice. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how this will trickle down to the planning teams like the Elmwood hub.

6.2.7 Elmwood: Summary of findings

In this chapter, I have explored how the Elmwood hub participants continue to grapple with issues of inclusion in the planning team and in the broader community. Drawing largely from participant interviews and observation from 2013 to 2015, several key finds emerged that highlight the ongoing challenges and efforts of NA participants in mixed and developing communities. I identify the following as the major findings from Elmwood:

- 1) When unacknowledged, geographical stratification of poverty in a neighbourhood can serve to exacerbate unequal patterns of participation. NA participants in Elmwood recognized that participation patterns were unequal and that residents from the northern parts of the

neighbourhood were under-represented, despite the desire to foster broader participation. The large size of the hub, the southern location of the meetings, and the lack of social connections between affluent and lower-income residents altogether served to limit participation of northern residents. At the beginning of the NA process, the pattern went largely unchecked and unacknowledged, and the dominance of residents from the south became the norm.

2) The removal of the term “south” from the Elmwood hub’s name was an important symbolic moment in the group’s trajectory and reflected ongoing conversations about addressing unequal patterns of participation. However, geographical divisions in the neighbourhood were sometimes used in a way to excuse unequal patterns of participation and to avoid explicitly talking about class differences. That is, residents were more at ease discussing the lack of participation of “northern” residents than explicitly naming the social class, economic and/or educational differences that the north-south divide represented. Moreover, symbolic gestures like removing “south” for the neighbourhood name can be important steps towards inclusion and can prompt conversation around patterns of exclusion. However, the sole focus on symbolic forms of representation such as the hub name can deflect attention from the systemic inequity in the neighbourhood. As a result, the root causes of unrepresentative resident involvement can remain obscured.

3) Class-related social divisions and discriminatory attitudes towards those living in poverty can limit outreach efforts, thereby excluding lower-income residents from participating. Conducting extensive outreach efforts was identified as an ongoing area of concern in the Elmwood hub. Even though the hub had a very successful newspaper and widespread readership across the

neighbourhood, there were noted gaps in delivery which operate in systematic ways through a) limited access to apartments and multiplexes, and b) limited social connections with and/or willingness to approach lower-income residents or areas for engagement. The intimidation felt by some hub members towards lower-income people or areas stems from negative perceptions towards those living in poverty and can create a further lack of connection and engagement with the hub.

4) The bureaucratic, professionalized expectations of NA, coupled with a changing demographic base, can push lower-income residents to the margins of the process. In combination, these aspects of NA create a professional culture that can be alienating to some lower-income residents. The structure attracts middle class residents with professional capacities and can inadvertently force out lower-income residents. At the beginning of NA planning in Elmwood, participants reported that the process was indeed guided primarily by lower-income residents. However, as the process evolved and the neighbourhood demographics changed, so too did the participation patterns and the sense of ownership. In a mixed and developing community like Elmwood, there was an increasing number of “new Hamiltonians” who were eager to participate and adapted easily to the demands of the NA process, which may have inadvertently pushed lower-income and less educated residents to the margins.

5) Exclusionary visions of neighbourhood change among some residents explicitly leave out certain members of the community, specifically non-homeowners, and posit a vision of change that benefits a select group. When such beliefs dominate the process, it is to be expected that lower-income residents will lose ownership and feel alienated by the hub culture. While the

official mandate and some residents did espouse a commitment to including all and supporting those living in poverty, there remained considerable disagreement about what the hub was for and what the neighbourhood should look like. As demonstrated above, residents and other participants have differing understandings of how inclusive the planning process had been to date, and had differing visions for how they saw the Elmwood hub developing. Many participants emphasized the need to develop a “mixed” community, which premised on the assumption that the current social and economic mix in the neighbourhood is in some way undesirable. When hub participants espouse a vision of neighbourhood change that posits homeownership as the norm and as desirable, excluding renters or “transient” populations, the work of the planning team will reflect those beliefs and further marginalize unrepresented residents.

Before connecting these findings to the literature, I will first turn to an adjacent community that is part of the mixed and developing prototype, Hillboro, and explore how it addresses issues in inclusion and participation in its work with NA. I will then connect the findings from both mixed and developing communities to the existing literature and summarize the chapter as a whole.

Chapter 7: HILLBORO: “Coming to blows”: making organizational change in an economically divided community

7.1 Hillboro profile

Located at the foot of the escarpment in Hamilton, Hillboro is one of the smallest NA communities in size and population, totalling 3,000 residents. Like Elmwood, it is a community that is marked by economic differences, but unlike its neighbour Elmwood, wealth and poverty are not strongly concentrated in particular areas. This is in part because Hillboro is a small community, stretching only a few blocks from north to south. It is also due to the mixed housing stock in close proximity, with large estates and single family homes next to converted multiplexes, residential care facilities and low-rise apartments. Approximately 30% of residents live below the poverty line and 72% of residents are renters (SPRC, 2012).

In Hillboro, the division between homeowners and renters was the most frequently mentioned marker of difference between residents in neighbourhood. Another distinguishing feature of Hillboro is the long history of the local neighbourhood association, dating back to 1991, and its unique relationship with the City. Hillboro is an NA community, but the group that was formed to be involved in NA planning merged with the pre-existing neighbourhood association, which became a source of significant conflict among residents.

Below, I will explore how Hillboro Neighbourhood Association (HCA) participants conceptualized the conflict that emerged as the group underwent an organizational culture shift, in a neighbourhood with deep economic and social divisions. The move away from the hierarchical and at times exclusive structure to an asset-based, collaborative model of organizing caused the HCA to confront the members’ vastly different visions of neighbourhood change. I will address the following research questions: *Who are the participants involved in NA and how*

do they understand it? How are participants taking up and redefining community development? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation and how are they created, challenged and/or reproduced through NA?

I explore this neighbourhood by drawing from interviews with 5 residents, 5 city staff, 2 NA management staff, 1 community developer, and 1 councillor. Because of the strong resident leadership in this neighbourhood and the peripheral involvement of some city staff, I will focus primarily on resident experience. Out of the 5 residents I interviewed, I consider 4 to be part of the core due to their involvement in the executive and/or leadership activities in the HCA, while the last participant was only peripherally involved (e.g. did not attend monthly meetings or participate in organizing during my two years of observation). All residents had lived in the neighbourhood for ten years or more, either as renters or as homeowners, and had been involved with the HCA since the beginning of its involvement with the NA planning process (approximately 2011). Before exploring the events that took place in Hillboro during my time of observation, I will first detail how the HCA articulated its official mandate in the action plan created for NA.

7.2 Critical Discourse Analysis of Hillboro's action plan

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody. – Jane Jacobs, quoted in the Hillboro action plan

The Hillboro neighbourhood action plan was developed from 2011-2012 and was presented to council in September 2012. The City-initiated NA process involved engaging residents, largely through the pre-existing Hillboro Community Association (HCA), and through

various public engagement efforts. The efforts listed in the plan included: face-to-face interaction with neighbours, a consultation with local school students, a community meeting, a barbecue attended by approximately 350 residents, a survey of residents living in residential care facilities, distributing flyers, and social media outreach. Through these multiple forms of outreach, the residents and partners engaged created the action plan. The document includes a detailed history of the neighbourhood, the demographic profile of the community, terms of reference, a list of community assets and needs, and stories from residents. The document describes the Hillboro mission as cultivating Hillboro "...as a vibrant escarpment community, celebrating its natural and historic character, championed by its diverse and engaged residents" (Hillboro Community Association, 2012, p. 1). It defines the neighbourhood as made up of "hundreds of beautiful 19th and 20th century homes and condominium/apartment buildings, and a handful of well-maintained residential care facilities" (p. 1). Further emphasized are the neighbourhoods green spaces and other assets, which are noted to make Hillboro "elegantly understated and active community near the heart of the city" (p. 1). The stories included in the document told by residents also highlight the historic nature of the neighbourhood, as well as the physical attractiveness of the community. Residents' stories recount how they got involved to address issues of crime, graffiti and disrepair, and reflect the desire to start a neighbourhood watch and to make the neighbourhood more attractive through street beautification, a park renovation, and heritage preservation.

The focus on beautification and attractiveness is also reflected in the major goals identified in the action plan. While the action plan lists eight goals in total, the first four are more established and defined in the plan. The first four goals include a detailed list of specific objectives and actions, whereas the latter goals do not. Secondly, while all goals are listed in a timeline form indicating when each specific objective will be completed and by whom, only the

first four goals and their actions are detailed on the timeline and attached to specific members. Meanwhile, the latter goals are blank, meaning that the actions have no deadline and no one assigned to work on them. This difference is important when considering the nature of the goals. The first four goals tend to prioritize making the neighbourhood more desirable, clean and attractive. The first four goals listed in the plan are: 1) creating public and social spaces (park renovation); 2) enhancing pride and ownership through beautification and history (garbage, property standards, promote perception of Hillboro as historic destination); 3) enhancing liveable and walkable communities (traffic safety and street beautification); and 4) improving social and health outcomes through connections and relationships (improve recreation programming and access to childcare). Like Centretown, the Hillboro plan also uses academic references, providing evidence to support the choice of priority goals. Here, only the first four goals are supported with academic literature. The literature review includes, for example, references noting importance of building social capital through attractive public spaces, the removal of graffiti and garbage to deter further crime and increase pride, and improving mental health through eliminating “traffic stress”.

Meanwhile, the latter goals relate more directly related to supporting lower-income residents (with the exception of the final goal). The latter four goals are: 5) strengthening educational and training opportunities, 6) addressing poverty and housing issues, 7) engaging residential care facilities as neighbours, and 8) building relationships with local businesses. Again, in the action plan, these latter goals have no deadlines and no one signed up to work on them. The first four goals are therefore central and reflect the priorities of making the neighbourhood more attractive, clean, safe and desirable. The lack of attention to the latter goals suggests that addressing poverty and supporting lower-income residents was less of a priority

among participants creating the action plan. Moreover, it further suggests that fewer planning team members were willing to sign up to work on those issues.

7.3 Neighbourhood association or planning team: "it's a friggin' word"

Before detailing the organizational changes that occurred in the Hillboro neighbourhood, it is important to include some background information on the terminology used in the NA communities: neighbourhood association versus planning team or hub. In some neighbourhoods, the difference between a neighbourhood association and a planning team (or hub) has been debated at great lengths. In the words of one resident, "it's a friggin' word" to some (meaning that the distinction is irrelevant), while for others the choice of terminology represents an important distinction. For one, neighbourhood associations often derive from a problem-oriented, or Neighbourhood Watch model, and typically are comprised only of residents (most often homeowners), who sometimes pay membership fees. Neighbourhood associations are also typically hierarchically organized, with a formal executive leadership structure. Planning teams or hubs, on the other hand, by definition are comprised of multiple stakeholders and partners – in this case, service providers, city staff and community developers. In the case of NA, the planning teams seek to have more inclusive membership, a more flexible leadership structure and follow an asset-based community development (ABCD) model. Given the distinctions between these two organizational models, it is not surprising that there would be some confusion and tension when NA required planning teams to be established where a neighbourhood association already existed. Those neighbourhoods with a strong prior history, particularly though who had active neighbourhood associations prior to NA, have sometimes struggled to fit into the parameters of the NA process. Tensions continue to play out in terms of clarifying roles and vision for

overlapping planning teams and associations, balancing resident voice with other stakeholders and partners, as well as broadening membership and engagement.

7.4 Carrying the “baggage”, or building on the history, of the neighbourhood association

When the City began to develop its Neighbourhood Action Strategy in 2011, staff approached the Hillboro Community Association (HCA) to see if residents wanted to form a planning team to work on an action plan with the City. The planning team would become known as HNAP (Hillboro Neighbourhood Action Plan) and at first operated separately from the previously existing HCA, but eventually merged in 2012. One resident, H1, explained:

So it was the same group of people that were working on HNAP that were working on the HCA. So that’s why it logically made sense, I think, at the time...

Having two distinct groups with overlapping membership of course created additional administrative responsibilities for residents, which some believed would be alleviated by joining the two. However, the merge highlighted the organizational differences between the HCA and the HNAP process. While the City-initiated NA planning process through HNAP was intended to be inclusive and asset-based with a collaborative leadership structure, the pre-existing HCA had a more hierarchical and rigid structure, typical of traditional neighbourhood associations. As a result, participants came to the table with differing expectations for organization and leadership. The resident above, H1, continued:

...with that came some organizational challenges around structure. The HCA’s rather role oriented, hierarchy..., whereas community planning groups are rather more loosely

organized. ... So we had a lot of - I would almost call it in-fighting between ... the elected board and our committee leaders...

The role-oriented, structured leadership of the HCA privileged the power of the elected executive, which did not mesh well with the NA planning process, which sought to engage a broader selection of community members in a more collaborative structure. One resident, H4, asserted that the merging of the HCA and the HNAP team meant that the NA structures and planning process inherited the organizational “baggage” of the neighbourhood association:

The culture of that organization becomes impressed on the plan. And the culture of an organization like a neighbourhood association, in an area where you’re having this kind of social divide, is exactly what you don’t want.

For this resident, the exclusive tendencies of the traditional HCA infected the NA process, which perpetuated the social divisions in the neighbourhood. A member of the NA management team, NA1, described the dynamic as follows:

...the Hillboro community association was an incorporated body prior to the neighbourhood action strategy coming into play. When the Neighbourhood Action Strategy came into play it got more residents involved in that particular neighbourhood but that caused tension between the folks who were the elected representatives of the community association, and then the residents that came to the table as community planning team members under different assumption of how this all works.

This staff participant and others explained that the highly structured, rule-based organization of the HCA created a great deal of in-fighting and misunderstandings between partners. This staff member described the result:

... led to projects then not being agreed upon, a power struggle between residents, and people coming to blows, literally coming to blows at meetings as to who was leading what and what the vision of this community is.

A community developer named this process a “clash of cultures”, noting that some members were being driven out – either emotionally or officially – through making people too uncomfortable to stay, or through creating rules or policies to exclude particular people. The CD stated that the friction between residents was so severe at times that it could be very intimidating to other members, and noted that the presence of other partners in the planning team helped to ease the tension at times.

They might have opinions, but they're not going to share them because someone else is yelling their opinions. But it's nice when you have a couple service providers there who are occasionally willing to say even simple things like, that's a really good idea...it makes a difference. It gives people the confidence and the courage to speak up. And so that's good. I think if it was just residents at that table, they would still just be fighting in Hillboro.

The personal and organizational tensions among the residents frequently spilled over into their interactions with city staff. According to one city councillor, some of the tensions stemmed from frustration with the additional levels of administration and bureaucracy. When talking about the complexity of these levels, during the interview, the city councillor himself expressed the confusion and frustration as he stated:

...it ended up being a little confusing for some of the people in the neighbourhood-but also for staff too. So branching off sometimes and forming a sub-committee and then a

sub-committee of a sub-committee and that kind of thing can not only be confusing, but it ends up, you are spending a lot of time and in some ways it's because that sub-committee is reporting to that sub-committee, and that sub-committee reports to the Neighbourhood Association.

The additional bureaucracy was indeed cumbersome for city staff and residents, who became burdened with additional responsibilities due to the added levels of administration. Another resident, H3, explained that due to the small number of people involved and the work required, burnout was common among residents, which seemed to fuel the conflict.

...that's part of what is driving all this drama as well is that there's volunteer burnout all over the place but this is so important that ... we don't want to let this [work with NA] go. But in the meantime we're losing our minds here because we're putting in meeting after meeting and nothing is getting anywhere and there's all this drama and tensions mount higher and higher until it explodes and somebody storms out of a room. ...

Having only a handful of active participants with many tasks to complete as part of the NA planning process contributed to stress and conflict within the team. At early monthly meetings during my observations, the tension was indeed palpable. During my time of observation in 2013 and 2014, I too witnessed discussions so heated that residents left the meeting. H3 continued:

...So everybody starts arguing and bickering and throwing things around the way you would expect to happen in a planning meeting, only this is in front of City staff and City staff at that point panics because they're going "oh my god, they don't know what they want, we've promised them all this money, we're in so much in trouble it's not even

funny, these people are idiots and they can't figure out what they're doing." So all around it has just been crazy.

By the time the merger took place, the tensions were already exacerbated by the time and energy it took to participate in two separate neighbourhood organizations and multiple levels of bureaucracy. The residents were not only struggling to develop a shared vision within the team but also trying to convey a singular message to city staff that were working to assist the HCA on particular projects, such as a park redevelopment. The team's lack of ability to express a clear vision was in many ways frustrating to city staff, who the residents empathized with in hindsight. Two residents, H3 and H1, offered the following comments, respectively:

...But where the action plan is concerned and that's the big concern here ... things that we could have gotten done by now aren't getting done because there's all of this miscommunication, misunderstanding and general dissent and it's not being communicated properly to the City and all they're seeing is disorganization and I can't say that I blame them.

I would say there's been a lot of challenges around getting the City to understand the vision and partly because we weren't unified as a committee group to what was our vision.

A city staff member, H-CS1, who worked actively with the group, expressed a similar sentiment about the ongoing conflict and lack of unified voice of the group:

I would say personality issues within the group. There may have been some ... at some points lack of respect between some of the team members. Just different visions, different wants, different needs, different economic status. They had different ... They

just came from ... They came at it from different perspectives. So we found that that was probably the biggest issue in trying to get them to work together and to put that aside and just keep moving forward.

For city staff involved with the Hillboro Community Association (HCA), the name Hillboro became synonymous with conflict and roadblocks. While residents sympathized with the individual city staff members for having to deal with interpersonal and organizational conflicts within the team, HCA members also named the City itself as a barrier to progress, both in interviews and the focus group. In the words of one focus group participant, there was concern "about how there didn't seem to be a true partnership with the City." Residents at times felt that their voices were not heard in the planning process and also that the City was not pulling its weight in terms of workload. Two residents in interviews expressed the sentiment as follows:

City culture is very busy and they have a kind of vested interest in having things work a certain way and so they're not used to having processes foisted upon them that don't coincide with the way they do things normally. They don't want the extra workload and they'll do whatever they can to get out of it if they can.

... So they're our major partner and it was like they're looking to us to basically do everything ... they don't necessarily impact or influence too much.

City culture here is portrayed as both inflexible to resident-led processes and unwilling to take on the work necessary for a full partnership. This left many residents feeling, at once autonomous from the City and self-sufficient, as well as overburdened by responsibilities that fell on the small group of active residents. The additional workload on the small group created further stress and contributed to the mounting frustration and tensions between residents.

However, as noted above, residents were also sympathetic to the fact that city staff were at times caught in the middle of interpersonal conflicts of residents, who were often unable to express a clear vision. Due to the major conflicts within the group, in 2014, the City gave the HCA an ultimatum that they must complete conflict resolution workshops before city staff would continue to work with them. Until then, all of their actions would be on hold. Later in the year, the group did complete conflict resolution. However, though many past members did not return, so members were now those who wished to further engage with the NA process. The remaining members worked through the conflict resolution workshops, scrapped the old constitution and drafted new terms of reference, which served as a team-building exercise for the group.

To sum up, in the early implementation phase between 2012 and 2014, the HCA was marked by considerable conflict, culminating in the City refusing to work with the group until conflict resolution was completed. Prior to the conflict resolution and the process of redrafting the terms of reference, the city staff regularly had difficulty understanding the vision of the HCA – namely, the group did not yet have a unified vision and was affected by interpersonal conflicts and differences in vision. Interestingly, the mandated conflict resolution only applied to the residents and not the city staff involved, highlighting the power dynamics between those partners, which will be further explored below. First, I will explore how the vast economic and social divide in the neighbourhood contributed to differences in vision and furthered the strife within the resident team.

7.5 “Hillboro is a strange case”: an “almost geological” economic divide

The organizational transition of the HCA from a neighbourhood association to an NA planning team, which was intended to be a unifying process, in fact moved the social and

economic divisions in the neighbourhood to the forefront. All interview participants mentioned the economic divide in the neighbourhood and there were varying opinions on the degree to which the HCA had been successful in including a wide range of participants. Nevertheless, the move from a more traditional neighbourhood association, which began with a crime focus and operated quite hierarchically, to an NA planning team, which was intended to be more inclusive and collaborative, prompted the group to reflect on their values and vision for the neighbourhood. To restate, the HCA now represented an amalgamated neighbourhood association and NA planning team. In trying to establish a collaborative shared vision, it became very clear that some residents, specifically renters, often felt excluded from the process and felt that the old neighbourhood association primarily reflected the interests of homeowners. One resident explained why Hillboro seems to be the most divided and conflict-ridden of the NA neighbourhoods:

...the problem is Hillboro is a strange case ...because there is a very strong divide between the homeowners and the lower income residents and they don't talk to each other. There is almost no overlap and the problem is that the HCA, which is in charge of the plan, is largely populated by homeowners. I've derogatorily said that it's a glorified homeowners association - it's not a neighbourhood association.

Some of the holdovers from the neighbourhood association therefore included not only a more exclusive leadership structure, as explored above, but also some exclusionary attitudes and policies. In one example, at the beginning of the NA planning process in 2009, city staff worked with residents to participate in a SWOT analysis – an exercise used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a project or process. Under the 'threats' column, two residents recalled that the word "renters" appeared. Another holdover from the old

neighbourhood association was an annual fee for membership and voting rights. Although it was eventually voted down in 2014, Hillboro was the only NA community to have a membership fee for residents. Part of the reason that the membership fee survived for so long, despite the HCA becoming an NA community, is that many residents, particular those who were homeowners or more well-off, did not believe that it was a deterrent for others. A resident, H3, in an interview noted:

The simple economics of a \$12 fee doesn't really register on their map because a lot of these people have been fairly well-to-do for long enough that it doesn't occur to them that what they consider to be pocket change is for some people the entire budget that they're going to use to basically put food on the table for the rest of the month.

Policies and attitudes can both economically and socially or emotionally prevent lower-income residents from participating. Another resident, H4, explained how the \$12 membership fee was equal to the grocery allowance for one former participant, who at the time of conducting interviews, was no longer involved with the HCA. The membership fee, to some members, indicated that the group is more traditional neighbourhood association working with homeowners' interests, rather than a collaborative group dedicated to addressing inequity in the community. Resident H4 noted that the membership fee contributes to lower-income residents feeling disenfranchised and sceptical of the association. At an HCA meeting in 2014, the group debated whether the membership fee should be maintained or eliminated. One resident stated that the fee was "a barrier to the folks who have time but not money." To some, this population seemed ideal to recruit to the planning team because those who are unemployed, underemployed, or unable to work formally may have the time to engage and tackle important community issues. One resident, H3, who is not formally employed, confirmed this sentiment in an interview:

... I can put in the hours that the rest of the [people] in the building who are working two jobs can't. So I look at it as this level of community involvement, as exhausting and infuriating as it can sometimes be, as giving back for that.

Nevertheless, the general attitude in the homeowner-dominated group was, in the words of one resident, "if we can't afford to pony up \$12, we're not really that committed", which was indeed expressed by some members at meetings. Commenting on this attitude, one NA management team member, NA2, noted that the NA process was meant to be inclusive and explained how the management tried to dissuade the HCA from having a paid membership requirement:

Some [neighbourhoods] had a very traditional structure, a neighbourhood association structure, a membership structure. Some actually had a membership-driven process. So initially the people at the table had paid, basically had paid a due to be there. That was their structure.

So we had to, you know, talk a little bit about 'So how do you include people who don't want to pay the due, maybe can't pay the due, because we want their voices in this process. What you're doing as a neighbourhood association somewhere else might be your own thing, but we're trying to make sure this works in an inclusive way.'

While the NA planning process may have discouraged the HCA from having a membership fee, the fee nevertheless held until 2014, when it was voted down by members, who at this point largely agreed that it could be exclusionary to some residents and potentially limited participation.

The conversation about membership fees also prompted other similar debates about accessible and barriers to participation, including fees and fundraising activities at public events

put on by the HCA. For example, at an annual carnival, entrance was always free, but some activities required residents to pay to participate, which one resident argued put “undue pressure on low-income families.” This resident stated that they knew what it was like to be a low-income parent and to have to say no to a child who wanted to participate. The group discussed whether all carnival activities should be entirely free to residents, or whether offering pay-what-you-can activities still put pressure on people to pay. The debates about fundraising and membership fees took place in the midst of ongoing discussions about re-defining the mission, vision and values of the HCA, which were facilitated by the community developer (CD). Following these debates, within the span of a few months, the Hillboro motto went from being “safe, clean, attractive” to naming the values of “collaboration, engagement, respect, trust, inclusiveness, and transparency.” For emerging decisions and activities, the CD would prompt residents to reflect on whether their choices espoused the values they had established for the group. Instead of framing discussions around questions of personal opinion (e.g. “do you think X is a good idea?”), they were now being framed around the common vision of the neighbourhood (e.g. “do you think X reflects the values of the HCA?”). This seemed to ease some tense discussions the group had become notorious for, even before the conflict resolution process that the group would be later required to undertake. In other words, by the time the conflict resolution process took place, the HCA had already been engaging in productive discussions and some conflicts had been resolved by certain members leaving group.

7.6 Representative of the broader community? “Kind of, but not really”

While the facilitated conversations around membership, fundraising activities and values represented a significant shift in the group, the resulting discussions nevertheless highlighted the

persistent economic division that characterized Hillboro and HCA. They also brought to attention issues of representation and outreach, which were common themes in interviews with residents. Participants had very different views on whether they felt members of the HCA were representative of the broader neighbourhood and whether enough outreach had been done. In terms of the make-up of the group, some participants did feel that the HCA represented the broader community. H1 responded:

I would say it's a fairly good mix. I know when they did the survey, what are the population stats of our area, right? And I think a large number were in their thirties. And a smaller group were in their later part of life. And I think most of people actively involved represent that group - early thirties, young forties. We do have representation from the older groups - I would say almost proportionate in size of our, it's reflected in our community. We have different -we have various levels of people in terms of their socio-economic status, so people that are working full time, some that are perhaps not currently employed but are wanting to be engaged in the community. So I think we do have a fairly good mix. I think, again, could there be a broader mix? Yes, yeah, for sure.

This resident focused on representation of age group, avoiding the sharp economic differences in the neighbourhood, perhaps because of awareness of the contentiousness of that issue. However, H1 did agree that more work could be done to get a wide range of people. Another resident, H5, agreed that the HCA was at least "kind of" representative of the community, but named socioeconomic status more directly, acknowledging that some believed that the HCA represented only the interests of homeowners.

So I think it was kind of representative. It's unfortunate, again it's personalities. There was a clash, some people thought it was the homeowners more driven strategy and we're saying no, we want better best for everybody. Again it's not, we didn't know each other. Some people were just not willing to know each other or to live by the rules and the conversations that were happening.

In this quotation, H5 attributes the divide in the neighbourhood not to economic differences, but to personality conflicts and some participants' unwillingness to follow "the rules" (which other HCA participants above mentioned were sometimes used arbitrarily to exclude certain members). City staff member H-CS1, also responded that the HCA was "kind of" representative of the broader community, although adding "...but not really".

Probably not. In my experience with Hillboro I would probably say kind of, but not really. Like there's a large rental population in that neighbourhood as well. Not many were represented. There were probably more of the homeowners that were represented. ... Had we been able to get more people involved from that other ... from the rental population, that might have brought a different perspective to the actual plan itself because a lot of the actions related to sort of beautification of the neighbourhood but maybe there were other issues that might have been more important to some of the other groups.

H-CS1 brought to attention the importance of wide representation in planning processes. Namely, it is not only a matter of who is in attendance, but also whose opinions get reflected and advanced into the action plan. By not having many lower-income individuals or renters at the table, it is not unsurprising that the plan privileges certain goals that may be more important to

homeowners. In this vein, resident H3 stated the HCA is representative “of a part of the community and it’s a part of the community that has a vested interest” in seeing the neighbourhood improve in particular ways. H3 stated that the HCA would like to be a strong representation of the community, but they do not know how to bridge the gap:

... they want desperately to be able to connect with us and to gain our support and they managed to fairly successfully do that but they have to be mindful of the rest of the home-owning community because the general consensus is they feel that they can best improve the lot of everyone in the neighbourhood if they continue to gentrify, failing to realize that all it’s going to really do is essentially continue to disenfranchise about 50% of the population. So until everyone has basically been priced out and has to go off and live somewhere else, a certain contingent of the population ...are adamant that things like the Civic Square and stuff like that should be our main focus because beautifying the neighbourhood will raise our neighbourhood pride.

Here, this resident expressed feelings about the disconnection between the homeowners and renters, which persisted despite the efforts of HCA members. While the priorities of the HCA such as a park redevelopment project may be supported by many people in the community and may be of benefit to many, this resident felt that the team had not seriously considered other issues that may be of more urgency to lower-income residents. As a result, few active or core members were renters, which many attributed to insufficient outreach efforts – a matter which received considerable attention during interviews and in meetings.

6.3.7 Locked doors and apathy: outreach to apartments and rental units

Like the issue of representation, participants had varied opinions on whether the Hillboro Community Association (HCA) had done enough outreach in the community, particularly to renters, and on how they ought to proceed with reaching out to neighbours. Resident H5 explained:

I also know there are some people that think that we don't outreach enough. And I'm sure you're aware of everything the neighbourhood action team did to get people's input and actually got 300 people at the [park]... when Hillboro residents are asked they'll come out but not necessarily ask them to spend 100 hours sitting at committee meetings.

There is evidence that the HCA conducted significant outreach efforts at the beginning of the NA process, including public asset-mapping and priority setting activities which drew up to 350 people (a substantial turnout in a neighbourhood of 3,000). The problem identified here is that it is more difficult to get residents to commit to ongoing responsibilities that form the core of participation in the HCA (and in NA more generally). Attendance at singular events is therefore high, but most people cannot agree to the time required to sit in monthly HCA meetings, sub-committee meetings, and completing other work on their own time. One resident, H2, who was only peripherally involved in the HCA, explained her lack of significant involvement as follows: "I am making a living and I only have so much time that I can donate to that sort of thing."

While some people do not have the time to commit to the process, others in the neighbourhood simply do not know that there is an active neighbourhood association involved with the City's NA strategy. Indeed, many residents are not aware that there is a neighbourhood strategy at all. Resident H4, who was not part of the old neighbourhood association, stated:

. One of the big issues I felt with the process right now is that there is not enough outreach and not enough of people were aware of it going on. I stumbled across it ... almost a third of the way through the planning process... we had heard nothing, not a peep.

Part of the problem is that there were so few active participants who are already overburdened with other tasks, that the team lacks the numbers and energy to do substantial outreach. During my time of observation, approximately 12-15 residents attended meetings, but fewer were regularly taking on actions. It takes substantial time and energy to plan and organize monthly meetings, attend sub-committee meetings, host annual events, move actions forward, and deal with the policies and deadlines required of city processes. Resident H3 explained:

...there isn't any actual effort right now to do outreach. Everyone is so tied up in either the Civic Square plan, the communications committee plan, the history group plan, the alleyway plan and the few other plans that are actually moving forward at the moment which is almost none. Most of them are basically on semi-hiatus right now because they're expecting to start up in the coming years, they're thinking well I can't do anything about that right now because we're waiting for things like feasibility studies or traffic studies or things like that to be done.

When this resident defined the core group as eight to ten people, when there were eight to ten projects and committees on the go, it was no wonder that there was little time to do significant outreach.

There were also considerable barriers to doing outreach in apartment buildings and multiplexes, similar to those experienced in Elmwood. In Hillboro, the tenants represent more than 70% of the residents in the neighbourhood, so outreach efforts to those residents would be

essential for representative participation in the HCA. As in Elmwood, there were both logistical and social barriers to conducting more wide-reaching outreach to apartments and other rental units. Resident H3, who was a tenant in the apartment buildings, explained:

Now it's understood and it's repeatedly mentioned that in our neighbourhood we have trouble doing outreach to apartment buildings because a lot of them have security locks and their landlords and superintendents are not City friendly...

When attempting to do outreach in apartments, some tenants have faced challenges in getting landlords to grant the City or their partners like the HCA access to their buildings. In addition to having physical barriers, like locked doors, in the way of delivering flyers or doing door-to-door outreach, HCA members also face legal barriers (being accused of trespassing in buildings) and, again, issues of time and energy. H3 further explained:

...it's something of a daunting job to actually go from door to door and I think there's been at least a little bit of concern that they [the HCA outreach group] could be ejected from the building so they generally just stay away.

The time-intensive nature of doing door-to-door outreach was seen as too daunting for a group that was already lacking sufficient person-power to work on daily organizational tasks. In addition to the logical barriers of locked doors and the potential of being accused of trespassing, it is not surprising that considerable outreach to apartments was not taking place.

City staff also emphasized the difficulty of contributing to outreach efforts and expressed uncertainty about how to reach a broader population in the neighbourhood. At meetings, residents frequently discussed how to do better outreach to renters, noting that "it's really hard to

engage and connect with them.” City staff member H-CS1 remembered the early NA process in the neighbourhood:

...it was really hard in the beginning to get the word out there. ... there was like a mailbox drop. People didn't see it. They just threw it out. They didn't realize what it was. They found what worked best was posters in the neighbourhood, like lawn posters, and just talking face to face. So I think as the process went on they were better able to communicate but in the beginning that was tough getting people to ... How do you reach out to everybody? How do you get the word out there?

In addition to the difficulty of doing broader outreach, some residents felt that there was a lack of desire on behalf of some HCA residents to actively reaching out to renters in the neighbourhood. Resident H3 made reference to Code Red, which is the newspaper series that identified the neighbourhoods that would become NA communities. The health inequities exposed in the Code Red series prompted the establishment of NA, which is sometimes forgotten by participants. H3 explained:

There were loud and vociferous objections to going door to door in apartment buildings and in converted houses to contact the people who were the reason why the neighbourhood has a Code Red designation and that's been why I've been ...pushing and reminding people that this whole project is meant to help people who are living in a poverty that is so deep and so difficult that it is destroying their health, whereas a large part of the group is again from the neighbourhood association, which is dominating the discussion, who are all upper middle class residents...

The lack of outreach efforts to renters here is portrayed as stemming from the economic and social divisions that run so deeply in the neighbourhood. The divide between what some residents refer to as the haves and the have-nots creates a situation where some more affluent members are unable to grasp the reality of the poverty that affects many residents and are unable to reach out to them in appropriate ways. Nevertheless, H3 qualified her statement and stated,

...there are homeowners that I feel really do support our case. They understand and they don't want to be seen as an obstruction to helping the neighbourhood plan and helping those who are in need. Not everybody in the neighbourhood who happens to live in a house is unaware that there are people living just down the block from them who are living on or below the poverty line but the very real problem is that the neighbourhood association represents the interests of everybody that has spoken up but because outreach has been fairly lax ... most of the time things like the action plan and stuff like that don't get discussed with the public so nobody is really aware that there's anything going on and nobody is really feeling involved, they're not really feeling as if they're being asked to join in.

For H3, the unequal patterns of participation, and the overrepresentation of homeowners on the team, at times comes from the disconnection between residents but is also created by the consistent lack of outreach efforts. Overall, HCA members did express a desire to reach a broad range of people, contribute to the action plan, and help to foster positive neighbourhood change in Hillboro. However, the visions of neighbourhood change and goals for NA expressed by residents, city staff, and NA management differ considerably, and often stood in direct conflict with one another.

7.8 What is the end goal here? Differing visions of neighbourhood change

When discussing the vision and effects of NA in Hillboro, the community's position as an economically mixed and changing neighbourhood is impossible to ignore. Similar to Elmwood, though not at the rapid pace as in Centretown, Hillboro has been undergoing significant economic and demographic changes. While the mandate of NA is to improve the health and well-being (quality of life) of all residents, particularly those living in poverty, the vision for neighbourhood change espoused by individual NA participants at times deviates greatly from this mandate. In particular, some residents and city staff posit a neighbourhood vision that is premised on increased homeownership and the displacement of renters and other non-homeowners. Resident H1, a homeowner, said the following about observing neighbourhood change in Hillboro over the course of ten years:

H1: ... I've seen how the neighbourhood's been changing and evolving over ten years and how different it's become and how it will continue to evolve and I see a bigger picture on that. You know there's a lot of change happening. ... You have the [condos], which are going to bring a whole different demographic of people down into our community and there are other developments that are on the table that might do the same. I've seen – personally for me, I've seen, you know, the hookers that I used to see on my street aren't there anymore. I've seen the crime - I've seen less cops set in front of people's houses. These types of things that for me are very visible and the demographic of people changing as well in terms of who is in our community. So there are a lot of younger families moving into our community, which is nice.

H2 also stated: ... The neighbourhood is transitioning. I think a lot of people on our street, particularly on [this street], a lot of houses are owned. And people are taking pride in their home, you know. But there is the occasional house that is still rented and people come and go. You know, there's good people and there's bad people. ... I could see the potential when I first moved in. It was really a lot rougher back then when I moved in. And things have progressively gotten better because I think people, you know, they see the potential and they've gained confidence. It seems to me the more people that moved in and they owned their house or they took pride in their house, it just kind of shoves some of the negative activity away.

Resident H1 credited the development of condos and other residential properties in the neighbourhood as bringing a "different" (wealthier) demographic, particularly "young families" (likely referring to homeowners). H1 also credited the positive direction of the neighbourhood to the removal of sex trade workers ("the hookers") and others associated with crime. While it is true that most people value a community with little crime, advocating for the displacement of sex trade workers had been countered in other NA communities who have actively reached out to the sex worker community in the area with the assistance of local service providers. Other Hillboro residents, as seen in the second quote by resident H2, also took up discourses of "cleaning up" the neighbourhood as part of their vision of change. In this quote, H2 credits positive changes in the community to an increase in homeownership and its characteristics ("pride" and "confidence"), which, consequently, "...shoves some of the negative activity away." It is not entirely clear whether the negative activity here is crime, or simply the perceived lack of "pride" by renters, or simply the existence of renters. In either case, the

growing number of homeowners coming to the neighbourhood is regarded here as a remedy for negative activity. Another HCA resident, H3, who was a renter stated:

I think everybody is kind of looking at the slow but steady influx of Torontonians to the Hamilton area as being a major boom and they're hoping to be able to sell off a lot of these multi-resident houses and things like that and have them reconverted into proper family dwellings and that would minimize the amount of trouble that they get from the renters community.

As a renter, this resident felt that non-homeowners were considered less desirable in the neighbourhood and constituted a "threat" to the neighbourhood image and cleanliness. Based on the resident comments expressed above (H1 and H2), and from my observations and experience living in the community, this "cleaning up" sentiment reflects a common discourse in neighbourhood-centred initiatives.

In reference to the NA mandate of improving the health and well-being of all community members, some HCA residents did talk about "quality of life" issues, although these seemed to be less a priority compared to aesthetic changes to the neighbourhood. Resident H2 talked about the HCA priorities as follows:

I think cleaning up the area, crime. The aesthetic is, I mean I personally, I would love to see the aesthetic change and improving the park areas. There are children in the neighbourhood, having a safe place for them to play. There's a community centre, I hear there's talk of improving that. That's sort of the hub of where the children and adults would like to go to have some leisure time, which factors into the quality of living.

When asked about the long-term impacts of NA, another HCA resident, H5, was optimistic about the HCA's work and also referenced quality of life.

I think we can make a difference. Not only in the physical neighbourhood like the Carter Park and the rec centre and flowers and stuff, but I think we can make a real impact on the quality of people's lives by addressing issues. So, it's also talking about parking and trying to resolve, alright, what do we do, we've got parking issues, we've got city staff and council support to find a resolution to this.

For another resident, H4, quality of life issues refer to assisting those "who are living in a poverty that is so deep and so difficult that it is destroying their health", which they understood as part of the NA mandate. With such vast differences in neighbourhood vision and what constitutes improving quality of life, in addition to organizational changes, it is expected that HCA members should experience significant conflict in their work with NA.

7.9 NA and city staff on Code Red stigma and RCFs

Interestingly, NA management and city staff working in Hillboro also expressed visions of neighbourhood change differently. One city staff member, H-CS2, who worked closely with the HCA during the planning process, when asked about things that had the potential for creating change in the neighbourhood, echoed similar sentiments as some residents. H-CS2 explained that the HCA needs to work on improving its public image and countering the "inner city stigma", believed to be perpetuated by presence of residential care facilities (RCFs) in the neighbourhood. City staff H-CS2 explained:

...the biggest change that will happen [in Hillboro] is they're going to start to increase their profile as a community, because they are a heritage community. And the one thing

that has really been a negative spin on their community has been the residential care facilities because they're inundated. That's where the most residential care facilities are. So I think possibly having less of an issue with the RCFs, residential care facilities, and probably increasing their community profile as being more of a heritage community and start kind of upgrading it, I could see that being a really good positive change.

The staff member here suggests that the development of the neighbourhood is contingent on improving its profile as a heritage community, and “having less of an issue” with the residential care facilities. While Hillboro does have a high proportion of RCFs (Nabi, 2012), the idea that this is an “issue” in and of itself is problematic.^{viii} H-CS2 goes on to explain how the stigma of poverty that affects the neighbourhood, perhaps perpetuated by the Code Red news series that identified the NA communities, needs to be eliminated in the neighbourhood. Again, worth noting is that, there is more concern expressed about the stigma and appearance of poverty in the neighbourhood than about poverty itself. Staff member H-CS2 continues:

I really hope that we can lose that stigma of the whole inner city community and the whole poverty issue. I mean you'll never get rid of poverty, but I think just to get rid of the whole inner city stigma, the Code Red stigma, I think that that alone in itself would be a huge thing. Unfortunately you're never going to eliminate that vicious cycle. ...

[...] There was a time when nobody would want to be around [the rec centre]. But now ... artsy people are moving into those communities, people who commute to Toronto... and they're moderate income earners, and you know, even higher income earners. And I see slowly that kind of turnover, and that's going to start to elevate all of the communities. ...

The staff member suggests that the poverty will never be eliminated, but that the stigma associated with poor neighbourhoods can be broken through the work of the neighbourhood strategy. In particular, it can be eliminated, and the community elevated, through the residential turnover and the increased population of more affluent homeowners. This is what is believed will serve as a remedy to the stigma associated with Hillboro as a Code Red neighbourhood, particularly as a community with a high proportion of residential care facilities. Again, the problem here is portrayed as the stigma associated with the RCFs and poverty in the neighbourhood – poverty itself is understood as inevitable.

The kinds of attitudes expressed by this staff member may not be representative of all city staff, but the opinions expressed here nevertheless stand in contrast to NA's official mandate of inclusion and tackling poverty. A member of the NA management team, NA1, speaks below about resident attitudes towards residential care facilities, and in fact credits the HCA for having largely constructive views on RCFs. NA1 explained:

The Hillboro neighbourhood for instance, highest concentration of residential care facilities, not once has the mantra of that neighbourhood been 'let's get rid of all residential care facilities'. They [residents] are however concerned about certain operators of residential care facilities because they don't believe that care is really being provided. And as a result there are concerns and issues that bubble up.

So it's not everybody. Most say 'Hey, these are great neighbours and there's all sorts of positives.' But then they're concerned about a couple of instances and I think that's fair. I think that's the way neighbourhoods become better places is by holding everybody accountable without imposing your will on everyone.

This NA management team member describes how resident concerns about RCFs are not about removing them from the neighbourhood, but rather about ensuring that they are neighbours who provide adequate care for their residents. While residents did not frequently mention RCFs explicitly in interviews, it is likely that many of the opinions expressed about non-homeowners, renters and transient people indirectly referred to RCFs as well. Nevertheless, I observed one interaction at a monthly HCA meeting that did directly address RCFs, where residents expressed a range of views and concerns – mirroring both those exclusionary views espoused by the city staff member above and the more inclusive view expressed by the NA management team member.

7.10 From NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) to neighbourly

In early 2015, a representative from a local residential care facility (RCF) came to speak at the monthly Hillboro meeting. Due to renovations of its property, the RCF was temporarily re-locating from an adjacent neighbourhood to Hillboro. Even though it was only moving a few blocks, the representative made an effort to approach the HCA in order to give information, answer questions and address any concerns of residents. The RCF had a forty-year history in the neighbourhood and was a well-respected service provider in the community. Nevertheless, RCF staff had spent the previous two years battling the City and the adjacent neighbourhood association in order to gain permission to perform the renovations on their original building. There were official complaints about zonings and concerns that the RCF was expanding; however, the renovations were only to make the building accessible and up to code, not to expand. The unofficial concern was that the RCF existed in the community in the first place, and that by welcoming one RCF, the neighbourhood would be positioned as open to receive others.

The city councillor, who was present at the HCA meeting, admitted that he and other parties wrongly put barriers in the way of the RCF for two years, but noted that there has been recent support from the City and acknowledged that this RCF was a model neighbour. Finally having City support and free from zoning constraints, the RCF was undergoing renovation, which is why it was temporarily relocating to the Hillboro community.

Some residents expressed concern about the stigma of having another RCF in the neighbourhood. In particular, these residents were concerned about this RCF relocating to a location on a main street in Hillboro, adding to the neighbourhood's negative image. HCA members asked questions about whether or not there would be signs to indicate what it was, since they preferred for it to be unsigned in order to not draw further attention. They asked other questions about who the clients were and how many of their clients stay in the neighbourhood after they are released from the RCF. I interpreted this line of questioning as residents being concerned that RCF residents might stay in the community upon their release. The RCF representative, supported by the city councillor and some residents who were current neighbours of the RCF, explained that their residence was a model program and model neighbour. It supported those who had recently been incarcerated while they completed their parole conditions and received other support services, with 24 hour staffing and a reported a low reoffending rate of close to zero percent. One HCA member, who lived next door to the RCF, described its residents as model neighbours with whom he had a friendly relationship. In fact, he did not know until this meeting that the house was an RCF. He urged other residents to welcome the RCF to the neighbourhood and wished them well with their renovations. With the new information about the residence, other residents markedly changed their views and asked if this RCF, being such a model neighbour, could take over some of the other less successful residences

in the neighbourhood.

At a second, publically advertised meeting later that year, the HCA hosted a public consultation in collaboration with the RCF and the local city councillor. The intention was to inform the broader community of the plans for the RCF to relocate and educate the neighbourhood about the facility. In attendance were HCA members, as well as others who were not part of HCA organizing, including residents at large, local property managers, current RCF clients, police and other service providers. At this meeting, HCA members appeared united in their stance of welcoming the RCF and its clients to the neighbourhood and protecting them against any backlash from other parties. When attendees expressed disrespectful sentiments towards RCFs or raised their voices, HCA facilitators maintained control of the room and ensured that the conversation did not turn aggressive. HCA members repeatedly reminded attendees to express their concerns within the HCA values of respect, inclusiveness and collaboration. By the end of the meeting, some attendees who had entered the room in order to fight against the RCF were expressing support for the facilities and its clients.

Importantly, this second interaction with the RCF took place after the HCA members had undergone conflict resolution, scrapped its constitution, written new terms of reference, and committed to the values of respect, inclusiveness and collaboration. Historically, the RCF conversation could have been much more explosive and less respectful had the team not taken those opportunities to engage in self-reflection around its values. Prior to the second meeting, the HCA had continue to engage in self-reflection around its values, and the support team facilitated team-building exercises to help HCA members to map its new direction. These values conversations held at monthly meetings focused on participation and engagement, with the group brainstorming about how to elicit broader levels of participation, both in order to ease the work

of the team and to more adequately represent the desires and needs of the community. Residents were taking seriously issues of representation and the lack of involvement of a wide range of participants. One resident spoke of participation in neighbourhood organizing, stating that full participation “comes from feeling of belonging and pride – you have to feel part of the neighbourhood if you want to give back.” Another resident cautioned that engagement activities are delicate and must be done with intention and care: “If you are not careful in your engagement efforts, you can make insiders feel like outsiders.” These conversations and others formed part of a broader process of self-reflection within the HCA, which emphasized broadening participation and engagement. HCA members continue to engage in ongoing reflection and team-building activities in order to refine the team’s mission and values and to counter the conflict that characterized the HCA in the early years of NA.

7.11 Hillboro: Summary of findings

The above account of the Hillboro Community Association (HCA) over the 2013-2015 period highlights how NA unfolded in a neighbourhood with a deep economic divide. I explored how HCA participants understood their work, how they negotiated organizational change and reconciled differing visions for the neighbourhood. With the unique position of Hillboro as a geographically small but economically divided neighbourhood, several key findings emerged:

1) It is clear that the role of the neighbourhood’s organizing history directly shaped the early planning process in Hillboro. While the long trajectory of organizing certainly contributed to the strong resident leadership and autonomy from the City, it also underpinned the conflict that emerged between residents. The conflict involved a “culture clash” between the more traditional

and hierarchical neighbourhood association and the more collaborative, asset-based model proposed by NA. Despite the collaborative, asset-based mandate of NA, initial organizing efforts within Hillboro were often influenced heavily by holdovers from the previous neighbourhood association, including the rule-based organization, a rigid hierarchy, and membership fees. Another holdover was the association's origins as an association concerned primarily with crime and beautification, reflecting the interests of homeowners in the area. This was reflected in the Hillboro action plan, where the priority actions concerned these issues, and marginalized issues related to poverty and housing, for example. In this case, the implementation of the city-initiated NA process and the conflict resolution appeared to have positively changed the ways of operating for the neighbourhood association and prompted changes in terms of patterns of participation and outreach. Nevertheless, these examples also highlight the ongoing tensions in determining who was directing the process NA – residents or city staff.

2) The economic and social divisions in the neighbourhood, particularly between homeowners and renters, shaped the NA process in significant ways in Hillboro. The economic divide in the neighbourhood was exemplified by the dominance of homeowners early in the process and the exclusionary attitudes and policies towards lower-income residents, tenants and other non-homeowners. The heavy involvement of homeowners early in the process, and the lack of social connections reported between tenants and homeowners, limited opportunities for outreach and further restricted participation. The division between socioeconomic groups in the community was also reflected in the action plan, which emphasized beautification and physical appearance over issues related to poverty. In turn, when lower-income residents were not central from the beginning of the process, feelings of lack of ownership and inclusion were exacerbated. In other words, not reflecting the lived experiences and needs of lower-income residents led to the further

alienation of those residents in the process.

3) The HCA's early involvement with NA showed that community work reflects conflicting visions of neighbourhood change. This was observed both in the official action plan document and by participants during the early NA process. The action plan document highlighted a vision of neighbourhood change that focused on beautification, crime reduction and raising the neighbourhood's profile as a heritage community. At the same time, the document mentioned, but marginalized actions associated with poverty reduction and supporting lower-income residents. Similarly, during interviews and observations, while some understood the work of NA as addressing the health inequities caused by poverty, others saw their goal as eliminating the stigma associated with poverty, attracting more "desirable" (e.g. home-owning) residents, and improving the image of the neighbourhood. Importantly, the latter focus on homeownership and stigma was also expressed by city staff who are supposed to be working towards to NA mandate of poverty reduction and inclusion.

4) The account of HCA demonstrated that when dealt with deliberately, conflict can foster positive changes and the planning team can function in a more productive and inclusive manner. When the overt conflict in the group became unmanageable, it prompted several NA partners (residents, service providers and city staff) to intervene and address the root causes. Through undergoing a process of self-reflection including conflict resolution, establishing a terms of reference, and engaging in ongoing conversations about vision and values, the HCA attempted to reconcile the differences in the group (economic and personal) and commit to the values of inclusion and collaboration espoused by the larger NA project. In doing do, they sought to

identify the barriers that have created limited levels of participation, drained active members, and fuelled conflict, as well as seeking to more adequately reflect the priorities of a broader range of residents. Importantly, the presence of conflict is not necessarily a marker of lack of progress towards inclusion. Similarly, the absence of overt conflict (as in Elmwood) is not necessarily an indicator of progress towards inclusion, but instead can be an indicator of the “retreat” of more marginalized community members. While excessive conflict can be counterproductive and can create a hostile environment for recruiting new participants, when addressed directly and appropriately, conflict can be a healthy characteristic of a resident group which can foster inclusion. According to anti-racist scholars, the avoidance of addressing racism directly due to fear of creating conflict can itself contribute to lack of change. Similarly, the avoidance of acknowledging socio-economic power imbalances for fear of making people uncomfortable or creating conflict can also perpetuate exclusion. Conflict can therefore serve a role in exposing and uprooting exclusive attitudes and politics, and can help to address barriers to participation.

7.12 Mixed and developing neighbourhoods: connecting to the literature

In this section, I will link the existing literature to the findings presented from Elmwood and Hillboro, both of which form part of the mixing and developing neighbourhood prototype. While there are important distinctions between the two neighbourhoods, both neighbourhoods are socially, economically and residentially mixed communities that are currently experiencing some resident and economic development. Compared with Centretown, the rate of change is not as rapid and the primary marker of difference is socioeconomic as opposed to racial.

Due to the nature of Elmwood and Hillboro as mixed and developing communities, experiences of *Neighbourhood Action* in these communities highlight the competing discourses

of urban renewal, neighbourhood change, and community health. Responses to urban “decline” and inequity witnessed in major urban centres since the latter half of the 20th century have been alternatively branded as “regeneration” in the UK, “renewal” in the US, and more recently as “revitalization” efforts (Pomeroy, 2006). Drawing on Beauregard (1993) and Zukin (1998), Lees (2003) argues that these efforts are often premised on the idea that urban decline was the result of the post-war flight of the middle classes to the suburbs. To reverse the decline then, the responses often focuses on making city centres attractive to the middle class in order to make them more economically viable and vibrant places. The mixed and developing communities profiled here - Hillboro and Elmwood - certainly are similar in character to this description, with large Victorian homes and their proximity to the downtown core. These neighbourhoods have a comparable housing stock to some very affluent neighbourhoods in Toronto, though the homes are sold for a small fraction of the price. While it is understandable that individual home-buyers and developers would follow the market and seek out less expensive housing options, Walks & Maarenen (2008) argue that rapid processes of gentrification can result in an increasingly “segregated and fragmented urban realm, rather than an inclusive one.” (p. iii) As a result, when participants in targeted neighbourhood efforts that seek to “revitalize” neighbourhoods by attracting more affluent residents, they run the risk of perpetuating exclusion rather than relieving it.

Neighbourhood Action can be understood as a revitalization effort and a response to urban inequity, where competing discourses can be observed, especially in Elmwood and Hillboro. Language choices used by participants when discussing neighbourhood vision were ideologically loaded, though phrased in ways that often obscured the reality of exclusion. For instance, terms like “renters” and “tenants” were often used to avoid naming class divisions, as were the terms

“north” and “south” when referring to areas that were underrepresented on the planning team. When failing to name class divisions, it is easy to ignore the discriminatory attitudes about lower-income residents that limit outreach efforts and engagement. In addition, when discussing neighbourhood vision, NA participants (both residents and partners) in these communities emphasized attracting new and more affluent residents, especially homeowners, to the neighbourhoods to create a “healthy” mix, and highlighted the need to “clean up” and beautify the communities. On the other hand, some NA participants also focused on the need to address poverty and improve the quality of life for existing residents. It is worth noting that urban policies and developments take up the notion of promoting “social mix” even when they do not in fact align with progressive or equality-oriented principles or outcomes (August, 2008). Rather, August argues, the term is often used euphemistically and vaguely in order to deflect criticism and to portray a commitment to equity. Similarly, the notion of attracting more affluent residents to a neighbourhood was proposed by some NA participants as necessary to creating a “healthy mix”, which was projected to benefit all residents. This notion ignores the reality of displacement experienced by many low-income residents in quickly changing communities. When the proposed solution to economic disparity is to actively bring more affluent residents to a neighbourhood, the complex structural causes of inequity remain unaddressed. Moreover, when the negative potentials of rapid neighbourhood change are not named, neighbourhood-based interventions “risk exacerbating some of the experiences of poverty that they ostensibly aim to mediate” (Cowen & Parlette, 2011, p. 31). If the mandate of NA is to respond to social, economic and health disparities^{ix}, stakeholders must be conscious of which actions are being prioritized, by whom, and for what purpose.

The competing discourses on neighbourhood change observed in these communities highlight how NA can be understood as a pedagogical process, if pedagogy is understood as “...a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among particular sets of social relations” (Giroux & Searls Giroux, 2006, p. 1543). In particular, the examples of Hillboro and Elmwood demonstrate how citizen groups are engaged in identity negotiation and struggle to determine whose vision for neighbourhood change is pushed forward. This was especially clear when there were tensions between tenants and homeowners, and acknowledging the underrepresentation of low-income residents (e.g. often named as renters, or those from the northern part of the neighbourhood). This negotiation was also palpable as both neighbourhoods received an influx of new homeowners from outside of Hamilton, which prompted questions about community identity and ownership. Relationships between residents and other partners, particularly the City, also demonstrate how NA is a process of power negotiations where struggles surface about whose knowledge and decisions get privileged.

The findings from Elmwood and Hillboro shed light on the role of organizational culture in community organizing, and how competing frameworks are adopted and negotiated between partners over time. Importantly, Elmwood and Hillboro are two demographically similar, adjacent communities. Yet, NA has operated very differently in these communities in large part due to their varied organizational histories. While the Elmwood hub was organized by residents close to the onset of NA, Hillboro had a long organizing history as a more traditional neighbourhood association. As a result, the Elmwood hub was following an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach from the outset, while Hillboro incorporated it later in the process. ABCD posits that strong communities are based on the capacities, skills, resources and assets of local people and their relationships (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Asset-based approaches use the mapping of community assets, resources and relationships to promote change focusing on social capital and community capacity (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). This approach stands in contrast to deficit-based approaches, found for example in more traditional neighbourhood associations. According to residents, Hillboro's prior model stemmed from a Neighbourhood Watch-style of organizing focused primarily on crime, safety and physical structures, and had an exclusive membership structure and hierarchical leadership model, similar to a homeowners' association, which some have identified as having exclusionary practices (Rahe, 2002). Some of the policies and attitudes from the old Hillboro Community Association were brought into the early NA process, which led to a "culture clash" with the asset-based model of NA. Traditional neighbourhood groups have been known to interfere in progressive neighbourhood changes, such as increased service provision to certain populations. For instance, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2009) openly acknowledges "discriminatory neighbourhood opposition" (also known as "Not in My Back Yard" or NIMBY opposition) as a major barrier to developing affordable and supportive housing across the province. Meanwhile, some argue that well-constructed citizen involvement programs can ameliorate NIMBYism and promote positive community change (Berry, Portney & Thomson, 1993; Portney & Berry, 2010). Hillboro's shift from a deficit-based to an asset-based model of organizing was observed in the evolving interactions with the local residential care facility. This account demonstrated how resident-led groups can indeed act as welcoming or exclusive spaces. It supports the observation of Fiorina (1999) that the smaller scale of neighbourhood-based projects means that a small number of participants can derail progressive projects, or spearhead inclusive ones.

The accounts of Elmwood and Hillboro also demonstrate the downfalls of a strictly asset-

based, collaborative and resident-led approach to community development. On one hand, citizen involvement in local affairs has been found to empower communities (Hancock, 2009; Jackson et al., 2003). More broadly, an expansive network of citizen groups is understood as essential to creating a public sphere – a democratic political culture where people can have critical debates and can reason freely (Habermas, 1989). However, the public sphere is “too often evoked as a neutral space where all can come together unproblematically” (Amin, Massey & Thrift, 2000). Conflict and differences in vision are bound to occur in spaces that aim to include public publics. When focusing entirely on assets, resources and relationships, inequity and power imbalances between partners can be obscured and inequity can proliferate (Cowen & Parlette, 2011). What is more, some scholars argue that the focus on citizen engagement to address poverty is fueled by the assumption that poor residents are disengaged, disillusioned and in need of middle class models of civic engagement to correct neighbourhood inequities (see for example Curley, 2010). In addition, when the resident “assets” that are sought out privilege those with middle-class, professional capacities, lower-income residents will be marginalized in the process – especially in mixed and developing communities like Elmwood and Hillboro which have growing populations of new homeowners. Meanwhile, those initiating resident-led projects often assume that “the same traditional middle-class cross-section of citizenry...represent the interests of all” (Church et al., 2002, p. 17). Moreover, the kinds of professional, middle-class skills and capacities that are required to take part in civic activities like NA are often assumed to be universal and attract the participation of the “right kind of people” (Martin, 2008). It is not surprising then that the involvement of low income and racialized communities has been observed to be especially underrepresented in resident-led processes (Zagofsky, 2013; Cowen & Parlette, 2011). Elmwood and Hillboro therefore reflect the patterns of underrepresentation of

lower-income residents, which is to be expected in communities with vast economic divisions. The reality of structural inequalities and exclusion in urban communities like the NA neighbourhoods means that those experiencing poverty are less likely to participate (Young, 2000). Moreover, community groups face significant structural challenges and often lack the resources and training necessary to create significant changes in their organizations and communities with regard to exclusion. Nevertheless, planning is a powerful act that “can have political effects upon community members, empowering, educating or miseducating, organizing or disorganizing them” (Forester, 1999, p. 4). While patterns of exclusion are proliferating on some fronts, there have been significant efforts by a wide range of participants to address and challenge exclusion. In particular, By increasingly acknowledging the patterns and processes of exclusion that are operating within the neighbourhoods and the planning teams, both groups have made significant strides towards countering unequal patterns of participation.

7.13 Concluding remarks on mixed and developing neighbourhoods (prototype 2)

In chapters 6 and 7, I have explored how *Neighbourhood Action* has been playing out in two mixed and developing neighbourhoods, Elmwood and Hillboro. Investigating the Elmwood hub and the Hillboro Community Association (HCA) communities helped to address the research questions: *Who participates in NA? What are they barriers and enablers to diverse and meaningful participation? How are barriers challenged or reproduced?* Above I outlined how the economic and social divisions in the communities, coupled with a growing number of “new Hamiltonians” (and few new immigrants), have shaped patterns of participation along class lines. The demographic changes in the neighbourhood and the professionalized environment of NA in both cases created membership structures that encouraged the participation and leadership of

more affluent residents. The accounts of Hillboro and Elmwood further demonstrate how resident-led, asset-based processes can obscure direct issues of poverty and exclusion, can grant additional voice to residents who already have significant privilege, and can put forth an exclusionary vision of neighbourhood change. These consequences stand in contrast to the official mandate of NA, which is said to address inequity and improve the quality of life of residents in low-income areas (City of Hamilton, 2012). That said, the vignettes highlighted, especially in Hillboro, support the notion that even small groups of residents have the power to support or derail progressive community initiatives (Fiorina, 1999).

Although similar in many respects as mixed and developing communities, the differences highlighted in this chapter between Elmwood and Hillboro had important consequences for issues of participation and inclusion. Specifically, the two neighbourhood groups had distinct histories and organizational cultures. With Hillboro's long history as a more traditional, hierarchical neighbourhood association, the HCA had difficulty adapting to a collaborative, asset-based model. Yet, resulting conflict in Hillboro in the end appeared to lead to a more inclusive and productive organizational culture. Importantly, the absence of overt conflict in Elmwood was not necessarily a marker of an inclusive organizational culture. Instead, the lack of conflict may simply indicate a quiet "retreat" of lower-income residents, who felt increasingly alienated as the NA process evolved. These accounts of Elmwood and Hillboro in the chapter are small but crucial vignettes of the observations and data collected between 2013 and 2015. As of the fall of 2015, both neighbourhoods are involved in processes of updating their action plans and working through their terms of reference. Both communities continue to engage in conversations about broadening membership, eliminating barriers to participation and supporting the NA mandate of inclusion, poverty-reduction and improving quality of life for residents.

Chapter 8

GLENVILLE: “Why aren’t you coming?” Resident participation in an ethnically diverse and economically homogeneous community

8.1 Overview of prototype 3

Prototype	Neighbourhood	Population (to nearest 1000)	Year Plan Developed	Action Plan priorities
3 – Economically homogenous	Riverdale	7,000	2011-12	Housing, food security, education, recreational programs and resources, safety
3 - Economically homogenous	McQuesten	7,000	2012	Safety and security, economic opportunities and investment, health and well-being, pride and beautification, education
3 - Economically homogenous	Davis Creek	12,000	2011-12	Community centre, safety, social cohesion, beautification, programs and services
3 - Economically homogenous	Keith	2,000	2012	Beautification and pride, health, safety and security, education, business and local economy, and forming partnerships with businesses and educational institutions

Table 4.1c, extracted from Table 4.1

As demonstrated in this chart, there are four *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) communities identified in Prototype 3. I identify this end of the continuum as more economically homogeneous communities that are further from the downtown core and have little new residential and commercial development. As opposed to the older Victorian homes found in neighbourhoods in Prototype 2, for example, the housing stock in these neighbourhoods include smaller single family homes, high- and low-rise apartments and townhouses. In these communities, there appears to be more long-term Hamilton residents, as well as new immigrants in most cases, and fewer “new Hamiltonians.” In other words, these neighbourhoods are not yet experiencing the same kind of residential and commercial development (or gentrification) as the

other mixed and developing communities featured in the Prototype 1 and 2, in part due to their distance from the core and their mixed housing stock. For this reason, I consider these neighbourhoods more residentially and economically homogeneous, as opposed to mixed. In the chapter below, I profile Glenville (a pseudonym), which is the most ethnically diverse neighbourhood in Hamilton and the one with the highest proportion of renters (SPRC, 2012). The other three neighbourhoods were not profiled in part because I did not regularly attend meetings and therefore was not privy to the nuances of participation in those communities. However, I have collaborated with my colleague who attends the meetings in the other communities in creating the prototypes. Meanwhile, due to its high population of newcomers and the significant economic challenges faced by many of its residents, Glenville serves as an ideal site to address the following research questions: *Who is participating? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation? How are the identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced?*

8.2 Glenville profile

Known as a settlement hub for new immigrants and refugees, Glenville is a geographically small but densely populated neighbourhood in the city's east end. Unlike the neighbourhoods profiled above (which are mixed and developing communities located in or near the downtown core), Glenville is located on the furthest edge of the city and at the time of observation (2013-2015) was not experiencing significant new residential and commercial development.^x The population is therefore more economically homogeneous than the neighbourhoods above with fewer "new Hamiltonians", but it is also more culturally diverse. A 2015 Globe & Mail article called Glenville the third most immigrant-heavy settlement in Canada

(Saunders, 2015). At the local elementary school, only 20% of students speak English as a first language, while most speak South Asian languages (Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, and Hindi) and some eastern European (Serbo-Croatian and Albanian) or other languages (Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Arabic) (SPRC, 2009). Residents tend to be newcomers (with 51% of the population being foreign-born), first-generation children and youth, or long-term residents without a recent settlement background. The latter group were most represented on the Glenville planning team – that is, most active participants were white, Canadian-born tenants who identified as low-income or poor. The fact that participants were tenants is not surprising because Glenville has one of the highest proportions of rental properties in the city, which totals 83% of dwellings (SPRC, 2012). However, the fact that long-term Hamilton residents, who were also low-income tenants, led the planning team, made Glenville distinct from other profiled communities, which were largely dominated by homeowners who are new to Hamilton. This leadership configuration in planning teams represents a class distinction between the neighbourhoods, which shaped both how participants experienced NA and how participants articulated their opinions about the neighbourhood (particularly around race), which will be explored below.

Prior to NA, Glenville did not have a long history of formal resident organizing, though it had been involved with community engagement projects through the Hamilton Community Foundation, which laid the groundwork for NA. The Glenville Community Planning Team is therefore a new organization and the team is still in the early stages of its development. The action plan lists housing quality/affordability and food security as its first two priorities (Glenville Community Planning Team Action Plan, 2012, pp. 10-13), which are challenges that affect the many residents who live in high-rises and on limited incomes. Because of the team's

new development and the difficulty in recruiting residents, support staff and service providers tended to take a more active role than in other communities with longer histories of resident leadership. While the initial outreach efforts gathered the input of about 125 residents (Glenville Community Planning Team Action Plan, 2012, p. 1), the active membership on the planning team was very small in the initial stages. When I began attending meetings and conducting interviews in 2013, there were six active and dedicated residents, with approximately 10-15 service providers and other partners. Some other Glenville residents were involved less formally behind the scenes (for example, assisting at large public events) – but not at the planning team table. The team has grown considerably since 2013, with the core remaining largely stable, but there is frequent turnover of more peripheral members. At monthly planning team meetings, support staff and service providers still tended to outnumber residents. Moreover, the core members tended to be more established, long-term Glenville residents who were white and Canadian-born. Like Centretown, while public events were attended by a diverse array of residents, the Glenville team has had difficulty recruiting newcomer participants as active members of the planning team.

Drawing on data from focus groups and interviews, as well as my own observations between 2013-2015, below I will explore the development of the Glenville planning team, its struggles to recruit participants, and the barriers to participation that affect immigrant and refugee residents in the area. Drawing on my own observations notes, as well as on several participants' accounts of the episode as expressed in interviews, I will also highlight an incident of conflict, which I believe highlights how racial tensions subtly influence interactions in the planning team. Lastly, I will outline the vision of neighbourhood change expressed by NA participants in Glenville, which differs significantly from the mixed and developing communities

profiled in chapters five and six. In doing so, I will address the following research questions:

Who are the participants involved in NA and how do they understand their role? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation? How are the identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced?

For this community, interviews included: 4 residents, 2 service providers, 2 city staff, 1 city councillor, 1 community developer, and 1 NA management staff. Resident and service provider interviews took place in the summer of 2013, while other interviews took place in the summer and fall of 2014. Of the four residents interviewed, three were white and were active planning team members. These residents had lived in Glenville from two years to more than twenty years. The last resident was a newcomer woman who had been in Canada for less than two years and had been actively involved in the development of the action plan. However, she did not continue to participate after the initial phase of planning. In fact, after our interview, I never saw this participant again. Unfortunately, the translator who was supposed to attend our interview (a family member of the resident) did not attend, so the participant insisted that we proceed without translation. As a result, the interview was much shorter and not as robust as it could have been, so I do not draw on it as much as I do other interviews, which I acknowledge as a limitation.

Before exploring the details of participants' experiences in Glenville, I first provide an overview of the Glenville Action Plan developed from 2011 to 2012 (Glenville Community Planning Team (GCPT), 2012), which served as a guide for the group in the following year.

8.3 A Critical Discourse Analysis of Glenville's action plan

Together we unite as a community, where everyone is respected and supported to live a healthy and fulfilled life. (GCPT, 2012, p. 7)

The planning process for the Glenville action plan took place from 2011 to 2012, and included monthly community meetings totaling 125 resident participants. Participants took part in face-to-face outreach, an asset mapping exercise, and completed surveys about their goals and priorities for the neighbourhood. According to the action plan, there were 205 resident surveys completed in total, which were handed out all over the neighbourhood including at local ESL classes and other places where residents gathered. According to the action plan, there were 125 residents who attended community meetings in the early stages of planning, 18 of which were “non-English speaking” individuals. It is not clear if this means that there were 18 new immigrants for whom English was not their first language, or if there were 18 residents who required translation. The plan does not specify how many newcomer participants completed the community survey, but the plan does indeed address a number of key concerns that affect newcomers in the area.

Glenville’s listed action plan goals appear to follow in order of importance. The goals are listed as follows: 1) improve the quality of tenant housing; 2) increase food security; 3) strengthen educational and recreation opportunities for children and youth; 4) enhance programs, services and resources; 5) increase safety and security. The first three goals occupy the most space in the document, are fleshed out with many detailed actions and objectives, and were routinely referenced at monthly meetings as the overarching goals of the group. The plan includes not only general issues around housing affordability and quality, food security, and services and programs, that would disproportionately be relevant to new immigrant residents, but it also specifically advocates for the improvement of language programs in the area, the

provision of translation for parents at the local elementary school, and the inclusion of culturally specific food in the future food bank, to name a few. It also highlights the need to address financial and linguistic barriers in accessing services and programming, and advocates catering to specific populations like seniors and persons with disabilities. While the plan does include issues of safety and security, and a park renovation, these are not central to the plan and are not framed in terms of “cleaning up” or beautification like in the other mixed and developing communities profiled in previous chapters.

8.4 Who’s at the table?

Given Glenville’s position as a relatively “young” planning team in a neighbourhood with little prior history of resident organizing and with significant economic challenges, it is not surprising that one of the team’s main difficulties has been resident recruitment. During my period of observation (from 2013 to mid 2015), the number of active resident participants on the team was consistently very small but dedicated, ranging from two to six residents at the beginning, to approximately ten to twelve by the middle of 2015. As of result of the relatively small number of residents, the planning team members experienced three major challenges, as reported in interviews, focus groups and meetings: 1) delegating responsibilities and burnout; 2) balancing resident leadership with service providers; and 3) reflecting the diversity of the community.

1) “Who can take the lead on this? ...Anyone?”: Scant participation and recruitment challenges

There should be more people that are not service providers ...it should be the people saying what they would like to do, start up small committees. But how can you start up a

small committee when you haven't got enough people to be with them. I really believe that more people like myself [would get involved], but they don't want to get involved because it's too much politics...and not enough hands on to do the job. – Glenville resident (G4)

Like other neighbourhoods that are challenged by limited resident participation, the Glenville planning team at times struggled to fully participate in the NA process in the early implementation phase. By this, I mean that the team sometimes lacked the necessary participants to complete basic tasks (e.g. writing agendas, chairing meetings, completing NA administrative tasks, and applying for grants), as well as to take lead towards the existing action plan goals and sub-committees. Resident G4, who had been active in the planning team since its inception in 2012, noted that the group had a number of urgent priorities, including food security and housing, but the team struggled to have enough people to do the work. G4 explained:

We're working towards a good cause, and that's Glenville. And Glenville is one of the poorest places there is. There's no low [income] housing or there's no food banks here. There's so much that the Glenville Planning Team could do if they had more residents. ... I think that's the biggest thing right now for Glenville is getting the residents to commit.

Regardless of how good the cause, it is difficult to get people to come out when many in the neighbourhood are unaware that the group exists. Despite living less than a block away from the community centre where the planning team meetings were held, for years, G4 did not know that the centre existed. Several other residents expressed the same sentiment. Certainly, in a neighbourhood where some residents do not know about or use the community centre, it is not

surprising that few would know about the much newer and less visible planning team. In a catch twenty-two, the team consistently identified that it needed to conduct extensive outreach and recruitment, but did not have the participants available to do that work. As a result of the few active participants, those who were involved tended to take on many responsibilities in order to keep the team afloat. Three focus group participants explained:

We have dedicated volunteers and we tend to be in more than one group [sub-committee]... there aren't enough people so we have to step up, so we need to bring more people into the group. We are lacking in the recruitment.

Our volunteers get stretched too thin, we need more people, and we get burnt out and worn out.

If we have more participation of community members, we can get more done and do more recruitment.

Among the active residents, the amount of tasks they must take on to complete the day-to-day activities of the planning is significant. The result is that residents become burnt out and disengage with the planning team, creating an even smaller group of active residents with more tasks to complete. In a negative cycle, the smaller the team, the less time and energy the group has to dedicate to outreach. Aside from raising awareness, another part of the challenge was recognizing that many people will not come to meetings and sit on sub-committees, which form the core of participation in the planning team. Resident G1 explained that it is easier to get residents to participate on particular tasks than to attend meetings:

I have probably 20 people that will come and volunteer at the food bank once it opens.

They just don't want to do this. ... [my neighbour] says, "Well I'll start, I'll volunteer at the food bank once it opens." She says, "I just can't do the meetings."

Non-resident partners, including the community developer (CD), service providers and city staff, also confronted this reality. The CD explained that while many residents many not attend meetings, there are still participants who are active in other ways:

In Glenville we have a fantastic planning team, probably out of all the sub committees and the planning team itself we probably have 80-90 very active volunteers and on the events that we run. People might not want to come to our meetings but they're helping in our community garden...

Indeed, there are many residents in the community who are involved with the planning team in more peripheral ways. This includes those who volunteer in the community garden, or help to run the large public events that the planning team hosts, including summer and fall festivals that draw upwards of 2,000 attendees. Despite the successful and well-attended events, still many in the community are unaware of the planning team's existence. In an interview, the local councillor stated:

... I think if you were to poll people, you know just the average person, when you walk into an apartment building or you knock on the door, most people would be completely unaware of what you're talking about. And that's the same for most things, even with politics ... most people, they don't have time to get involved in things in their neighbourhood, they don't have time to participate in politics... they lead busy lives and some people have certain challenges that take over and they just don't have that

discretionary time to donate to work on things like this.

[...] ...outside of a core group of people I'm not certain how much the plan is resonating to the average person who's in the neighbourhood.

To the councillor, for many Glenville residents, the demands that they face in their daily lives prevent them from participating in formal ways like attending meetings and working on sub-committees. The particular challenges that face Glenville residents include the demands of the early settlement experience as well as food, housing and child-case issues that take significant time and energy. Moreover, in many cases, even residents that did become involved in the early planning process waned in their participation. The councillor continued:

... you start with 20 people, it's down to 12, six months later you're down to 10 and then after a year you've got three or four people sitting around the table. And they're the people who are doing all the work. And that's the challenge in every neighbourhood is trying to I guess garner enough support from the residents to start addressing whatever issues are challenging them in their particular neighbourhood.

While there was a larger number of residents who contributed input (about 125) in the very early planning process, it was difficult to maintain the participation of a substantial group of residents on an ongoing basis during the implementation phase. Residents on the planning team also had to deal with opposition to a one major action – the food bank – by some in an adjacent community who “did not want the food bank as a neighbour”, according to Glenville participants.

2) Balancing responsibilities with service providers: “They should have our back”

As a result of having few active participants and no prior history of organizing, the Glenville residents have also been learning to balance roles and responsibilities with other partners, particularly support staff and service providers. As mentioned, the make-up of the planning team has been heavily populated with support staff and service providers, who at planning team meetings almost always outnumber the residents. While residents value the work that service providers do, there have been concerns that their voices can at times dominate the planning process, which is supposed to be resident-led. The ideal that residents expressed was that service providers are there for administrative and moral support. Resident G1 explained:

Our goal is to have service providers and have residents ...but the residents have the final say and what this means to me is that the residents are there to help our community. It is resident [led]. The service providers are there to help us or to show us the way or what we need to do. They basically have our back.

Especially in a neighbourhood where the planning team is early in the process of developing the capacity to organize, it is expected that staff and service providers would be needed to provide support. However, some residents felt that service providers could take over and prevent the process from being resident-led. When asked what the role of service providers should be, resident G4 stated:

They train you. They get you going. They get you up and running. They do the planning, like they did. But before they do anything, they should have a committee [of residents]. They should have the secretary. They should have everything. It should run smoothly. But in this particular area, it'll never happen. ...

While service providers should be there to support residents and take direction from the planning teams, at times they can divert attention from the group's activities. The community developer noted that service providers could take over, particularly at monthly planning team meetings, which is the primary site for residents to converge. The CD said:

The agendas...are so hectic and so full that we can't even talk about the things that we should be planning because we have service providers and we have other groups coming. It's now the direction from these other groups.

There is also concern that service providers can use the planning team as an opportunity to promote their own agenda, rather than to support the residents. The CD continued:

A lot of groups are using our planning teams. They're not going out and doing their job and they're coming and saying, can we present to your planning team? Well, that's not what the planning team was set up for. If you want to do a workshop or you want to talk about your program, that's great ...I'll bring it to the planning team, I'll tell them about it. ...I don't feel that it's the best use of our planning team time because we're supposed to be working on issues within the community ...

When the monthly agendas are filled with service provider updates and requests, it can frequently mean that resident concerns are tabled and discussions about key issues get cut short. Moreover, some participants questioned the motivation of certain service providers, particularly those who do not regularly attend meetings or engage with the planning team, but who do come to the group to request grants. Resident G4 stated:

...The service providers, when they get their grants, sometimes they're only there one

time. Well, they're not doing anything for Glenville. Now there's a couple of them that have fulfilled their part. But what I've found out about grants ... even if we say no, they can still get their grant ...something should be changed there too. Because they're getting money to do something in Glenville. ...Why should they even get the money? They haven't even filled out their forms about what they've done for the community.

In addition to being unaccountable and potentially using the planning team for grants, this resident argued that some service providers who work closely with residents can take over the process or fail to give appropriate credit to the residents. G4 continued:

... the service providers make people angry because they don't give them credit. ... this one person was terribly angry. She worked so hard and ... the service provider took over and didn't give her any leeway and didn't give her any input. ...she might have walked away and she lives here. Do you know what I'm saying? The service providers are ... [out to] get higher jobs or higher up there or a pat on the back. Who the hell cares? Especially in this area. I feel like, hey, just help the people.

For this resident, especially in a neighbourhood where many face significant economic and social challenges, the goal should always be supporting residents. When service providers take credit for resident led projects, it is interpreted that they find status and power more important than helping the community members. This is likely fuelled by the wide social and economic disconnect between most residents and service providers in Glenville. Resident G1 recounted that at times the service providers and residents did not understand one another due to educational differences:

I mean sometimes people don't understand what people are saying. That could cause a problem but it is usually worked out. I mean it is just little stuff, if you word something the wrong way because they have ... the diplomas ... So, we may not always know how to properly word things in their eyes so they just ...

The feeling of being misunderstood or dismissed by service providers was also expressed by resident G4:

Nobody else gets to know the people. You've got to know the people. How can I phrase this properly? Smiling at them yet looking down at them. Patting them on the back, saying, "Oh, you're great! You're great!" That doesn't mean anything. That's what I'm finding with the service providers.

It is not surprising that there might be significant socioeconomic differences between service providers and some Glenville residents, who might not share the same educational and professional experiences. However, these differences can become an issue when residents feel disrespected or when their voices are overpowered in the planning process. As mentioned in other neighbourhoods profiled above, the overrepresentation of service providers and support staff can also be intimidating for residents and can limit participation when residents feel that the process is not theirs.

3) Reflecting the diversity in the community

We're good people but [the planning team] doesn't reflect the community.
-Glenville resident (quoted in Pecoskie, 2014)

The lack of general participation on the Glenville planning team goes hand-in-hand with the lack of representation from newcomers on the planning team. Specifically, the small group who do participate do not reflect the cultural diversity that characterizes the rest of the neighbourhood, both in terms of who is present and in terms of eliciting a wide range of opinions to direct the planning process. While many agreed that the earlier stages of the planning process (2011-2012) elicited wider participation, as the numbers dwindled, so too did the newcomer participants. Since then, the turnout of newcomer residents has been sporadic. One interview participant (G2), who was a newcomer, was indeed active during the early stages of developing the action plan, but did not continue to participate into the implementation phase. The interview was the last time I saw this participant. When asked if there were other newcomers who participate, G2 replied, “not anyone else I’ve seen.” Asked if the planning team was representative of the broader community, other resident participants would name a few individual participants from newcomer backgrounds involved in specific projects, but these seemed to be isolated occurrences as exemplified by Resident G3 response:

Not as a whole I don’t think, because there’s – well there’s the one gentleman who is involved with the food thing – then the other one is the food bank and the gardener.

Resident G1 said that the planning team did reflect the diversity in the neighbourhood, yet still listed individual newcomer participants:

Yeah, because we have some [residents] that are older and Caucasian and then we have some that are East Indian and I think there is a lady from Iran. And they are residents so we are starting to see more of the multiculturalism come in so I am glad. Everybody should have a say. Everybody is the same as far as I am concerned.

The community developer, city councillor and service providers acknowledged that the planning team had struggled to maintain the participation of newcomer residents. Nevertheless, participants consistently expressed a desire to have newcomers participate and were disappointed at current levels of participation.

8.5 Barriers to participation

NA participants in Glenville were quick to point out that the planning team struggled with recruiting newcomers to the planning team, and also easily identified a number of barriers that prevent participation. Since Glenville is a neighbourhood with high residential turnout especially among new immigrant residents, it is often observed that newcomers who become more established, and perhaps more able to participate in the planning team, move on to other communities. Resident G4 described how the participation of newcomers had ebbed and flowed, and was at times tied to the attendance of certain community members who were taking a leadership role in recruitment, who, however, often left the neighbourhood and therefore the planning team:

We had a school teacher in here. He moved. He lived here in this building and I asked him, “Why aren’t you coming?” And he said, “Honey, we’re moving.” And he was a newcomer and he understood everything, and he had a lot of input. And I thought oh, we’re winning there because we’ve actually got a school teacher that’s a newcomer. So that helps. And he was bringing newcomers in. But once he stopped, the newcomers stopped.

The newcomer teacher served as an informal connector between his community and the planning team, but when he left the planning team, so did his companions. The local councillor described this reality of high residential mobility in the Glenville neighbourhood:

As soon as you think you're making inroads with a group or an individual, they're off to greener pastures. Someone's replacing them and you're starting all over. So the fact that they are so transient makes it a very difficult task whatever we're dealing with. Whether it's the Neighbourhood Action Plan, whether it's dealing with property standards, whether it's safety and crime in the neighbourhood... the fact that they're so transient and there's so many languages, it's been a really difficult issue to deal with beyond this.

With newcomers becoming more established and moving to "greener pastures", engagement efforts will not be successful unless they are ongoing and consistently drawing in new participants. There are, however, other barriers to participation above and beyond residential mobility, specifically, linguistic barriers, which the councillor singled out as worth mentioning:

There are challenges because there are so many languages even to try to put up a simple brochure or a neighbourhood meeting invite can be challenging.

Other like service provider G-SP1, described how lack of participation "starts off as a language issue and weighs out of that", especially due to newcomer residents' reliance on a support community who share a primary language.

Residents and support staff emphasized the need for substantial relationship building with newcomer residents on a one-to-one basis. The development of trust was regarded important when engaging with newcomers through the planning team. Service provider G-SP2 explained that sometimes the team can build on the established community relationship with local organizations:

In some cases ... somebody's convinced them to go to the table but there may be a barrier to participation, right? And that may be language. It could be other things as well. Not understanding what is this table about and what does it mean, right?... there's some work required around capacity building .. And it has to come from an organization probably like mine that already is working with them...so there's a rapport there, that it's not somebody coming out of the blue to try and encourage them. Because sometimes that's threatening. ... done with good intentions. But lost in delivery.

Having long-term and ongoing relationships with local newcomer communities means that some local organizations can get around the intimidation by having prior connection. In our interview, newcomer resident G2 stated that many in the community lacked trust not necessarily in the individuals involved, but in the process, and doubted that their participation would result in change. G2 explained:

If I attend this meeting [and] they're just discussing problems [and] after one month, [it's] never solved. After 15 days, same problem, never solved. ...So I think people [are] not interested.

Convincing participants that their participation would result in change for themselves or for their community members remained a significant challenge, particularly when there are linguistic and cultural barriers involved. Some participants expressed that this trust would only come from increased engagement efforts and informal relationship building. The community developer stated:

So, it's building relationships and there are so many barriers to building those relationships. There's language, there's money, there are kids... So we have to take that

time to build the relationships and sometimes I think that's too fast, especially in the multi-cultural community. We just had a new family move in from Somalia and their issues, my heart breaks. She has eight kids, so she'll never come to our planning team but how can we help her anyways because maybe, eventually she will.

Here the CD also mentions the reality for that many participation, daily life challenges may prevent a lot of residents from ever attending a planning team meeting. In addition to the challenges to general recruitment of residents, newcomer families face additional barriers due to the increased stress of settlement.

8.6 Ongoing outreach and engagement challenges

As noted, fostering participation from newcomer communities and conducting appropriate outreach has been successful to varying degrees throughout the process to this point. While the early days of planning seemed to have had some success in eliciting participation from newcomer communities, participation dropped in the early implementation phase (2013). It was at this time that few residents were attending meetings (two to six), and one interview participant, who was a newcomer, stated that she had not seen any other newcomers participating. For some, this raised concerns about not only whether there was enough participation to get projects/activities done, but also about whether there had been enough input from the community on the action plan and enough engagement efforts. One service provider stated that because the action plans came about quite quickly in some neighbourhoods, particularly in those without a long history of organization, this might have been done at the expense of significant and ongoing outreach. She asked:

... Was there a good process to engage broadly with that neighbourhood to capture voices? You got the people that came to the table and [heard] their voices. And so here is a plan that's now good for however many years. What about people you missed?

...I don't think it should be about the quick wins. If this is a strategy, it needs to be well thought out. And we're talking about neighbourhoods that have been in poverty for years and years and certainly nobody's expecting the neighbourhood strategy to rescue them out of poverty in five years. ... but you can't rely on a dozen people to carry out the work of this plan... you need the whole neighbourhood to embrace it and have a say in it.

This service provider expressed concern that in Glenville and other NA communities, the fast process for engaging participants may have unintentionally excluded some residents, while at the same time placing a great deal of responsibility on the few residents who do continue to participate. This highlights the need for not only wide-reaching engagement tactics from the onset, but also continued outreach and engagement throughout the planning and implementation process.

Nevertheless, two city staff who commented on Glenville had a different take on engagement efforts in the neighbourhood, insisting that not much more could have been done. One G-CS1 stated:

... efforts to bring the different nationalities and the different members of the community to the table has been done. The community development worker surely tries to push to have them involved. But like I said... it depends on how they feel or how they see themselves fitting in...

While acknowledging the significant outreach efforts that have been headed by the CD in Glenville, this staff member holds the idea that the participation of newcomers “depends on how they feel or how they see themselves fitting in.” This seems to put the onus on newcomers themselves and fails to acknowledge the significant barriers to participation and challenges in outreach. Asked if the planning teams were reflective of the neighbourhoods, another city staff similarly responded:

G-CS2: Yes, I think so. ... So in Glenville for instance it’s the east end of Hamilton, there’s a high diversity. ... We have a Punjabi population, lots of newcomers and we’ve really tried in the rec centres to engage them. And in a lot of the plans, diversity and engaging newcomers into the community is, they’re mentioned. So, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think anything could be done better to reach out to a broader range of communities?

G-CS2: No...Not really. I don’t know what else we could do. ...

G-CS2 mentioned the considerable outreach efforts to engage particular communities, such as the Punjabi community and offers the action plans’ documentation of diversity and engaging newcomers as indicative of engagement efforts.

Early in the implementation phase, the planning team indeed struggled to have consistent participation from newcomer participants and faced challenges when conducting outreach. At this time, outreach included flyering, word-of-mouth, and telephone reminders. Resident G4 reported having a list of telephone numbers of residents who had been at some point involved in the plan. Each month, this resident would call all of the people on the list to invite them but

given that there were only six residents regularly attending, it was not considered effective. G4 explained:

...the Glenville Planning Team has a volunteer list - but it's just not getting enough residents out right now. ... I used to be the caller - and everybody's name was on that and nobody showed up for those meetings. They would come for one meeting and not come again but they'd leave it on the calling list so we'd have a lot of people. ... I couldn't understand when people who would say yes, say no... And so that's why I gave it up. I did it for three months and I said...it's hard for me to pronounce their names ...That's not their fault. But I would put it through and I would talk and talk and it would take me sometimes three hours and I thought to bring out this many people. There's got to be another way. Then I went right through the whole building.

Given the extensive time commitment, linguistic barriers and seeming lack of interest, this resident gave up on the telephone list, continued to focus their efforts on face-to-face outreach and distributing flyers with an invitation to the monthly planning team meetings. However, even with translation, the flyers did not seem to have their intended effect. Resident G2 explained:

I think it would be good if they distribute the flyer, but not only distribute the flyer but discuss on the flyer what kind of organization [this is] - what they [do to] solve the problem. Because a lot of people never know. They see the flyer, just this meeting is that day - they never know what kind of meeting. Even if you describe the aims. The actual aim...so that people would come.

Even if the flyers were reaching a wide number of residents, it was still difficult to convey the complexities of the NA process in a written format with limited space. For this reason, many people would discard the flyers since they lacked the personal connection and relationships necessary to make clear the aims of the planning team and the NA process. The community developer again emphasized the need for extensive relationship building, which takes considerable time and energy:

... we have a great planning team and it gets better and better and better. In the beginning we just needed a planning team. So we were just told to bring a planning team together. Now, a year and a half later, time has been more on our side. It's all about building relationships because I could come up to you today and say come and join our planning team and this is why I want you to and you'll go, yeah right. ... but in the next six months if we see each other out in the street and we see each other in the coffee shop or we see each other at other events or we just see each other...if I come up to you and say come to our planning team, this is what you'll get out of it. You're more likely now to come to my planning team than the first time I'd asked you, right?

Certainly, the role of one-to-one relationships in engagement and recruitment is essential to broadening participation. However, in a neighbourhood of approximately 7000 people with a high proportion of residential mobility, building those personal relationships can be an overwhelming task. This is especially true when the already small planning team has actions that it would like to work towards and needs to complete the day-to-day tasks to stay afloat.

Given Glenville's position as a hub for newcomers, the social and economic challenges facing many residents, and its early development as a neighbourhood association, Glenville was

a good candidate for additional support staff to conduct dedicated outreach to newcomer communities. In 2013, a Resource Facilitator was hired part-time to work on community engagement in Glenville through the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC). Specifically, the position was created by the SPRC, in discussion with the Hamilton Community Foundation and the City, to reach out to newcomer communities about the planning team and to ensure the appropriate services and resources were in place for residents. The Resource Facilitator worked closely with the Community Developer and conducted canvassing and facilitated icebreaker activities to assist in relationship-building in the neighbourhood. In addition, in 2014, Community Developer Assistants were hired by the SPRC in several neighbourhoods, including Glenville, who were tasked with the doing targeted outreach to newcomer communities with the goal of making the planning teams more reflective of the diversity in the neighbourhoods. The Glenville planning team also often had translators present at planning team meetings and other events to facilitate the participation of newcomer residents. With these additions, the participation of newcomers on the team has continued to ebb and flow, but now in the pattern of “two steps forward, one step back”. A few noticeable outreach results are worth mentioning. With specific outreach efforts towards youth promoted by the additional staff, a group of young newcomers became actively involved in the team and served on the executive committee for a short period. One of those youth continues to participate on the planning team. Other individuals and groups of newcomer residents have attended sporadically and a small few have been regular attendees. The core leadership of the group remains largely unchanged, though some participants have cycled between serving on the executive and being more peripheral on the team, and vice versa. For many NA participants in Glenville as expressed in interviews, it was not entirely clear why participation for newcomer residents had been so

sporadic, but it seems that efforts to address long-term relationship building through additional staffing have been successful. However, due to the long-term nature of the work, it may take some time for the full extent of that success to become widely apparent. Some service providers and support staff have also noted informally that some newcomer attendants have not been inspired to continue attending since some meetings, particularly in 2014, were rife with conflict. The result was that the planning team meetings were tense and did not provide a welcoming atmosphere for new attendants. In this case, despite the outreach efforts of support staff, the environment was not conducive for new members to feel inspired to participate.

Nevertheless, the importance of consistent and ongoing relationship-building cannot be overstated, though it is also necessary to explore other factors that may influence unequal patterns of participation. To develop more insight into the relative lack of participation of newcomers on the planning team, I turn to an earlier episode of tension within the group that hinted at racial tensions between participants, which reflect tensions more broadly in the neighbourhood. I will draw on personal participant observation notes from this incident, as well as refer to participant accounts of the event as described in interviews. My account of the event will speak to how barriers to participation are created, challenged and/or reproduced and how NA participants dealt with issues of inequity in the broader community.

8.7 “I think this is about something else...”: racial undertones in resident conflict

Over the initial months of my observations in Glenville in the spring and summer of 2013, the planning team residents appeared to work together amicably with very few exceptions and the team was largely unaffected by conflict. However, I observed one instance of conflict at a planning team meeting in the summer of 2013 during a discussion about a small grant proposal.

It is necessary to foreground this episode with information about small grants. As part of the NA process, each planning team is allotted up to \$5000 per year in small grants for resident-led projects. The grants are adjudicated by the planning teams themselves and, at this time, used an evaluation process defined by the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), who administered the grants. The process required the planning teams to rank proposals on a number of criteria, including, for example, suitability with the action plan and potential benefit for the neighbourhood. There are also several stipulations with the grants, including: the project lead must be a resident, the event must take place in the neighbourhood, and the funds should be one-time commitments and not support ongoing operational costs. In most neighbourhoods, the process is typically that a resident informs the team that a proposal will be submitted, the planning team strikes a sub-committee to adjudicate the proposal, and at the following monthly meeting, the sub-committee informs the team of its recommendation that the funds be granted or denied. The planning team members can ask for further information about the decision and then vote to support or deny the recommendation.

At the summer of 2013 meeting, an individual came to the team with a small grant proposal requesting \$1500 to support an annual Pakistani independence day celebration put on every year and attended by several hundred Glenville residents. It became clear early in the presentation of the proposal that the grant would not be successful for reasons related to the small grant criteria. Firstly, the proposal was submitted too late for the grant deadlines. Secondly, the lead on the project was not currently a resident in the neighbourhood, though the associated organization was in Glenville and the event was generally run by and attended by Glenville residents. Thirdly, the event was to be held downtown (far from Glenville) in order to accommodate the 900+ attendees, which no venue in the area could accommodate. Given that the

small grant did not conform to the basic criteria of the adjudication process on timeliness, location and resident leadership, it is not surprising that the grant was unsuccessful. However, the discussion about the appropriateness and potential benefit of the grant revealed that some residents did not support the proposal for other reasons and the discussion highlighted the racial tensions in the group and in the neighbourhood.

Typically the adjudication process happens in a closed sub-committee, who then make a recommendation to the planning team table. However, in this case, likely due to the time-sensitivity of the proposal, the decision was made in a group discussion in front of the entire planning team and the applicant. During the discussion, some planning team members (including the chair) expressed concerns about the event being for “one cultural group”, namely, the Pakistani community, since the event was a Pakistani Independence Day celebration. The applicant and some other residents in attendance insisted that the event was open to everyone and is typically attended by a wide range of people, serving as an opportunity for cultural exchange and education. Indeed, several planning team members who were not from that community mentioned attending the event in previous years. An executive member stated that the event would likely not be funded because it was too culturally specific and argued that if this event was funded, the planning team might not have enough funds for a Christmas celebration. This participant also insisted that they respected everyone equally and always had the neighbourhood’s best interests at heart, at one point stating: “I am Glenville.” This resident said several times “I am not prejudiced in any way, shape or form, but...” as a preface to justifying why the proposal should not be successful. The applicant responded by stating: “I think there is a reason for what you are saying. I think this decision is coming from something else...” At this point, I thought that the applicant was going to name the racist undertones of the conversation.

Before the applicant could continue, a service provider stood up to take control of the room, as the discussion was obviously becoming tense. The applicant was asked to leave so a vote could be taken. The chair spoke first saying that they were voting “no” because the event was too culturally specific and because the applicant was too late and unprepared in filing his application. Other residents voted to not grant the applicant’s request.

As some of the Glenville participant interviews took place the week following this event, it was discussed by some residents and one service provider. The executive member involved in the discussion spent more than an hour recounting the event to me off tape, detailing how they felt extremely intimidated by the applicant and found the applicant’s behaviour threatening.

Another resident, G1, described the event as follows:

[The executive member] handled it perfect. I mean after I found out [the applicant] has requested funding before and knew the process and everything, yet actually stood there. At the end, I think [the applicant] was ready to talk about racism and things but we didn’t get to that point... but [the applicant] was getting hostile [and] agitated because [the applicant was expecting the grant].

This resident portrays the applicant as having an attitude of entitlement and aggression.

Conversely, a service provider, G-SP1, who witnessed the event, felt that the applicant handled the situation well and remained calm and professional. G-SP1 explained:

... it was an ethnic event and they were hoping for some financial assistance with the ethnic event. I think part of the problem was when you’re dealing with requests for money, you usually have to allow a fair amount of time and I think that was the main problem. ... I admit, it is frustrating. It’s difficult enough to organize a complex event

such as he's organized with several hundred people coming. That's very complex to do. And you just assume everybody's going to be overwhelmed by the benefits of this proposal, and they're going to see the logic of funding it. And it gets to be difficult when people see it from a different angle. ...

When you have a power struggle, which is what that became... I mean [the applicant] was sincere, well intentioned ... polite and kept cool and didn't get abusive... was professional. However, in the negotiation ... [the planning team] have the duty to adhere to the principles that their mandate requires. ...I thought [the executive] did that very professionally and very well.... And since there is a history of ummh – people get sensitive over ethnic issues - there is a history of that in our culture, I thought [the executive member] did that very well. Now one hopes that [the applicant] didn't take it the wrong way.

The service provider, G-SP1, sympathized with the applicant over the frustration of dealing with red tape and administrative hurdles to putting on events that would benefit the community. G-SP1 also noted that the applicant remained calm and professional, despite the frustration involved. In this description, G-SP1 largely sidestepped the cultural and racial elements of the interaction, except to state that there is a history of people getting “sensitive over ethnic issues” and expressing hope that the applicant would not take the decision “the wrong way” (i.e. interpret the interaction as racist). Importantly, the incident involved dismissing the relevance of a culturally-specific event that was popular among many Glenville residents, partially on the grounds that it would compete with potential Christmas activities aimed at white Canadian residents. This can be interpreted as at least being culturally insensitive. However, the denial of

racism and the dismissal of those who interpret events as racist or insensitive are common reactions to racial tensions, which were also observed in other participants' accounts.

8.8 Whose neighbourhood is this anyway? Broader racial tensions in the community

If one had witnessed the grant proposal interaction with no context of the neighbourhood, it might have been easier to dismiss it as an isolated occurrence; however, I observed the discourses of race that infused that episode in other interactions in Glenville and in participant interviews. In particular, the small grant episode highlighted the existence of two racial discourses. The first is the discourse that newcomers are “taking over”, “getting more than their fair share” or in some way taking away from non-newcomer residents in the neighbourhood. The second surrounds the denial of racism and the idea that those who point out instances of racism or discrimination are being “too sensitive”. These discourses surfaced in meetings and in interviews above and beyond the small grant incident. In the following excerpt, in an interview, resident G4 talked about the women-only swim that had been endorsed by the planning team to make the pool more welcoming to residents who are Muslim:

I thought that shouldn't have happened. But it only happens once or twice a week, or a month... But everything is related. Now if I'm saying this, [it is discrimination on the newcomers]. Even our Summer and Fall Fest [poster] has now just got the faces of the newcomers. It doesn't have the many faces like it was before originally when I started it. Now ... everybody is in their apartments and they're not coming out. Say 1,500 people is coming out to Fall fest, maybe 200 would be not newcomers.

The resident first argued that the women-only swim should not happen, but acknowledged that this opinion could be considered a form of discrimination. G4 described how the inclusion of “the faces of the newcomers” on the festival posters had made white, non-newcomers feel excluded, to the point that “everybody” (non-newcomers) are staying in their apartments and not attending the events. Resident G4 continued:

And we’ve even moved to all their kind of foods. They used to have for each person - like the hot dogs would be two different kinds, stuff like that. But now, it’s all one sided. How does that make the other side feel, you know? You’re doing so much, there’s more than just them...

The discourse that newcomers are “taking over” and excluding non-newcomers is very palpable in this resident’s response, as is the idea that the newcomers are unfairly taking for granted the hard work of non-newcomers.

Like in the small grant event, this sentiment surfaced in another situation where the planning team was debating resources – in this case, space. In Glenville, meeting space is difficult to come by since the recreation centre is the only central place to congregate and it is often being used for recreational programming. Due to a scheduling conflict with a program for youth, the planning team was told that it would need to find a new time to meet. Thinking of their options in terms of changing their time or location, one resident mentioned the adjacent room, which was sometimes used for a Punjabi seniors group (which was spearheaded by the planning team). One resident asked: “Why aren’t they getting bumped? They are getting more than their fair share!” The implication here is that newcomers, in this case, the Punjabi seniors, are unfairly or undeservedly occupying the room and taking away from non-newcomers’ use of space and the neighbourhood.

The idea that newcomers are infringing on or taking away from the enjoyment of the neighbourhood was expressed by another resident as well. In this case, resident G3 blamed newcomers for the presence of bedbugs in the high-rise apartment buildings.

I think it is kind of sad that these people come to our country and unfortunately, the living conditions aren't as – what is the word, as health conscious as it should be. I know they had a problem with bugs... Something that has to be – that's coming from when they are coming in. I don't know, they have to change the rules somehow so that when people come ... they don't endanger the community's health and well-being...

Here, newcomers are portrayed not as resources or assets, but as dangers and liabilities. The notion that newcomers can “endanger” the health and well-being of the entire community is consistent with the discourse of non-newcomers suffering or being excluded because of the newcomers, who in turn take advantage of the work of non-newcomers.

The incidents and participant quotations described above offer a problematic view of newcomers that stands in contrast to the inclusive and respectful vision of Glenville expressed in the official mandate. Specifically, while non-newcomer participants expressed a desire to build relationships with newcomer communities, the portrayal of newcomers offered an “us vs. them” mentality towards community issues (such as bedbugs), use of public spaces (such as the swimming pool), appearance in public documents (as in the described event flyers), and customs (exemplified here by event food choices). Inclusion then seems to be premised on the newcomers adhering to dominant white Canadian cultural norms. Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of these exclusionary discourses of race within the community, participants in Glenville still expressed high levels of interest and commitment to relationship building with newcomers.

Importantly, even the residents quoted above expressing exclusionary views towards newcomers simultaneously expressed a desire to be inclusive and develop trust and respect with newcomer neighbours. In fact, this was a core part of the vision they expressed for the neighbourhood and part of the positive changes in the community that they attribute to the work of the planning team and resident organizing. Specifically, residents placed a high value on the creation of community cohesion and defined a shared vision for the neighbourhood in ways that were very distinct from the mixed and developing neighbourhoods profiled above.

8.9 Vision for the neighbourhood: “We are a happy little community”

8.9.1 Building bridges and fostering change

In conversations with NA participants in Glenville, participants expressed a commitment to inclusion and building trusting relationships with their neighbours, specifically those from newcomer communities. Interestingly, participants also noted that relationship building with newcomer communities has been more successful over the years, perhaps in part due to the planning team and resident organizing efforts. Resident G1 mentioned feeling a growing sense of community and trust between neighbours:

... I have seen lots more community ... as many different cultures there are, we are very respectful of each other because we are all in the same boat. ...So that’s the way we do it in here. I can’t go on enough about how much community there is. I mean it is amazing how people trust each other here.

Interacting more with neighbours, this resident expressed a sense of camaraderie with newcomer neighbours from being “in the same boat”- that is, living in the same apartment and perhaps

experiencing the same financial hardships. G1 also commented on the changing dynamics in the neighbourhood:

... it has gone from basically hating each other, from bang, bang and walking away, to a very close knit multicultural, actually dysfunctional, functional family, because it is.

In stating that the community is a “dysfunctional, functional family”, the resident implies that while things may not be perfect, there is generally a sense of respect between neighbours.

G1 noted the camaraderie between neighbours:

...we are in the elevator the other day and I don't know how it came and I said, “Yeah,” I said, “It sure feels safe here ...” He looked like a very nice East Indian man and he goes, “Yes,” he says, “My family loves it here too. We feel so safe in this area.” Do you know how nice that was for me to hear?

G4, who had lived in the neighbourhood and has been involved in organizing for many years argued that these changes have not happened overnight.

..I've tried for 14 years to get the people to mingle ... but these people [newcomers] help me. And they'll help anybody that's older because that's how they're raised, to help their elders...And it's just because they've gotten to know me and I've shown them respect. I think that's the whole thing. You have to show somebody respect to get it back and I think basically what's not happening here. Shove them aside here, or feed them and it works. It does work. But nothing gets done. But show them respect, you know, I think that makes a big difference.

Not only do these sorts of changes not happen overnight, they also build from very small interactions, from talking to a child in an elevator, to being helped by a neighbour in the hallway. A city staff member, G-CS1, also commented on the steady growth of community cohesion in the area, attributed here to resident organizing efforts like NA:

In the Glenville community, I think just having the committee [the planning team] together and the whole communication process within the community of people ... making the effort to communicate with other people in the community. I think there's a lot more of speaking going on. There's a lot more common dialogue happening. And I think that alone in itself is huge when you have 7000 people in apartment buildings in this little square of a community.

So it's no longer that nobody speaks to each other. I find that the communication is going around, the awareness of it is going around. And I think just changing the communication dynamics in that community is huge ... it's a very big newcomer community, so just even reaching out to these newcomers and being able to have them involved and support them. ... And I think that's going to bring a big change in a small community.

G-CS1 noticed that the planning process and resident organizing efforts created new pathways and venues for communication, fostering a common dialogue, in a small, densely-population and highly diverse neighbourhood, has the potential of creating "big change."

8.9.2 Shared vision for the community

Unlike in the mixed and developing neighbourhoods profiled in chapters 6 and 7, when Glenville residents talk about their vision for the future, they explicitly reference the health, happiness and well-being of all residents in the community. With no reference to development or

displacement, they expressed a value and pride in the sense of community they are fostering and a commitment to helping those in need. Resident G3 expressed a vision of neighbourhood change succinctly as follows:

I hope that people when they talk about Glenville, they are going to say, “Oh yeah that is a great place to live.” Or, “There’s a community that sticks together.”

Rather than valuing changes in the physical infrastructure of the neighbourhood, this resident hopes that the planning team and resident organizing can create a feeling of community that is palpable even to outsiders. Resident G1 similarly stated:

I am hoping that 95% of the things are dealt with and we are just going along, fa la la la la, and being a happy little Glenville and everybody is happy and healthy. ... we have four community gardens going and a social every week, whether it is for seniors, youth, moms and dads. I just hope that ... it just rocks. We are just a happy little community.

Residents and other participants in Glenville expressed a significant commitment to housing and food security issues. Resident G3 stated: “The housing and the food is the important thing. That is the security they need.” The community developer expressed a similar vision to residents:

We want the neighbourhoods to shine. We want them to have jobs. We want them to have good housing. We want them to be able to have food on their table. We want the families to be able to provide for their families but when you look at other neighbourhoods, they’re providing. They have a house. They have food.

In the case of residents, the prioritization of food security and housing, in some cases, stemmed from their own first hand experiences with these issues, and the ways that they saw fellow

neighbours struggle. G1 explained how working on food security in the neighbourhood was inspired by lived experience:

All this stuff on the food bank... do you realize how many people are hungry? ...Oh my goodness, I was so jacked all day from that [food security] meeting. I was so excited. You have no idea, no idea... because I know what it is like to be hungry.

The same resident continued to describe the sense of community experienced in the neighbourhood and the commitment to helping one's neighbours:

I love it here. I am happy I moved here. It is the best place to live if you are broke. Because usually you don't see happy broke people. *{laughs}* It is true though. ... Poor people have the love and the *community*. That is the difference between the rich and the poor. Because if you are rich, everybody is behind closed doors. In the community, we welcome you with open arms. We say "are you hungry, do you need a loaf of bread? I will be there in ten minutes". [emphasis in original speech]

Given the widespread economic challenges that face many residents in Glenville, there is an increased sense of urgency to help one's neighbours and to relieve suffering in a way that was not captured in the other neighbourhoods profiled above. The residents' commitment to addressing food and housing security was a source of pride for NA participants. However, some participants questioned whether the City shared a commitment to these issues and whether their involvement in NA stemmed from the same vision.

8.9.3 Celebration or spectacle? Questioning the City's commitment

While NA participants involved in the Glenville planning team generally valued their interactions with city officials and appreciated the dedication of individual city staff who regularly attended meetings, there was a sense from some participants that the City as a whole was not fully committed to the same vision as residents. That is, some questioned whether the City understood the complexities of the daily struggles of many Glenville residents and wondered whether the City was more committed to public celebrations of NA than to the actual day-to-day operations. This was particularly mentioned in reference to large public events put on by NA management staff, often at city hall. The events ranged from a presentation at council to approve the action plan, to more general NA celebrations. One resident, G4, described two trips to city hall – once for the approval of another neighbourhood's action plan and once for the Glenville plan:

... a whole bus load [went] down to City Hall one night for the other hubs to support the other hubs and I thought why were we there? I thought we were going down – now this is what I thought – we were going down to submit our [own plan] and get some money from City Hall. I thought we were. We weren't. But that's what we were told ... nobody knew what we were going there for. I assumed that it was for us too but it wasn't. So why get a whole bus load of people from Glenville to go there because they had enough of their own [people] doing speeches and we sat there four or five hours for what reason? ...So then we went another time ourselves and there was hardly anybody, just some from Glenville, and we had to get down there ourselves. They didn't hire a bus to get us down there and people can't afford to go down, you know what I'm saying?

In the first case, the resident described a large group of Glenville residents spending hours at an event with speeches and activities that were not relevant to them. The next trip was for the approval of their own plan, but there was no one there to support them and they were not supported in terms of transportation (as city hall is on the opposite end of the city). G4 felt that this showed a lack of awareness of the financial and mobility issues of many residents in Glenville. The newcomer resident, G2, also mentioned only ever seeing city officials at these city hall events.

Meanwhile, the community developer felt that city hall events and other NA celebrations were primarily for the City's benefit and not for the residents'. The CD explained this as follows:

A lot of times I feel that our people are on display. A lot of times I feel events are done and that it is sort of, come and see the poor people? They would say, no it's a great big event but really, our community members don't care where the events are - they just want to be together. They would have it outside. They would have it in somebody's basement, whatever, right? They just want to be together and talk and celebrate if that's what we're doing. It doesn't have to be a big elaborate thing....

So the real issues in my area are food, jobs, rent - not talking about some big event going on... The events are good and they're fun and it gives them a break, but at the end of the event, they still have to go back to an apartment that's infested with cockroaches or bedbugs. So, are we doing anything about the problem? I think the CDs are, we really are because we've given so much support and credit to our community members, and they feel empowered, but it doesn't continue up the way. ...

Here the CD argued that while residents might enjoy the events put on by the City, they do little to address the daily reality of their lives or tackle important issues in the community. This made the CD question the City's understanding of the daily struggles of residents and doubt their commitment to addressing pressing concerns. The CD continued:

I'm down in Glenville where seriously people are getting kicked out of the house. They have no food on their table. They're infested with cockroaches and bedbugs. ...and then they're doing this thing on promoting Hamilton and... getting new people to come to Hamilton and new businesses What level are we on? This project didn't start out to be that. It started out to help people and to make a difference in the city not to be sort of a promotional tool.

The CD feared that some events focused on promoting Hamilton and NA neighbourhoods to potential homeowners, businesses and investors. This, the CD argued, was far removed from the stated mandate of NA, which is to help those in need and to address the health disparities experienced by those living in poverty. Importantly, CDs working in other NA communities also expressed concerns about the direction that NA was moving and wondered if the project would continue its mandate to support communities who are experiencing social and economic challenges.

8.10 Glenville: Summary of findings

The above account outlines how NA is playing out in Glenville, a neighbourhood with a recent history of organizing and a highly culturally diverse population, where residents experience significant social and economic challenges. Due to the demographic profile of this

neighbourhood, Glenville was uniquely positioned to address some of the key research questions in this study. In particular, the findings for Glenville spoke to the questions: *Who are the participants in NA and how do they understand their role? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation? How are the identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced?* I identify the major findings from Glenville as follows:

1) The relative “newness” of the planning team (shorter history of organizing), and the economic and settlement changes experienced by many Glenville residents, contributed to unequal patterns of participation. Despite a well-articulated mandate of inclusion and an action plan that reflected the needs of newcomers, the planning team still struggled to recruit newcomer participations. The limited resident participation, particularly early in the implementation phase, meant that the planning team often struggled to complete tasks, resist burnout, and balance responsibilities with other partners. The relative lack of consistent participation of newcomers on the planning team was an ongoing area of concern throughout the planning process. NA participants in Glenville identified a number of barriers to participation including: high rates of residential mobility, linguistic and cultural differences, and the settlement struggles of newcomers, which limit the time and energy of residents to participate in meetings. Outreach efforts have been a consistent challenge for the team, especially due to the small number of resident participants and high rates of burnout.

2) Coupled with a recent organizing history and significant barriers to participation that face residents, partners (e.g. the City and city staff) play a particularly delicate role in the

neighbourhood and can serve to either support or limit meaningful participation of residents. On one hand, some NA participants expressed concerns that residents were being overpowered or ignored by other partners, and were not always treated as equal partners due to their lower levels of formal education and relative lack of experience with the professionalized environment of NA. Some participants also doubted whether the City's shared the same commitment to pressing concerns in Glenville, which in turn has the potential to limit resident investment in NA. On the other, NA support staff and other partners were viewed as essential to the operation of the planning team and outreach efforts. The Community Developer, city staff and service providers played an active role in engaging residents and supporting day-to-day activities and action items. In addition, to counter the unequal patterns of participation and lack of active members, additional support staff have been engaged in the NA process: a Resource Facilitator, a Community Development Assistant, and occasional translators. These measures seem appropriate due to the relative newness of formal resident organizing in Glenville and the additional barriers to participation experienced by residents. While outside partners were supportive and helpful to the planning team in many cases, non-resident partners ought to be mindful of defining roles and responsibilities, and careful to not overpower resident voice.

3) The racial tensions in the community emerged in subtle and complex ways throughout the NA process, which certainly shaped patterns of participation and ownership of the process. Several incidents described above exemplified exclusionary discourses of race by some NA participants. Specifically, newcomer residents were sometimes portrayed as "taking over" or taking away from non-newcomers, yet the existence of racism was consistently denied. Newcomers were also sometimes portrayed as being unwilling to participate. If these discourses are as prevalent in the

neighbourhood as they are in the data presented here, it is conceivable that some newcomers may not feel welcome in the neighbourhood as a whole, which would serve to limit participation in neighbourhood activities like the planning team. Interestingly, although there was a tendency of denying individual racism, Glenville residents were more willing than those in other profiled communities to explicitly talk about racial and cultural tensions in the broader community. That is, the frank discussion of race by some Glenville participants stood in stark contrast to those in other communities, whose discussion of race was either non-existent or more vague or politically correct, although no less problematic.

4) Glenville participants expressed a view of community and neighbourhood change in distinct ways from the other mixed and developing NA communities profiled above. While some residents expressed exclusionary views towards newcomers, residents also consistently named community cohesion and cultural harmony as central to their vision for the neighbourhood. Due to the more economically homogeneous demographic patterns in Glenville, there was a sense of camaraderie among residents that may have been premised on class lines. That is, some residents expressed a sense of being “in the same boat” as their neighbours in terms of a common experience with financial hardships. Importantly, the vision for neighbourhood change expressed by Glenville residents was also very different from that found in other NA communities. Namely, Glenville’s vision for change did not include notions of development or displacement, but rather emphasized the health, happiness and well-being of all residents. The sense of urgency towards addressing food and housing security in the neighbourhood was also unique to Glenville among the neighbourhoods profiled, and is not surprising given the degree to which these issues affect residents’ lives and the extent to which these priorities were emphasized in the action plan.

8.11 Glenville and prototype 3: Connecting to the literature

The findings presented above from Hamilton's Glenville community highlight a number of important themes in existing literature on urban diversity, public participation and responses to inequity. With its high population of new immigrants and families experiencing significant economic challenges, as a neighbourhood, Glenville, reflects broader urban trends of concentrated and racialized patterns of poverty (Galabuzi, 2001; Ornstein, 2000; Lovell, 2008). The last decade has witnessed a striking growth in the number of racialized and immigrant families living in poverty in Ontario. Racialized families are three times more likely to live in poverty and experience disproportionate barriers to employment and housing (Block, 2010). In the case of Glenville, the high proportion of rental properties, existing settlements of newcomers, and the accessible social services make the neighbourhood a welcoming space for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. However, the concentration of racialized poverty in the area also reflects global patterns of migration, neoliberal restructuring, and historic and institutionalized racism that have contributed to racial segregation in urban centres in the postwar era (Parlette & Cowen, 2010). Yet, Canada's increasingly diverse urban population, coupled with the country's historic multicultural policies, can create an idealized image of a barrier-free country and can obscure the ongoing presence and processes of racism. Importantly, the co-existence of multiple cultural groups is not enough to guarantee cultural exchange or harmony (Amin, 2002).

Even in neighbourhoods that are populated by a large proportion of immigrants, refugees and racialized residents, interpersonal and institutional racism continue to operate and can limit the involvement of racialized residents in participatory processes. Zagofsky (2013) and Cowen &

Parlette (2011) found that participatory neighbourhood strategies in ethnically and economically mixed neighbourhoods often excluded low-income and racialized residents, even when the strategies aimed to support those residents. As noted, Glenville is an ethnically mixed community but does not share the same kind of economic mix observed in other *Neighbourhood Action* communities profiled above. Patterns of participation therefore did not fall along class lines, but along racial, cultural and linguistic lines. Unequal patterns of participation of new immigrants and refugees in Canada have been observed in civic participation more generally (Best, Dustan & Breton, 2006; Simard, 2002; Blais et al., 2000). As noted by Nakhaie (2008), the extent of immigrant participation in Canadian political and civic processes has received considerable attention in the literature due to the implications this dilemma represents for the legitimacy of multicultural democracy. Nakhaie (2008) suggests that recent immigrants “do not have access to the same type and/or level of social capital when compared to those born in Canada” (p. 839), which has been correlated with public participation. Especially in a community like Glenville, these additional barriers to participation would especially affect residents due to this neighbourhood’s position as a hub for the most recently arrived newcomers in the city (SPRC, 2009). Indeed, NA participants above did note such barriers as time, work commitments, and being unconnected socially, in addition to persistent linguistic and cultural barriers. Those involved with NA in Glenville also noted that some newcomers may come from a “culture of silence” (Frideres, 1997) that affects their willingness to participate. This was observed especially in discussions of landlord/tenant issues.

In addition to logistical barriers to participation, the findings from Glenville shed light on the complexities of processes of exclusion in civic processes. Literature illustrates that public participation has been constructed in ways that exclude newcomers. That is, civic participation

has been based on European Canadian ideals and norms that do not reflect the reality of many Canadians. Scholars such as Best, Dustan & Breton (2006) contend that civic participation can be understood as a manifestation of belonging. They argue that there is "... [an] innate contradiction of belonging and making oneself a part of a larger community where the elite, white, male is the standard and norm" (p. 7). Moreover, feelings of belonging and exclusion in a community must consider what Saloojee (2005) called "...the complex interplay between social identity and the persistence and reproduction of racial oppression and discrimination" (p. 41). It also requires a focus on the distribution of socioeconomic resources, how political and social structures operate and determine which people or groups are marginalized (Stolle & Cruz, 2005). In other words, patterns of civic participation are shaped by local and institutional causes, which was observed in Glenville. At a broader level, global and institution forces and social hierarchies have created a situation of concentrated, racialized poverty, where newcomer residents disproportionately experience limited socioeconomic resources.

Young (2000) explains how broader forces manifest in turn at the micro-level in participatory processes through what she calls internal and external exclusion. This distinction is helpful in accounting for unequal patterns of participation in Glenville. On one hand, external exclusion refers to cases where individuals or groups are excluded from decision-making while other more powerful actors dominate. Specifically, many allegedly participatory processes exclude members of racial and ethnic minorities. This was observed in the dominance of white residents on the Glenville planning team to the exclusion of new immigrant residents, who represented a significant population of the neighbourhood. Internal exclusion, on the other hand, refers to cases where less privileged participants are included (often tokenistically) but their voices are dismissed or overlooked. The small grant incident highlighted how "included

participants” can still be marginal actors in the process when racist discourses underlie group interactions. This incident also emphasized the persistence of the denial of individual racism and discourse of race that blame those from racialized groups for community ills, which is a common concern among anti-racist scholars (Galabuzi, 2006; Bonnet, 2000; Bannerji, 2000; Dei, 2005; Razack, 1998; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Conflicts over limited space, resources and funding throughout the NA process in Glenville were often observed to have racial undertones.

Discourses consistent with traditional multiculturalism were expressed by participants and observed in meetings in Glenville. According to Kymlicka (2012), multiculturalism is characterized as “...a feel-good celebration of ethnocultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine that exist in a multiethnic society” (p. 5). Similarly, Glenville participants expressed enjoying experiencing different cultures, language and traditions in the neighbourhood, and portrayed ethnic diversity as a strength. Wood & Gilbert (2005) note that in urban settings, it is common for multiculturalism to be branded as a marker of global, competitive cities and neighbourhoods. Yet, critics have pointed out that multiculturalism as cultural display and enjoyment does nothing to directly acknowledge racism or redress issues of inequity (Dei, 2005; Bannerji, 2000). Razack (1998) further argues that multiculturalism is complicit in maintaining white Canadian cultural norms. This was observed in the vision of inclusion expressed by Glenville participants, which excluded new immigrants who did not conform to white Canadian norms of dress and food, and were perceived to infringe on the space of other white residents. Further, racist undertones were illustrated by statements referring to immigrants as dirty, while in fact, there is no evidence indicating that newcomers have different standards of hygiene. Importantly, multiculturalist discourses are not compatible with an anti-racist framework, within which NA claims to operate.

The denial of individual and institutional racism in Glenville, and the proliferation of multiculturalist discourses on ethnic diversity, indicates that the anti-racist mandate of the NA project had not trickled down to the planning team participants as of the time of observation and interviews (2013-2015). In the fall of 2015, however, the planning team was beginning anti-racism training as the result of institutional intervention (i.e. from the direction of the Social Planning & Research Council).

Importantly, class and race were seen to operate in complex ways in Glenville, which was especially prevalent in linguistic choices in discussions of racial difference. On one hand, as in the other NA communities, participants in Glenville sometimes talked euphemistically of race by naming white residents as “non-newcomers” and any racialized residents “newcomers”. In this way, participants, including partners and service providers, avoided naming racialization and whiteness. Yet, while the denial of individual racism was common, resident participants also acknowledged racial tensions in the neighbourhood and talked about race in more direct ways when compared with residents in other NA communities. Most active Glenville participants were white, Canadian-born, long-term residents in the neighbourhood and often identified as low-income, poor and/or disabled. This represents a class differential between these residents and active NA participants in other communities, who were often highly educated professionals. The direct and un-“politically correct” discussions of race affected the way that City partners and service providers (typically middle class) responded to patterns of exclusion in neighbourhood. I observed that these partners in Glenville often appeared unsettled by the language used by white residents when talking about race. I believe that this contributed to the additional institutional interventions in the neighbourhood, including the hiring of a resource facilitator and other support staff, and the implementation of anti-racism training, which as of early 2016, only ever

took place in Glenville. However, it is important to point out that the experiences of racism found in Glenville are similar and have the same scale as those in other NA communities. What makes the Glenville racism experience different, however, are linguistic discourses; that is, the way Glenville participants talked about race, shaped by their class position, simply made patterns of “everyday racism” (Essed, 2001) more visible.

The example of Glenville highlights a pedagogical process of negotiating class and power positions between residents and partners. On one hand, the story of this neighbourhood supports the idea of social class as more than a mere economic category, but also a social, cultural and behavioural category (McLaren & Kinchloe, 2007; hooks, 1994). That is, social class is a system that shapes the speech, behaviour and culture of poor and working-class people, which can often be deemed to deviant from middle-class expectations. This was clear in the treatment of racial difference and racial conflict in the community, where this neighbourhood appeared to be singled out for the way in which residents talked about race. While the interventions in Glenville, particularly the anti-racism training, were well received and prompted healthy discussions, it is notable that it has not been offered to other neighbourhoods with similar and obvious racial tensions (such as Centretown). In addition, the focus on Glenville as a neighbourhood with a “race problem” may have distracted from the power imbalances between residents and other partners caused by class differences. Glenville residents also expressed feeling singled out or ignored due to their class background by some other aspects of NA Residents identified that they were sometimes overpowered or intimidated by partners who had more formal education than they did, or that they were being put “on display” by the NA initiative. In other words, there were doubts that residents were being meaningfully engaged in the process. This may indicate that residents are experiencing tokenistic or surface-level involvement in community planning,

despite goals to the contrary (Eversole, 2010). As a result, questions remain about whose voices are dominating in NA and how the planning process might “might open up or close down democratic practices and experiences” (Giroux & Searls Giroux, 2006, p. 27).

8.12 Concluding remarks on Glenville and prototype 3

In this chapter, I have provided an account of the Glenville planning team and its involvement with *Neighbourhood Action*. Glenville represents one example of a neighbourhood prototype that is not mixed and developing, but rather is more economically homogeneous and also more ethnically diverse. Drawing on focus groups, interviews, observations, and official documents, I outlined how NA participants in Glenville addressed issues of inclusion and participation in the period from 2013 to 2015. Specifically, the account above spoke to the following question: *Who are the participants involved in NA and how do they understand their role? What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation? How are the identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced?* As a highly diverse community with a strong and growing population of immigrants and refugees, the experiences of Glenville participants shed light on patterns of unequal participation among new immigrant residents and also on the patterns of exclusion that underlie these patterns.

Participants acknowledged that newcomer involvement was especially limited, in part due to the broader racial tensions that existed in the neighbourhood. Despite a clear mandate of inclusion and an action plan that appeared to reflect the needs of newcomers, the attendance and full participation of newcomers remained limited. This was perpetuated by exclusionary discourses of race within the planning team and the broader community which portrayed newcomers as undesirable or problematic, and subscribed to a view of inclusion premised on white Canadian

cultural norms. Such multiculturalist approaches to inclusion are inconsistent with the official anti-racist/anti-oppressive mandate of the NA project and create barriers to participation for those who do not adhere to established norms.

The account of Glenville presented above demonstrated how the history and socioeconomic status of the neighbourhood influenced the NA process. In particular, the planning team's position as a new site of resident organizing in a community where residents face significant economic challenges was observed to constraint resident participation when partner roles and responsibilities were not well-established. Moreover, discourses of neighbourhood change were also markedly distinct from those in mixed and developing communities, in that Glenville participants did not reference concepts of development or displacement. Because the neighbourhood was not very economically mixed, social divisions were not conceived along class lines, but rather along racial, cultural and linguistic lines. Yet, despite the overt racial tensions in the neighbourhood and at times in the planning team, participants expressed a neighbourhood vision premised on mutual support, cultural harmony and community cohesion in ways that were unobserved in other profiled communities. In this way, in more homogeneous low-income communities, the common lived experiences of residents living with the effects of poverty and financial hardships may be a source of kinship between residents which can be harnessed in resident-led processes.

In preceding chapters, I have profiled four NA communities, representing three neighbourhood prototypes. I explored how the communities have: addressed unequal patterns of participation; approached outreach; negotiated with partners; responded to instances of exclusion in the neighbourhoods; and established a vision for neighbourhood change. In the next chapter, I offer concluding remarks and comment on implications for practice and research.

Chapter 9: CONCLUSION

9.1 Overview

Using Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* as a case study, in this research I have explored the tensions and opportunities that arise when using a collaborative neighbourhood strategy to address economic disparities in an economically and culturally diverse urban centre.

Specifically, I have narrowed my focus on how the stated aims of inclusion and resident leadership are playing out in the strategy and how barriers to citizen participation are being challenged or reproduced. These issues are of particular concern in the 10 involved Hamilton communities, which are markedly economically, socially and ethnically diverse. Given the well-documented barriers to civic participation that disproportionately affect low-income and ethnically diverse communities, it is important to assess who is participating in resident-led community work and to be mindful of the power imbalances that can affect the process. Unequal patterns of civic participation continue to represent "democracy's unresolved dilemma" (Lijphard, 1997), particularly in urban centres that are increasingly troubled by disparity and looking at new ways to address localized inequity.

In the previous chapters, I explored who is participating in NA, how participants understand their work and take up issues of inclusion, and how barriers to participation are created or challenged in the process. Specifically, I addressed the following research questions:

- 1) Who are the participants involved in Neighbourhood Action and how do they understand their role in it?
- 2) How are participants involved in *Neighbourhood Action* taking up and redefining community development?
- 3) How do processes of community development address issues of inequity and inclusion?
- 4) What are the barriers and enhancers to eliciting diverse and meaningful participation in the Neighbourhood Action project?

5) How are the identified barriers to participation created, challenged and/or reproduced through NA?

To address these research questions, I used data collected between 2013 and 2015 including participant interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. I also analysed official documents of NA and of the planning teams in order to assess the mandate of inclusion expressed by various stakeholders. The analysis served as a point of reference and comparison to the experiences of NA expressed by participants and observed on the ground. In addition, I outlined the history and mandate of *Neighbourhood Action* and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved, including residents, service providers, city staff and management.

Next, I presented detailed information of the 10 communities involved in NA and proposed a continuum to help the reader to understand the nuances between the neighbourhoods. While all of the neighbourhoods are socially and economically mixed to some degree, I divided the continuum into three prototypes: 1) rapidly developing downtown core; 2) mixed and developing east-central; and, 3) economically homogeneous with little residential/commercial development. I exemplified the three neighbourhood prototypes by exploring four neighbourhoods in full chapters. Relying largely on participant interviews, focus groups and observations, I provided in-depth accounts and vignettes in order to explore the nuances of participation and processes of exclusion operating within each neighbourhood. Below, I reoffer the findings from each of the profiled prototypes and identify how the selected neighbourhoods address the research questions. I will then provide concluding remarks on the overall findings of the study and comment on implications for practice and research.

9.2 Summary of overall findings

1) Despite a well-articulated goal of inclusion in official *Neighbourhood Action* (NA) and planning team documents, participation in NA remained constrained along class and racial lines. That is, as predicted by public participation literature, low-income and new immigrant residents were under-represented among the planning teams even in neighbourhoods with high economic and ethnic diversity. In neighbourhoods with high economic disparities, participation was patterned on class lines (e.g. homeowners vs. renters), while in neighbourhoods with higher ethnic diversity and many new immigrants, the division patterned more on racial lines (e.g. newcomer vs. non-newcomers). Moreover, in mixed and developing communities with growing numbers of new homeowners, longer-term and low-income residents were observed to be increasingly marginalized in the process. The bureaucratic, professionalized expectations of NA, coupled with a changing demographic base, were found to push lower-income residents to the margins of the process.

2) Exclusionary visions of neighbourhood change among some residents explicitly left out certain members of the community, specifically non-homeowners and newcomers, and posited a vision of change that marginalized lower-income and racialized residents. Class-related social divisions and discriminatory attitudes towards those living in poverty were found to limit outreach efforts, thereby excluding lower-income residents from participating. Moreover, class and racial tensions in the community emerged in subtle and complex ways throughout the NA process, which shaped patterns of participation and ownership of the process. The views expressed by participants in neighbourhoods with many new immigrants highlighted a complex portrayal of race and culture, and competing discourses of multiculturalism and anti-racism. Despite the NA mandate of anti-racism, official mandates failed to name racism or reflect the

needs and interests of new immigrants and racialized residents, which meant that opportunities for diverse and meaningful participation remained limited. Moreover, discourses of tokenist multiculturalism were more often observed among participants within the planning teams than were anti-racist sentiments.

3) Conflict played a role in both exacerbating unequal participation and, conversely, in prompting healthy discussion that led to positive changes. On one hand, conflict with partners such as service providers and city staff fuelled tensions within the team and diverted attention away from matters of outreach and inclusion. Moreover, interpersonal conflicts between residents often reflected social divisions in the neighbourhood (such as between homeowners and renters, or newcomers and non-newcomers) and created a hostile environment for recruiting new participants. On the other hand, when dealt with deliberately, conflict was shown to foster positive changes promoting the planning teams to function in a more productive and inclusive manner. Importantly, the avoidance of conflict can result in failing to address class and race-based exclusion, meaning that patterns of exclusion can go unchecked. Conversely, when racism and exclusion were named and interrogated, and when the planning teams' actions reflected the needs and interests of newcomer, racialized and low-income residents, diverse and meaningful participation was enhanced.

4) While all partners in NA expressed a desire to maximize resident leadership, there is a complex balancing of power required to achieve the expressed goals of fostering diverse and meaningful participation. That is, while resident leadership can remain a priority, institutional interventions may be necessary to enhance diverse participation. Positive examples of

institutional intervention include the hiring of additional support staff for outreach, the training of staff in anti-racist practice, and the recent introduction of anti-racism training in at least one community. Moreover, in order to limit barriers to accessing NA activities, additional support is required to ensure that neighbourhood planning teams have the space and resources necessary to consistently provide translation, child-care and transportation.

9.3 Comments on overall findings

The above accounts of the four profiled neighbourhoods demonstrate that despite a well-articulated desire to be inclusive of diverse voices and to engage a representative group of residents, persistent barriers to participation continued to play out in the neighbourhood planning teams. Given that the NA communities are significantly economically and ethnically diverse and given that NA was designed to alleviate health outcome disparities caused by poverty, many stakeholders expected that a diverse group of residents should be involved in the planning teams. In reality, however, active resident participants in many neighbourhoods were reported and observed to be fairly privileged residents. In particular, in mixed and developing neighbourhoods, active residents and those involved in neighbourhood leadership were often found to be Canadian-born “new Hamiltonians.” That is, many active participants were reported to be recently arrived homeowners (typically professionals) who had come to Hamilton from surrounding cities. As reflected in literature, it is not surprising that more economically stable individuals and professionals would be more likely to participate in neighbourhood organizing like NA, given that they would experience fewer barriers to participation and possess the capacities necessary to participate in the professionalized context of NA. Nevertheless, the findings from this study revealed that more than simple barriers, there were complex processes

of exclusion premised on discourses of class, race and neighbourhood change, which were often couched in ambiguous language.

When discussing participation in NA and other supposedly citizen-led processes, it is essential to explicitly ask who is *not* participating and who is being targeted for outreach. Interestingly, concerns about non-participation referenced different groups depending on the neighbourhood. In the communities that are hubs for recently arrived newcomers and with many ethnically diverse residents, the primary marker of social distinction operated along racial lines. Meanwhile, in the less ethnically diverse, mixed and developing neighbourhoods, the primary distinguisher was class-based. Therefore in some neighbourhoods, the concern about lack of diverse participation centered around racial difference (most often conveyed by the term “newcomer”), while in others it centred around class differences (often euphemistically referenced through homeownership/tenancy or south/north location). As a result, expressed concerns around lack of participation and targeted outreach efforts played out differently across neighbourhoods. While there were concerns about some groups not being represented at the table, there were also examples of active participants from marginalized communities being forced into a position of “retreat” in the face of more dominant actors. This suggests a view of participation that moves beyond listing “class” and “race” as simply individual barriers, and instead understanding them as complex processes that shape patterns of participation. Moreover, it suggests a need to interrogate the ambiguous language often used to obscure racism, classism and processes of gentrification.

Neighbourhood Action can be understood as a pedagogical process, where partners and residents negotiate power and competing identities. The neighbourhood narratives presented above demonstrate how participants engaged in self-reflection and consciousness-raising,

learning to more effectively engage diverse groups and address patterns of racism and exclusion in the communities. Individual and group learning were observed in concrete ways through resident leadership development as well as through organizational transformation at the project level. Part of the learning took place at the level of interactions between residents and other partners, particularly the City, whose staff are attempting to engage with historically marginalized (though rapidly changing) communities. Residents, in turn, are learning to engage differently with the City, and being supported to navigate city bureaucracy and imagine alternative futures for their neighbourhoods. However, as the visions of neighbourhood change are divergent among participants, even within the same neighbourhood, NA serves as a site of constant negotiation of power and identity formation, and one that often highlights class and race struggles.

As only a snapshot of the 2013-2015 period, the findings presented here suggest that NA participants are in the early stages in the learning process in terms of addressing neighbourhood inequity and balancing power between partners and within the planning teams. During this period, participants' approaches to inequity developed substantially. Both officially and in practice, it is clear that NA participants considered issues of inclusion and equity to be central to their mission, vision and values. *Neighbourhood Action* as a project was sparked as a response to vast social, economic and health disparities between Hamilton neighbourhoods. In its mandate, the overall NA strategy articulates a commitment to working with a diverse and representative resident population, yet some participants observed that low-income and ethnic minority residents were not "brought into the tent" from the outset and as a result often did not feel ownership over the process. Meanwhile, resident planning teams equally named diversity and inclusiveness as core values, though also largely failed to explicitly name race and exclusion or

address the needs of newcomer communities. In their plans, some teams prioritized actions that aim to support those living in poverty and those who are newcomers. In addition to working towards such actions identified in neighbourhood action plans, there were individual instances of exclusion and racism being addressed as they occur in the neighbourhoods, using the planning teams as sites of mobilization. Conflicts of vision with service providers and other partners also put residents on the defensive in some cases and prevented them from tackling important action items. This suggests that a purely asset-based or collaborative approach to community work can ignore power imbalances between partners and may in turn stand in the way of resident leadership and tackling issues of equity and inclusion.

Conflicts of visions of neighbourhood change among residents emerged across the NA communities and served as continued barriers to addressing inequity within and between the neighbourhoods. Specifically, some participants espoused a vision of neighbourhood change that was inclusive of a wide range of residents and prioritized issues of poverty and exclusion both within the team and in the broader community. These participants stated a commitment to working with all residents, even very marginalized populations, to achieve a healthy and inclusive neighbourhood and a better city. Meanwhile, other participants expressed a more exclusionary vision of neighbourhood change based on discourses of displacement and economic development. The latter was particularly salient in mixed and developing NA communities, where participants tended to promote a “mixed” neighbourhood, yet often explicitly and implicitly excluded some parties from that vision, ranging from renters to sex trade workers. Even though the planning teams sought to be hospitable spaces, some participants expressed not feeling welcomed and at times felt actively excluded from the process. In this way, it is clear that exclusionary discourses and visions of neighbourhood change reflect broader social divisions

that the NA initiative had yet to adequately address, which, consequently affected patterns of participation as observed in the 2013-2015 period.

9.4 Concluding remarks

The research presented here supports the existing literature in highlighting the competing discourses on urban revitalization emerging in community development efforts, and exposing some of the many challenges that face resident groups in addressing issues of equity and inclusion in the broader community. Despite a well-articulated goal of addressing inequity and supporting diversity and inclusivity by both the NA strategy and the planning teams, barriers persist internally and externally, preventing the participants from achieving the stated aims of the project. Findings from my study further demonstrate that in low-income and racialized communities, exclusionary visions of neighbourhood change persist, and that discourses and patterns of exclusion differ significantly between neighbourhoods. For this reason, it is essential to consider the demographic profiles of targeted neighbourhoods, their histories of organizing, and the nuances of social exclusion that operate uniquely within the communities. This has important implications for how outreach is approached, who gets targeted for recruitment, and how to ensure that exclusionary views within the neighbourhoods are appropriately acknowledged and challenged. Moreover, since exclusionary discourses and visions of neighbourhood change have the potential to influence patterns of participation, it is especially necessary to acknowledge the nuances of exclusion that operate within the broader neighbourhood.

The findings from this study of NA highlight the complex and subtle ways that organizing history, socio-economic profile of the neighbourhood, relationships with partners, and classist and racist discourses all combine to influence patterns of participation. These factors can

create or reproduce barriers to participation. The data presented above should prompt participants and practitioners to consider the unique profile of any neighbourhood engaged in community development efforts and consider how these factors may influence the process. The findings also highlight the ways in which barriers to participation can be actively countered: namely, through deliberately addressing patterns and processes of exclusion in the neighbourhood, engaging in reflective practice to address conflict as it emerges, fostering supportive and balanced relationships with partners, conducting concerted outreach efforts to recruit under-represented resident members, and reflecting the needs and experiences of residents who have experienced marginalization. At the management level, the incorporation of an anti-oppressive anti-racist (AOAR) framework, followed in turn by staff training and an evaluation of management values, seemed to be an appropriate first step. However, other support staff, service providers and city staff must also be on board with anti-oppressive practice in order to support the neighbourhoods to engage effectively and appropriately with other residents, and to foster an inclusive vision of neighbourhood change. Meanwhile, it is necessary to provide leadership development opportunities for residents to learn more about engagement strategies, barriers to participation, and systemic exclusion, as well as opportunities for under-represented residents to take on leadership positions and represent their lived experiences. Efforts are therefore required by all involved stakeholders and at multiple levels in order to ensure that the established barriers to participation are not perpetuated through community development processes. While there is a complex balance of power to be maintained between residents and city management and while all parties express a desire to maximize resident leadership, the examples explored above highlight the need for institutional intervention in the case of institutional racism and exclusion. Moreover, concerted efforts to counter unequal patterns of participation ought to be concentrated

in communities where such patterns can be reasonably foreseen – for example, in neighbourhoods with exceptional economic disparity, with high ethnic diversity, or with rapidly changing demographic profiles.

In conclusion, this study presented here of Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* sheds lights on the complexities of participation and exclusion operating in citizen-led processes in urban centres. By highlighting the challenges and successes of *Neighbourhood Action* participants, this research may serve to inform responses to urban inequity in economically and ethnically diverse communities, which increasingly focus on collaboration and resident engagement. The account of *Neighbourhood Action* emphasizes the pervasiveness of subtle and overt forms of exclusion that operate in citizen-led processes and highlights the need to interrogate the language of inclusion and diversity used in official mandates. The findings should prompt questioning of the legitimacy of citizen-led processes aimed at addressing social, economic and health inequity, when those processes may not actually involve those most affected by such issues. The study also suggests need to expect patterns of exclusion, patterned on broader social divisions, from the outset of participatory processes and to be proactive in naming and countering them. In short, the experiences of *Neighbourhood Action* expressed by participants serve as a reminder that civic processes can be both powerful sites of exclusion, and powerful sites for resisting and mobilizing against marginalization.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Neighbourhood Action Participants

Topics	Questions	Probes
A. Personal context and experience with project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How have you been involved in the <i>Neighbourhood Action</i> project? (explain what we mean by this if necessary, don't worry too much about what SPECIFICALLY is in or out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role/level of involvement (Planning team? Action items worked on?) ○ Length of time/Approx. start ○ How got involved? ○ Connection/interaction with CDW
B. Perceptions of Planning Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did you think of the neighbourhood planning process overall? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Process good? ○ Outcome (plan) good?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did the planning team work together to make the plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teamwork "best moments" & challenges ○ What made the process easier or harder?
C. Perceptions of Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How has the implementation been going? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ quick or slow? On some items more than others? ○ Different from expectations?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are you satisfied with the speed of progress? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not? ○ Specify which action items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think has led to, or held back, progress? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Link to tracking form items/results (use specific probes)</i>
D. Perceptions of Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How would you describe the relationships you've had with other people and organizations involved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g., residents, city staff, community organizations, CD workers, city councilors ○ How were these relationships established? (e.g., by CD worker) ○ What did they accomplish? ○ Do partners really understand each other? (Why/why not?)
E. Perceptions of Inclusiveness and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has a diverse group of people and perspectives from your community been brought into <i>Neighbourhood Action</i>? How? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What efforts were made? ○ "Representative" of community? (in what ways?) ○ How involved? (Formal, informal; part of committee, attending meetings etc.) ○ Planning and/or implementation?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who has been left out? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ race, gender, age, ability, language, tenure (rent vs. own); types of stakeholders (e.g., residents, organizations) ○ Why? (Barriers to involvement)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What could be done to better reach out to a broader range of communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By city, service providers, CD worker, planning team
F. Perception of the CD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall, what has been the role of the Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In planning AND implementation ○ Activities (engaging new people,

worker component	Development worker in Neighbourhood Action?	<p>helping people build skills, developing plan)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contributions (Skills, attitudes, knowledge, experience, connections/relationships) ○ Positive AND negative
	○ How has the CDW impacted the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive AND negative ○ How would things have been/be different <u>without</u> CDW?
G. Change and potential for change	○ What have been the impacts (so far) of Neighbourhood Action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your life? Other's lives? The neighbourhood/community? ○ Probe or positive AND negative
	○ What things have happened in/to the implementation that weren't part of the plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive AND negative ○ Changes in context (local, provincial or federal)
	○ What do you see happening right now in your community that has the most <i>potential</i> for creating change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is (change/potential described) part of/related to the NA process? How?
H. Links to bigger picture,	○ Do you think that Neighbourhood Action will make a difference in your community in the long run?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long run = 10 years+ ○ In what ways? Why/why not? ○ E.g., health, environmental conditions, inequality, economic situation, community involvement
	○ What advice would you offer to other neighbourhoods as they start to implement their plans?	
I. About participant	○ Every person we interview has a different background, a different life story, and we believe these differences shape we see things. With this in mind, would you mind telling us a bit more about yourself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g. have you and your family lived in Canada for a long time? ○ How long have you lived in this neighbourhood, and why do you live here? ○ [<i>interviewer use discretion</i>] age? gender/sexuality? rent/own? Education? Family structure? Employment and economic status?
J. Final thoughts	○ Do you have any final comments you would like to share?	
K. Follow up	○ Is it OK if we contact you again, to see how things are progressing later on?	○ Collect contact information (do not audio record; store separately from interview data and consent forms)

Appendix B: Handout for interview recruitment

Neighbourhood Action Evaluation

WHAT?

The Neighbourhood Action Evaluation (NAE) invites you to contribute to an evaluation of your local Neighbourhood Action Strategy's process. We would like your thoughts on how things are going and how to make it better. The study will be used to try and improve the *Neighbourhood Action Strategy*. It will also let other people outside our community know what lessons we have learned in the project.

WHO?

The Neighborhood Action Evaluation (NAE) team is made up of Hamilton resident and University of Toronto researcher Dr. Sarah Wakefield as well as an SPRC researcher and the NAE Research Assistants, with support from the Hamilton Community Foundation and the City of Hamilton.

How?

We would like to ask you some questions in a 30-40 minute face-to face interview. We won't identify you or what you specifically say in our reports or presentations, but people whom you work closely with might still be able to figure out your identity based on what you say or how you say it.

CONTACT:

If you would like to be interviewed, please call [researcher] at [PHONE NUMBER] or email us at rhoodeval@gmail.com with your name, phone number and the best time to reach you.

Appendix C: Informed Consent for Interviews

What is this study about?

This research will help us learn how Hamilton's *Neighbourhood Action* neighbourhood development initiative is working. We would like your thoughts on how the project is going and how to make it better.

Whose study is this?

Dr. Sarah Wakefield (a University of Toronto professor and Hamilton resident) is doing this study with the help of her research team, local students and staff from the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC). The Hamilton Community Foundation and the City of Hamilton are partners in this study – they will be using the results to improve the *Neighbourhood Action Strategy*, but are not paying for or in charge of the study. This project has been funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR).

What will I do?

You will be asked some questions in a one-on-one interview, to find out:

- a) How you think the initiative is working so far, and,
- b) Any issues or concerns (or happy stories!) you'd like to share.

The interview will take about an hour to complete.

What will you do with my answers?

The interview will be tape recorded, and transcribed into text at a later time, as long as that is okay with you. Only Dr. Wakefield, her research team, and professional confidential transcribers will have access to your answers. When we report on the study, the issues you mention will be talked about in general terms. Your name will not be used in any report or presentation that comes out of this study. We may use direct quotes from your interview, without including names, organizations, program names or other specifics. We will try not to present information in a way that could identify you. However, people that you work closely with might be able to figure out what you said, since they know you well. If you have a unique role or opinion, others may also be able to identify something you said. If you mention something that has gone particularly well, we would like to give credit to the organizations and projects involved and so might name them by name.

Do I have to participate?

You don't have to be interviewed. You can refuse to answer any questions, and you can stop the interview at any time. You can also ask us to take out information you have given us if you change your mind, up until our report is finished. We may want to talk to you again later on in the project to check how things are going. We will ask you about this at the end of the interview. You don't have to talk to us again if you don't want to.

How will I benefit?

Community resident participants will receive \$20 to compensate for their time. The study will be used to try and improve the *Neighbourhood Action Strategy*. As well, results from the study will be presented back to your community, and we will let other people outside our community know what lessons we have learned in the project.

Who do I talk to if I have more questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please email rhoodeval@gmail.com or [RESEARCHER] at [CONTACT INFORMATION]. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can also contact the University of Toronto's Office of Research Ethics, ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

I understand what this study involves and agree to participate. _____

I am willing to have this interview tape recorded. _____

I have been given a copy of this consent form for my records. _____

Participant signature _____ Date

Appendix D: Facilitator's Questions for Focus Groups with Residents

Focus groups will start with presentation of interim results. Following presentation, these questions will be used to guide discussion:

1. Do you think that what we just presented (about what people have told us about the implementation of the neighbourhood plan) reflects your experience? Why or why not?
2. The results so far say that _____ are the most important factors that contributed to progress on the plans. Would you agree, or not? (Elaborate)
3. The results so far say that _____ are the most important factors that held progress back on the plans. Would you agree, or not? (Elaborate)
4. Is the progress so far meeting your expectations? Why or why not?
5. How would you describe the working relationship you've had with city staff?
6. How would you describe the working relationship you've had with community partners?
7. How involved have you felt in the process?
8. Did you expect to be more or less involved in the implementation?
9. Do you feel that residents have enough voice as implementation is going ahead?

Appendix E: Consent and feedback form for focus groups

NEIGHBOURHOOD EVALUATION CELEBRATION |

Neighbourhood
Action Evaluation

Welcome. This event is an interactive presentation of the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation's (NAE) preliminary results surrounding the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on the initial findings through discussion and other activities. Your contributions will create a clearer picture of your neighbourhood's experience with Neighbourhood Action.

Consent

Feedback from this session will contribute to the study results and publications, which will be used to improve the implementation of the neighbourhood plans. No names are being recorded, and all comments are anonymous.

If you would rather not have your comments included as part of the research data, please let us know. You can either refrain from adding a comment (verbally or in written form), or tell us not to include it.

A member of the NAE team will be taking notes, so please ask one of us if you have any questions or concerns. If you want to withdraw your information or ask us any questions later on, our contact information is on the handout provided.

Who do I talk to if I have more questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please email nhoodeval@gmail.com or [RESEARCHER] at [CONTACT INFORMATION]. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can also contact the University of Toronto's Office of Research Ethics, ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

FEEDBACK

Thank you. We appreciate your contribution to the evaluation and to your neighbourhood. At the conclusion of the event, please take a moment to fill out this brief feedback form to record any last thoughts about our discussions and to help us improve this session.

Other comments you want us to know about the implementation of the Action Plan:

What did you like the most about this session?

What should we change for the next session?

General feedback on session:

Endnotes

ⁱ Definitions of *community development* are widely varied and notoriously contentious (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Nevertheless, Frank & Smith (1999) offer a succinct definition of community development as: "...the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems" (p. 6). The nuanced usage of the term *community development* is explored further in chapter 2.

ⁱⁱ Here, the authors refer to an indifference by political parties and community groups towards visible minorities, which contributes to exclusion from political processes.

ⁱⁱⁱ Statistics Canada (2011b) reports the population of the city proper (census subdivision) as 520,000, while the larger census metropolitan area (CMA), including amalgamated suburbs, is reported at 721, 000.

^{iv} For each neighbourhood, I outline the size and population of the community; highlight distinguishing demographic and physical features; and, indicate whether the neighbourhood had a resident organization prior to the City's engagement leading up to the action plan. I also state when each neighbourhood's plan was completed and outline the goals and priorities detailed in each of the plans.

^v Interestingly, the CNA's action plan uses the term *social capital* and includes scholarly references, reflecting the high levels of education of many of the leadership team. In the action plan, social capital is defined to mean social connectedness and a sense of belonging, allowing citizens to use networks to access socioeconomic resources.

^{vi} The Somali refugee community has been growing in Canada since the early 1990s as displaced Somali fled civil wars and political instability that began in the 1980s and continues to date. Hamilton has been a significant site for the settlement of government-assisted refugees, including Somali refugees, and Centretown is a common neighbourhood for settlement due to its relative affordability and proximity to settlement services.

^{vii} Saying that the assets "stop" at a certain street when talking about who is participating in the hub suggests that the speaker may have equated assets with "people who actively contribute to the planning team." The speaker may also have been referring to physical assets, such as those typically found on an asset map, which tracks resources and valued spaces in a neighbourhood.

^{viii} Importantly, the discussions about RCFs here extended from ongoing public debate about RCFs in adjacent neighbourhoods which intensified in 2012. Some vocal residents in an adjacent community, named Corktown, expressed opposition to the movement of a new RCF into the neighbourhood on the basis that the area was inundated and already had its "fair share". The Ontario Human Rights Commissioner intervened, objecting to this "fair share" argument: "It is illegal to make planning decisions based on people, instead of on land use and other legitimate planning principles. We wouldn't think that we could, as a society, say that there's a 'fair share' of a people of a certain faith group or a particular racial group. That's pretty clear that that's not acceptable language." (Reilly, 2012)

^{ix} Although beyond the scope of my study, the action plan and some other NA documents, make reference to health equity, which could equally be a frame of analysis for NA. As noted in the literature, neighbourhood revitalization efforts often reference best practices in creating "healthier" communities, based on a Social Determinant of Health (SDOH) model (Marmot & Wilkinson, 1999; Adler et al, 1999; Diderichsen et al., 2001). In the SDOH model, personal and community health are understood to be shaped by social and environmental factors, like transportation and food accessibility, education and employment opportunities, early childhood development, and social exclusion. In Hillboro, the action plan referenced scholarly articles on the effects of green space, traffic calming and crime reduction on mental and physical health. While it may be true that accessible public green space can benefit community health, the marginalization of housing, food and employment issues, for example, can obscure the root causes of local poverty and inequity. The focus on physical factors like green space and traffic can be misguided by

literature on “neighbourhood effects”, which posits that living in poor neighbourhoods can have a negative effect on social development, even independent of variables like individual or family income (Galster, 2012; Wilson, 1987). However, in Canada, studies of “neighbourhood effects” indicate that life opportunities are in fact more influenced by individual or family factors than neighbourhood conditions (Oreopoulos, 2002, 2008).

^x While in-depth physical/geographical analysis is beyond the scope of my study, it is worth mentioning that the built environment of the neighbourhoods in question cannot be ignored when accounting for how they have evolved and how they continue to experience change. In particular, the housing stock in Glenville (mostly high rises and townhouses) as well as its location (quite far from the downtown core) are important aspects of the community to take note of. As opposed to the other profiled communities, which are in or near the downtown core and have a housing stock of grand old homes, Glenville is in a sense less “gentrifiable” than other profiled communities. Nevertheless, other physical changes to the neighbourhood, such as increased public transit to Toronto, have the potential to affect residential and commercial growth in Glenville, as do rising rents in other parts of the city and other forces.