

DECONSTRUCTING LAWRENCE HEIGHTS THROUGH PLANNING, RACE, AND SPACE

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Abstract

This major paper examines the implications of urban planning with respect to the built environment and public participation. It specifically analyzes the racialization of urban space and spatialization of race in marginalized communities through a case study of Lawrence Heights, a social housing neighbourhood in Toronto. The aim of this research is to flesh out the theories and processes related to the construction of identities through race, space, and the importance of place. I argue that the poorly built environment and barriers to public participation have contributed to the substandard conditions in the neighbourhood, which, ultimately have led to the current revitalization process. This community has been plagued with issues of crime, a deteriorating infrastructure, and the stigmatization stemming from a low-income neighbourhood. These factors have compounded, resulting in a space that has been reproduced as degenerate. My research is concerned with the relationship between identity and space and the role that the implications of planning have played in cementing this connection.

Foreword

This Major Paper fulfills the requirements for the completion of the Master in Environment Studies (MES) degree because it looks at the implications of planning through the racialization of space and spatialization of racialized bodies in Lawrence Heights. The Plan of Study culminated in the Major Paper through an extensive process identifying learning objectives which eventually allowed me to elucidate marginalized issues – issues that are crucial to Canadian planning. The preparation of the research allowed me to engage with issues of marginalization in the planning field through interaction with planners, community workers and residents of Lawrence Heights. My learning objectives broadly revolved around planning, racialization, and spatialization (race and space). The Major Paper has allowed me to accomplish my planning objectives as I became more versed in the planning process and was able to develop a better understanding of public participation between citizens, stakeholders, land developers, and planners in general. I became more familiar with “race” and “space” literatures, which were central to my research. This paper allowed me to not only understand the theories and processes related to the construction of space, but place, which is crucial to the production and reproduction of identities.

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Introduction: Race, Space... and Planning

“To unmap means to historicize, a process that begins by asking about the relationship between identity and space. What is being imagined or projected on to specific spaces, and I would add, on to bodies?” (Razack, 2002: 128).

This research paper takes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the urban landscape while utilizing concepts borrowed from planning, geography, urban design, and sociology. This method prevents “tunnel vision”, which is often found in planning-related research. In the recent years, planning in Toronto has focused on issues surrounding the congested 400-series highways, condominiums, transit-oriented development, or the flavour of the month – sustainability. Very little attention is paid to poverty and racial-spatial politics even though this city is home to over 2.6 million residents (Statistics Canada, 2012) (half of them being foreign-born) while poverty is concentrated in the inner suburbs (Lorinc, 2011). Randolph Hester (2006) draws attention to the fact that planning has focused on the physical and it is only recently that social planners and sociologists have emphasized the experiential, spatial and political aspects of the neighbourhood (377). This is important because we must look at ways to limit the reproduction of social inequalities and oppression in the city (Krumholz, 2003). We must look at planning through different lenses. Hence, I propose that we unmap the processes that perpetuate racialized and spatialized communities, echoing what Yasmin Jiwani (2006: xii) argues is the “stripping” of the colonial constraints and structure guiding spatialization.

For the purpose of this paper, I intend to highlight how race and space have worked, and continue to work, together to produce identities and communities. I am particularly interested in how racialized processes are spatialized in the city. I theorize that the implications of planning, with particular respect to the built environment and public participation, play an important role in the creation and maintenance of racialized spaces – more specifically, how planning has been complicit in the reproduction of racialized spaces and spatialized bodies in Lawrence Heights. These intersections are shown through a case study of Lawrence Heights, a (formerly North York) Toronto community that has been marred by poverty and crime. Lawrence Heights is a low-income neighbourhood bounded by Lawrence Avenue West, Dufferin Street, Bathurst Street, and Highway 401, which has

been controversially bisected by William R. Allen Road, commonly known as "The Allen." In 2005, Lawrence Heights was designated as one of Toronto's controversial thirteen priority neighbourhoods and has since undergone the initial steps towards revitalization with the City of Toronto and Toronto Community Housing (TCH). The area has been targeted for the renewal of "deteriorated building stock combined with social, physical and income isolation" with market and subsidized housing (Sterling and Cappe, nd: 1).

Urban design journals, planning seminars, and professionals have astonished crowds with techniques to improve "unattractive" areas through beautification, implementing way-finding strategies, and enhancing overall liveability. As Paul Knox (2011) notes, design can add to quality of life, making urban contexts more legible and creating a sense of place (236). Planners have incorporated the input of residents and local stakeholders into the public participation process, influencing official plans, secondary plans and community improvement plans. On the same note, there is a certain void that is left in the planning conversation, especially in a diverse Canadian metropolis like Toronto. Current topics at the forefront of planning-related debates pertain to public transit, urban sprawl, and retrofitting deteriorating buildings. My aim is not to prioritize one over the other, but it is crucial to elucidate other factors. That is, what role does the implications of planning play in the importance of space, how is space racialized and how do racialized bodies become spatialized? Similar to the concept of "race", "space" is socially defined and regulated – accessibility, borders, maintenance, and rights to space are created. While the dominant media discourse surrounding spatial barriers suggests a blame-the-victim approach, it can also gloss over important issues. Jennifer Nelson (2008) argues that discourses construct the topic itself, authorizing what can and cannot be discussed. Canadian planning literature pays little attention to "place-based identities" (Duncan and Duncan, 2003) or the relationship between place and landscape. As Knox (2011: 173) reminds us, "[s]ense of place is always socially constructed, and a fundamental element in the social construction of place is the existential imperative for people to define themselves in relation to the material world."

Planning is a multilayered approach to building, sustaining, and accounting for communities through various levels of government, organizations, and communities themselves. Planning – in theory and in practice – carries several dimensions and

assumptions. As a theory, all communities are deemed to be equally invested in economic, political, and social development while the needs of all residents are met from the bottom-up. As a practice, historically, certain communities have been marginalized from engaging in public participation or any forms of community input and planning processes, and were subjugated to racial profiling, depreciated properties, higher crime rates, and the powerful stigmatization of impoverishment. Such conditions have been the result of the “possessive investment of whiteness” (Lipstiz 1998) and/or “asset stripping” (Woods 2010) over time.

Ideally, planning looks at achieving certain future conditions in the built and natural environment in a community (Hodge and Gordon, 2007). Planning, in the easiest way identifiable, is exercised through zoning by-laws. Zoning by-laws govern how the land in a specified area may be used and how development may take place on individual parcels (Hodge and Gordon, 2007). In Toronto, zoning by-laws are enforced through the municipal government via by-law officers. The location, height and size of buildings, placement of signs, density, and types of businesses are all dictated by zoning by-laws. Momoko Price (2009: 1) argues that “[g]ood urban planning requires critical hindsight and practical foresight” – and had the planners in Lawrence Heights taken heed, the current impoverished state would have been severely mitigated, if not unlikely. As Duncan and Duncan (2007) theorize, “land use planning” (an umbrella term that involves zoning by-laws) informs what is regarded as an acceptable social category and relationship. For instance, they espouse that “there are no zoning maps divided into racially or economically restricted areas, so labelled. But there are thousands of zoning maps which say in effect: ‘Upper Income Here’, ‘Middle Income Here’; ‘No Lower Income Permitted Except as Household employees’, ‘No Blacks Permitted’ ” (Duncan and Duncan 2007: 100).

As a renowned critical race scholar in Toronto, Cheryl Teelucksingh’s research focuses on race-space analysis. As Teelucksingh (2006) explains, the process of “racialization” occurs where racial meanings manifest into social, political, and economic contexts but, at the same time, is not limited to ethnicity or race as it usually includes discourse pertaining to class. As a result, “racialization as a lens to view the city’s dominant social relations, ideology of multiculturalism, and the spatial structure of the city... as the racial system in Canada contains an underlying spatial extension that is influenced by historical racial domination and resistance” (Teelucksingh, 2006: 3).

Racialization has been relegated to low-income neighbourhoods, producing racialized spaces. Moreover, when race becomes “spatialized”, race takes on an identity based upon the particular space it occupies. Canadian planning academia generally glosses over issues of oppression and inequality that manifest in the built environment, however, Slater (2005), Buzzeli (2008), Sahak (2008), Szekely (2009), and Nelson (2008) have contributed greatly to the literature on social and community planning. It is important to show that the implications of planning have been frequently racially biased and largely dictated by persons of European descent.

Spatialization occurs when certain racialized, ethnicized, and gendered contexts become intrinsically associated with physical and symbolic spaces. Social relations in Toronto are largely affected by historical domination and spatial structure, which manifests itself in Whites residing and working in the core. When a space becomes associated with race (in media and other institutions), it becomes racialized. Racialized spaces are quite prevalent in “Western” societies, producing racialized bodies and identities. Given the marginalization and disenfranchisement of such spaces or neighbourhoods, people who occupy these spaces often end up unemployed, uneducated, and/or in the criminal justice system. While this process may sound highly theoretical, studying high density communities such as Regent Park and Lawrence Heights exemplifies this concept. I believe that a space becomes “racialized” when racial meanings are attached to it and transforms it into a differentiated space (of crime for example) in relation to the dominant status quo – and that the status quo is actively or passively working to sustain such meanings, resulting in the marginalized issues that we see today.

Let it be unequivocally clear that this paper does not limit race to the skin colour of non-Whites. As Nelson (2008: 20) indicates, “race as a meaningful category has not always relied on skin colour. Predominantly White spaces may be racialized if they exhibit qualities similar to Other groups or exist in proximity to them.” With that said, even Whites can be raced. Examples include White residents living in impoverished conditions, or those historically discriminated against (like the many Irish and Italian immigrants in North America at the turn of the twentieth century) (Nelson, 2008). At the same time, planning cannot take the full blame for the issues plaguing low-income neighbourhoods –

issues that are undeniably based on the larger underlying, structural and historical factors stemming from the transatlantic slave trade, colonial ideologies and capitalist development.

Issues of multiculturalism, equity, equality, diversity, Whiteness, and racism are at the core of this paper, since these ideologies are greatly challenged in practice. Planners, designers, landscape architects and others involved in influencing the built form should focus on the “fatal links” that maintain the race-place-space-power nexus (Lipsitz, 2007). Planning as a profession and a practice has been highly gendered and dominated by White males. Whiteness is a reference to the “structured advantages that accrue to whites because of past and present discrimination” which is not “consciously embraced” by all White individuals but is something from which they may inadvertently benefit (Lipsitz, 2007: 13). At the same time, Lipsitz (2007) argued that Black consciousness is not something that is embraced by all Black people. Black consciousness refers to the idea that Blacks became aware of their historical disenfranchisement and their relation of oppression to the privileged societal position of power of Whites (Lipsitz, 2007). Thus, the question at the core of this research is how planning in Lawrence Heights has contributed to the racialization of that neighbourhood and the spatialization of race. As Jacobs (1961) points out, the successful city neighbourhood is cognizant of its problems but ultimately does not render itself helpless. Lauren Costa (2010) argues that social housing neighbourhoods all lack social and spatial integration with their surrounding areas. Costa (2010) notes that isolating residents is not good planning as segregated communities simply do not function well.

I will operationalize my study mainly through a qualitative research method which is exercised through four “traditions”: 1) to understand social reality in its own terms; 2) to understand how social order is created through talk and interaction; 3) to get a look at the “inside experience” of residents; and 4) to be sensitive to the social construction of reality (Bryman and Teevan, 2005: 145). Qualitative research relies heavily on interpretation and my research on understanding the role of the planning implications in maintaining or reproducing exclusion in Lawrence Heights relies on archival, primary and secondary research, and semi-structured interviews.

Overall, a total of nine semi-structured interviews were conducted. The insights of one City of Toronto senior planner, one City of Toronto community development officer,

one Toronto Community Housing manager, one Toronto Community Housing community leader, the City of Toronto councillor for Ward 15 (Eglinton-Lawrence), an executive assistant for the councillor, two current Lawrence Heights residents, and a former Lawrence Heights resident (who is currently working as a community animator) were imperative in providing me with a range of perspectives on the different realities of the neighbourhood. Of particular interest was the history of the neighbourhood, and shedding light on the perception of planners and the lived experience of residents. Interviews were conducted over the course of two months (February and March 2012), which were tape-recorded and transcribed selectively.

In the first section of this paper, I review the history of Lawrence Heights, main planning issues, revitalization episodes, and the reasons why this neighbourhood is important to Canadian planning. In the second and third section of this paper, I respectively delve into an extensive look at the processes of the racialization of urban space and the spatialization of racialized bodies. In the fourth section, I examine the racializing issues related to the built environment of Lawrence Heights. The fifth section focuses on the public participation process and respective struggles during the revitalization of Lawrence Heights. As the final section of this paper, the conclusion summarizes my findings and looks to the future of this community through the current revitalization process.

Lawrence Heights/Jungle

“Neighbourhoods vary from one another in many ways that make a difference in residents’ lives” (Oakley and Logan 2007: 215).

“Power is naturalized and communicated through structures of dominance” (Jiwani 2006: 4)

Context can either strengthen or weaken an argument. It is imperative to recognize that media representation is so crucial to our understanding of the world. In the news media, it is usually without context that certain bodies are represented as being lethargic, licentious, or criminogenic, and these portrayals may influence behaviours, something often

unbeknownst to viewers. Racialized bodies construct the space in which they inhabit. The “body” that is produced is a racialized and spatialized manifestation of historical, systemic, and institutional factors projected onto the individual.

Notwithstanding this insight, it is necessary to provide the context for the development of Lawrence Heights from its inception to the current stage of the Lawrence-Allen Revitalization Plan (LARP). Lawrence Heights is an isolated community, which does not bode well for the residents inside *or* those on the outside. This community currently has deplorable housing conditions, safety issues, as well various social and structural issues. To put things in perspective, it is well known that marginalized communities affect the economic prosperity and wellbeing of the well-to-do areas, thereby affecting individuals from all economic strata.

The history of Lawrence Heights can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, in 1814, when European settler Henry Mulholland and his family settled on a farm in an area known (at the time) as North York (Sewell, 1993). Development pressure intensified the area surrounding the farm, forcing the Mulholland family to sell their land during the 1940s to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), an agency that was purchasing a tremendous amount of land on the outskirts of Toronto (Sewell, 1993). Around this time, the Second World War was beginning to taper off and suburbia flourished, resulting in the extensive usage of the automobile (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). At that particular time, downtown, the public housing project "Regent Park" was hailed as a success in the planning community – prematurely acclaiming a neighbourhood that has since been heralded as the archetype of "bad planning." Similarly, the initial planning for Lawrence Heights has since been seen as a failure.

During the 1940s, CMHC purchased farmland directly to the east of what would eventually be known as Lawrence Heights (Toronto Neighbourhoods, n.d.). This area was zoned for residential development and individual lots were sold. Most of this area was farmland prior to the postwar period. During the late 1950s, Lawrence Heights was developed on the northern outskirts of Toronto, an area bounded by Lawrence Avenue West, Bathurst Street, Dufferin Street, and Highway 401, replicating a Regent Park model on a multi-block site plan. The area was proposed to provide affordable housing for low-income families who were faced with financial hardship (City of Toronto, n.d.), while

aiming to implement an abundance of green space with ample housing stock and low-rise apartment buildings. In June of 1954, the *Toronto Daily Star* printed an article on the plans for the new neighbourhood (E.R.A. Architects, 2010). Originally, Lawrence Heights was to have 1,560 units – including ten-storey apartment buildings – but after intense opposition from the local Lawrence Manor Ratepayers Association, the site resulted in 1,100 units with four-storey apartment buildings (E.R.A. Architects, 2010). An advisory committee was then created (in the summer of 1954) to consider the physical, social, and psychological needs of residents and community planning (deSorcy, 2010).

What began as a 127-acre site (which was originally owned by the CMHC) now has 65 acres owned by Toronto Community Housing (TCH) (City of Toronto, n.d.).¹ In 1955, architect George Chapman’s recommendations for cruciform high-rise apartments were rejected because the proposed locations were in the flight path of Downsview Airport and the fact that these buildings would not be affordable for low rental fees (City of Toronto, n.d.). George Wrigglesworth, an architect for CMHC, attempted to implement a Le Corbusier-esque design in Lawrence Heights (Sewell, 1993) but Jack Brown, an official responsible for “intergovernmental” housing projects (and a former pilot) rejected his drawings for twelve-storey buildings. It was decided that the area was in such close proximity to Downsview Airport that high structures would be problematic (Sewell, 1993). As a result, three-storey and four-storey buildings were deemed to be in the best interest of the community (Sewell, 1993). A low-density site with vast open space and mid-rise apartment buildings was in the making. This plan was quite the paradigm shift from neighbourhood streets outlined in a grid pattern and “haphazard” open space in Toronto at the time (Sewell, 1993). Along with a 9.5 square-kilometre area and 1208 units in the housing complex, a mix of low-rise apartments, townhouses and single-family homes were constructed along a central ring-road (Lawrence Heights Local Immigrant Partnership, 2011; E.R.A. Architects Ltd., 2010). Today, this is a low-density community with rent-

¹ The Toronto Community Housing (TCH) is an arms-length housing agency from City of Toronto whose mandate is to build affordable homes and sustainable communities (City of Toronto, n.d.). Toronto Community Housing (TCH) is the largest social housing provider in Canada and the second largest housing provider in North America, providing homes to approximately 164,000 low-to-moderate income tenants (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). The average household income in a TCH administered home is \$14,600 (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.).

geared-to-income housing and no retail in the immediate vicinity (City of Toronto, n.d.). The housing conditions have been quite problematic for Lawrence Heights, leaving the area devoid of substantial interest or investment.

As the first major commercial development in North York, Lawrence Manor was designed with the guidance of the “neighbourhood unit” concept, espousing “concentric rings from a centralized recreational, community, commercial space... [where] individual homes were privately developed with the CMHC providing servicing” (E.R.A. Architects Ltd., 2010: 8). Lawrence Plaza opened in 1953 as the first significant shopping centre outside of the city, bringing attention to the largely Jewish community of Lawrence Manor (E.R.A. Architects Ltd., 2010). Although Lawrence Heights was designed prior to the development of The Allen around the 1960s and 1970s, there were already plans to construct this arterial expressway in the 1950s and, as a result, Lawrence Heights was built with this proposal in mind (E.R.A Architects, 2010). In 1977, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) created the subway stations of Lawrence West and Yorkdale at the northern and southern ends of Lawrence Heights (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). The Allen was completed in 1976 and now primarily functions as a route from Highway 401 to Eglinton Avenue West (City of Toronto, n.d.). Today, it is seen as a physical and social signifier of exclusion due to its imposing structure in the area, resulting in a bisection of Lawrence Heights. This road development has caused several problems for the area which will be discussed later.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the federal and provincial governments cut back on many social housing and neighbourhood improvement programs (Hodge and Gordon, 2007). As a result, in the early 2000s, Lawrence Heights was publicly acknowledged as an area suffering from a deteriorating infrastructure, lack of investment and services, crime and low levels of income. In October 2005, Toronto City council designated Lawrence Heights as a priority neighbourhood (Gavan-Koop, 2011) – a classification predicated on the neighbourhood meeting criteria pertaining to a lack of services, investment, and low levels of income and education, to name a few. As a priority neighbourhood, Lawrence Heights was “an area which could benefit from targeted physical and social infrastructure improvements” (City of Toronto, n.d.). TCH and the City of Toronto have acknowledged that the conditions in Lawrence Heights are deplorable and quite simply do not meet the

needs of residents (City of Toronto, n.d.). Thus, planning for the LARP began in 2008 – a project designed to revamp more than just the immediate neighbourhood of Lawrence Heights. According to the City of Toronto, the goals are to improve the street network to ensure that different modes of transportation are encouraged, and to implement social inclusion through urban design and social development (Gavan-Koop, 2011). Currently, residents face a lack of community services in close proximity, neglected infrastructure, and a scarcity of publicly accessible open space (Gavan-Koop, 2011). The design of the community has often been criticized for its abundant green space and fencing (which will be examined later). This feature was intended to be the definitive feature of the community but the design was halted by the construction of The Allen and TTC subway stations (Gavan-Koop, 2011). The omnipresent fencing was intended to provide residents with various paths to traverse but instead has given Lawrence Heights a feeling of separation or isolation (Gavan-Koop, 2011).

Lawrence Heights experienced a tremendous influx of newcomers between 2001 and 2006 (Gavan-Koop, 2011). As of 2006, approximately forty percent of the residents in Lawrence Heights were first-generation immigrants seeking “affordable” housing (Gavan-Koop, 2011). The area has become quite diverse, boasting a large immigrant population and a high percentage of youth. Currently, there are approximately 17,000 residents in the Lawrence-Allen area (City of Toronto, n.d.). Lawrence Heights is one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Toronto with approximately 3,500 residents in only 1,208 homes across 850 acres of land (City of Toronto, n.d.). The planned density of the area was ten units per hectare (City of Toronto). Many of the housing units take form in three-storey or four-storey walk-up apartments, blocks of six or eight units, or row houses “clustered around cul-de-sacs, leaving the majority of the site vacant” (Sewell, 1993: 104) and residents pay no more than thirty-percent of their income for rent (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). The Lawrence Heights lands are currently owned by TCH, Toronto District School Board (TDSB), RioCan, and City of Toronto. Over the years, Lawrence Heights has had issues with income disparity, crime, and social isolation (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.) from neighbouring communities. From a built environment standpoint, Lawrence Heights has safety issues and problems which stem in part to its physical isolation. In order to address some of these issues, Toronto City Council has approved a secondary plan that will allow

the revitalization process. The LARP is scheduled to take about twenty years to complete (Gavan-Koop, 2011). This plan seeks to respond to the deteriorating housing, the lack of connectedness between apartment buildings and open space, and addresses entrances that are not legible from outside the community, the lack of community facilities, the underutilized green space, and the vehicle-oriented design (Gavan-Koop, 2011). According to the City of Toronto and TCH, Lawrence Heights was selected for revitalization efforts for many reasons, notably the “unacceptable housing conditions”, guidance from 1950s community planning inadvertently causing social and safety issues, “isolation from the surrounding community”, severely underutilized land, and “missed opportunities for partnerships with the school boards and the City to create better schools, recreation facilities, economic development, and social services” (City of Toronto, n.d.: 1).



Figure 1: Open Space in Lawrence Heights (Source: Google Maps).

The LARP includes the land in Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor, as well as tracts of land around Yorkdale Shopping Centre, Toronto District School Board schools, Baycrest community, and Lawrence Square shopping centre (City of Toronto, n.d.). It aims to minimize the impact of the construction or relocation of residents, to preserve the landscape, and to improve housing and overall health of the community (City of Toronto, n.d.). The City of Toronto (n.d.) outlined significant opportunities for the Lawrence-Allen area which include the vast, open space and ease with which the land can be redesigned,

and the unique street pattern of Varna Road giving Lawrence Heights character and heritage status (4). The two major streets in Lawrence Heights are Varna Drive and Flemington Road. The unique, ring-shaped design has been beneficial and problematic for this community. The City of Toronto (n.d.) identifies Ridgevale Drive, Rondale Boulevard, and Kirkland Road as the streets which isolate Lawrence Heights both physically and socially. Although its design is somewhat of an anomaly in Toronto, there are both positive and negative outcomes for the residents in this community (to be examined in a later section).

Josh Colle, city councillor for the Eglinton-Lawrence constituency, argues that the poor planning of the neighbourhood has far-reaching implications (and complications). According to Colle (2012), “a lot of the challenges surround the neighbourhood being cut off and isolated from the rest of the city”. For Colle (2012), the isolation “has a lot of ramifications. It means you’re cut off from transit, employment, food, and a lot of other services and amenities that most residents take for granted.” As Colle (2012) argues, the planning behind this community resulted in an island-effect due to its isolation, marginalization, and segregation. In a city as integrative and progressive as Toronto it is baffling to find a neighbourhood surrounded by communities that looks and feels deserted, a way of showing the different ways in which space dictates the character of an area .

Lawrence Heights is colloquially known as “Jungle”, a moniker that has been troubling for some, but endearing for others. Andrew “Jaydahmann” Cox, a former Lawrence Heights resident, is still very active in the community, making his stance as both an insider and outsider quite unique. Cox is currently employed with TCH, North York Harvest Food Bank, and is a hip-hop artist, in addition to being a community animator. According to Cox (2012), “they say that [it was] the cab drivers [who] gave the community the name ‘The Jungle’ because they’d come in and couldn’t find their way out in the night... Most people [also] can’t... [and] that keeps everyone just bottled in.” When asked about the challenges that the residents face, Cox (2012) identified the lack of employment as the main challenge, along with a lack of training. Evidently, a sense of entrapment coupled with a low employment rate, high rates of youth, lack of skills and a system in place hinder the community from attaining a sense of empowerment.

A significant portion of Lawrence Heights residents feel as though they have been cordoned off from neighbouring communities through fencing, gates, and a lack of cohesion between other areas. Many have expressed their concerns, most recently during the early stages of the LARP through organized protests and deputations during public consultation meetings (Gavan-Koop, 2011). Residents opposed to the revitalization efforts argued that it would lead to increased density, traffic, and transportation issues (Gavan-Koop, 2011).

As the first major commercial development in North York, Lawrence Manor was designed and developed by private developers years before Lawrence Heights was built (City of Toronto, n.d.). The two communities were intended to have direct connections and access to one another but this proposal was never executed, rendering the neighbourhoods clearly demarcated through fencing (City of Toronto, n.d.). Oakley and Logan (2007) argue that there is a clear connection between race, class, and services where poorer neighbourhoods which tend to be raced and of lower socioeconomic class get inadequate community services but are “overprovided” with social services (215). Social services tend to be virtually unwanted in affluent communities and end up in the poorer areas as residents do not have the same clout as those who belong to spaces of higher income (Lobao et al., 2007). Low-income areas are likely to share a common feature in that they tend to be disconnected from the surrounding physical and social spaces.

On the outskirts of Toronto, Lawrence Heights is a suburban neighbourhood that is home to many newcomers and many racialized persons. This is quite the atypical suburb, characterized by a decrepit housing stock, low average household incomes, safety concerns, and a poorly built form. Perhaps Lawrence Manor showcases more of the prototypical suburban lifestyle with immaculate front lawns, picket fences, nuclear families and a predominantly White population. This paper will highlight how the two neighbouring communities of Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor belonged to two different spaces and the differing experiences of the respective residents.

The designated priority status for marginalized neighbourhoods was given by The Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force (SNTF), a coalition created in 2004 comprised of individuals from various sectors in Toronto (SNTF, 2005). Led by the United Way of Greater Toronto, City of Toronto, Government of Canada, and Province of Ontario, SNTF

looked at 140 neighbourhoods in Toronto, ultimately identifying those that were plagued by poverty and lacking investment in the hopes of spurring revitalization projects (SNTF, 2005). SNTF's priority-status designation asserted that investment in these communities would help improve the quality of life for residents and society in general (Gavan-Koop, 2011). From its genesis, the revitalization priority designation aimed to distinguish Lawrence Heights from Regent Park, a priority neighbourhood that was also undergoing revitalization. As a downtown neighbourhood, Regent Park is surrounded by many arterial roads, social services, amenities, and accessible public transit (City of Toronto, 2007) – advantages with which Lawrence Heights was not particularly bestowed. Carmen Smith (2012), Manager of Community Engagement in the revitalization process in Lawrence Heights, defines the priority status as “a way of articulating characteristics, which are: [a] lack of services and opportunities, combined with significant social challenges.” Whether or not this is a failure is yet to be seen.

The history of Lawrence Heights shows that planning was not overtly practiced with malicious intent, but the omission of equal, just treatment was nevertheless absent in the planning of such a community. Toronto is finally attempting to atone for its grave errors, by revitalizing, gentrifying, and providing further engagement with the community input to produce some minuscule form of social justice. Currently, the Lawrence Heights community awaits the political process behind revitalization. Since 2008, the public consultation approach to Lawrence Heights has been addressed through various forms of engagement, including community advisory, town hall, and environmental assessment meetings (Gavan-Koop, 2011). As of 2011, over 2,500 residents and community stakeholders have been involved in over twenty-seven community engagement sessions (Gavan-Koop, 2011). In 2011, the Lawrence Heights Secondary Plan was passed by Toronto City Council, a policy that includes the Infrastructure Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan. In addition to the Secondary Plan, the Public Realm Master Plan looks at the design of the streetscape, as well as the connections to Lawrence Manor. The Social Development Plan deals focuses on community input regarding social support and services, an initiative to be completed in the future by the City of Toronto.

Race and the Processes of Racialization

“The essence of racial categorization is to connect individuals with a group, and then treat all according to that group membership... Racialized space is one of the important ways in which the idea of a superior group position for whites finds tangible expression” (Lipsitz, 2011: 42).

Given the fluidity of race, space, place, design, and identity, it is safe to say that these are socially constructed concepts. Even in a city as diverse as Toronto, institutional discrimination still persists – albeit through (relatively) less egregious processes than what tends to be exhibited in the United States. Consequently, people of colour have been marginalized in the workforce, occupying rare positions of power when compared to that of White males and often earning substantially lower wages in their respective professions. Predictably, the planning profession in North America tends to be dominated by White males, who in turn are expected to liaise between residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds or ethnicities with (generally White male) developers, investors, architects, engineers, and politicians. As a planner, especially in Toronto, acknowledging diversity and sensitivity towards different cultures has become commonplace. In practice, the perfect situation marries the diverse with the mainstream. Although the ideals of multiculturalism are embraced, it is naïve to disregard the role that structural inequalities play in race-space dynamics. This is not, however, to suggest that race and space operate in a binary relationship. In their pivotal piece, *Racializing the Canadian Landscape: Whiteness, Uneven Geographies, and Social Justice*, Peake and Ray (2008) argue that while people of colour are dispersed throughout the landscape, they remain highly concentrated in urban spaces, rendering White Canadians oblivious to the processes of racialization. I believe that this unawareness is often conflated with wilful blindness, where many actively *choose* not to be aware of these processes.

From a planning standpoint, land use planning decisions directly shape the spatial environment of the city, thereby affecting the economy of citizens – decisions notably “dictated by capitalist developers, city bureaucrats, and elected city officials” – which are often premised upon growth or development downtown areas (Campbell and Fainsten, 2003: 351). Campbell and Fainstein (2003) indeed argue that planning decisions have a knack for reproducing social inequalities and oppression. Social inequalities and

oppression are also socially constructed phenomena which have become normalized through reproduction, posing grave problems for racialized groups.

During my interviews with key actors in Lawrence Heights, participants were often surprised when they were informed of my intentions to integrate race, space, and planning. The term “racialization” was popularized by Frantz Fanon (1967, see also Bairot and Bird, 2010) and while the connection seemed palpable to myself, my familiarity with sociological and critical race literature has obviously left me with a proclivity to discover correlations between race and other disciplines. With the term “race” already being somewhat nebulous, racialization as a process of differentiation *based* on race is a concept that non-racialized persons may find either too abstract or simply implausible. Catherine Carstairs (1999: 69) specifically defines the concept of racialization as “a process by which attributes such as skin colour, language, and cultural practices are given social significance as markers of distinction.” In theory, planning is a practice that incorporates rationalism and pragmatism, and therefore racialization and spatialization are concepts that may seem trivial to many professional planners. Therein lays an important issue – a way to impart upon planners the “proof” that racialized and spatialized processes are still persistent.

It is difficult to discuss race and racism, as Bannerji argues (in Jiwani 2006: 66), “because racism is not accepted as a structure of domination, similar to sexism, and as arising from a legacy of colonialism, its reality has to be continually proven.” It is also challenging for those who have experienced an institutionalized ideology of colour-blindness to accept a concept that is so intangible. As Jiwani (2006) indicates, when racism or processes of racialization are alluded to, it is downplayed as isolated cases of ignorance, lack of education or a few rotten apples belonging to a hate group. Essentially, there has been an erasure of the colonial history behind the subject and process as a whole. Wendy Chan and Kiran Mirchandani (2001) argue that focusing on racialization allows us to consider how certain groups of people have been racialized historically and geographically. Looking at a U.S. example, during the mid-twentieth century Los Angeles experienced the “white flight” phenomenon that left inner cities socially and economically crippled, rendering many African Americans, Latinos, and other minorities impoverished. As a result, the historically powerful migrated to the suburbs and left the historically powerless ghettoized. For Chan and Mirchandani (2001), “[r]acialization refers to the historical

emergence of the idea of 'race' and its subsequent reproduction and application... [and how] privilege and oppression are often not absolute categories but, rather, shift in relation to different axes of power and powerlessness" (13). Racialization illuminates processes where "categories of the population are constructed, differentiated, inferiorized and excluded" (Chan and Mirchandani, 2001: 13). George Lipsitz (2007) explored the race and space relationship in depth in "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape" where he argued that "the lived experience of race has a spatial dimension as well as the lived experience of space" (12).

The racialization of particular groups has been predominantly documented in media studies. In *Discourse and Domination: Racial Bias*, Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2002) engage in a discussion of racial bias in Canadian media discourse. According to Henry and Tator (2006: 351), racialization is a process "by which race is attributed to particular social practices and discourses in such a way they are given special significance and are embedded within a set of additional meanings." Henry and Tator (2006) expand on the issue of "invisibility" and "profiling" which is important because marginalized spaces may become visible through one lens (criminalization), yet remain invisible in another (effective planning). Taking a Marxist, feminist and critical race perspective, Razack (2002) argues that racialized bodies are produced not only through representation and crime, but also through space (as also elaborated in Henri Lefebvre's (1991) trialectics of space).

From a theoretical and academic vantage point, it is necessary to provide the framework for which this section on racialization requires. Historically, race as a concept attempted to account for the differences in individual appearance through moral and cultural dispositions. In "'Race' and the Construction of Human Identity", Audrey Smedley (1999) argues "[i]t was during British imperialism that the English used the 'knowledge' of different races to justify their colonial expansion and understanding of human differences" (694). However, the malleability of the concept of "race" cannot be overlooked. In *Race* (1994), Roger Sanjeck states that "[p]rior to the sixteenth century the world was not race-conscious and there was no incentive for it to become so" (2). Consequently, it *became* necessary for colonists to that the relevancy of race was accentuated. As it currently stands in Canada, race has been blurred by culture and ethnicity in the national discourse of multiculturalism.

It is crucial to the strength of this research to point out the inaccuracy of claims by readers who assert that theories of racialization are forms of "reverse racism" because they allegedly exclude Whites. In Canada, Whites have been known to be racialized as well as Blacks, Aboriginals, and other minorities. As Jaihan Saihuk (2008) explains, "[e]ven whites are racialized when they are spaced in a racialized space... [as] there are specific practices that remove one from Whiteness such as marking the body as uncivilized, inferior and foreign" (15). There are, however, certain spaces of domination where Whiteness and its privileges are not acknowledged. When we think of race, we tend to think of persons of colour, as Whites are often de-raced in representation. As a result, Whites are often not seen as belonging to a "race", rendering the White body invisible, yet dominant. The "raced" body becomes visible in representation but invisible in terms of power. This idea has certainly been dominant in planning.

It is necessary to defer to *Razing Africville: A Geography of Racism* by Jennifer Nelson (2008), a pivotal piece that explores the role that Canada as a nation has played in perpetuating racism through landscape. The appalling conditions, (mis)representation of Black bodies, production of racialized space, and the literal/physical imposition of dominant White culture in a marginalized community in Halifax, Nova Scotia were swept under the rug in the academic world. Africville is nevertheless an important case in the discussion on the race-space nexus in Canada. The tragedy that occurred there is one of the most extreme examples of discrimination in Canada, (un)fortunately shedding light on the importance of space. Notably, Nelson (2008) argues:

"First, spaces do not simply predate historical events which occur 'in' them; they develop along with and are shaped by social relations and ideologies. Second, social space plays a role in signifying and enabling certain forms of knowledge production; in turn, such knowledge constitutes space in particular ways. Third, space makes certain kinds of identities possible, both dominant and subordinate, and these groups necessarily inhabitant separate spheres. Finally, racialized, spatial separateness and the differential values placed upon people have concrete repercussions in their daily lives" (19).

On the surface, the City of Halifax provided the African residents with a place of refuge by removing them from the slums. Beneath the surface, and in all likelihood a perspective

taken by many Africville residents themselves, Nelson (2008) concludes that “Africville’s removal was a planned and widely sanctioned destruction, a clearance, a razing, of black space, of black people” (4). Africville’s removal was the result of the dominant White spatial imaginary. According to (Lipsitz, 2011: 28),

“A white spatial imaginary based on exclusivity and augmented exchange value forms the foundational logic behind prevailing spatial and social politics in cities and suburbs today... It is inscribed in the physical contours of the places where we live, work, and play, and it is bolstered by financial rewards for whiteness. Not all whites endorse the white spatial imaginary, and some Blacks embrace it and profit from it. Yet every white person benefits from the association of white places with privilege, from the neighbourhood race effects that create unequal and unjust geographies of opportunity.”

As Awad Ibrahim (2006: 83) indicates, the Black body enters the "social imaginary", a discursive space that is "constructed, imagined, and positioned" through experiences. The connection between the Africville tragedy and the current situation in Lawrence Heights spawns various parallels as the community was developed through social relations and ideologies. Gentrification was a relatively new concept during the mid-twentieth century and thus, it was believed that the poor needed to be cordoned off from the rest of society. When represented as criminal, unsafe, and haphazard, this space may serve as justification for the view that certain racialized peoples are criminogenic, dangerous, and uncivilized to prejudice observers. Consequently, the residents in this space are privy to the outside views and may internalize the very perceptions projected onto them.

John Sewell (1993) discusses the faults of planners during the early twentieth century and contends that planning solutions to eradicate slum issues showcased planners’ ineptitude in understanding the ideals of social justice. David Silbey (1995), during his discussion on stereotypes in “Images of Difference”, asserts that “[s]tereotypes play an important part in the configuration of social space because of the importance of distancing in the behaviour of social groups, that is, distancing from others who are represented negatively, and because of the way in which group images and place images combine to create landscapes of exclusion” (2). This is the idea of keeping the racialized Other at bay, yet not too far out of sight. It therefore became acceptable to cram racial

minorities in areas where they were segregated, allowing them to remain exhibited for the privileged to see who/what they were not. Razack (2002) explains that “at the end of the colonial era, and particularly with urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s, the segregation of urban space replaces these earlier spatial practices [geographical separation]: slum administration replaces colonial administration” (129). On that note, it has become apparent that Canadian planning literature tends to shy away from the race-space discussion. Issues of discrimination, racism, and prejudice are often glossed over in the narrative, so the dearth of race-related planning content is unsurprising. This point is summarized in *Cities and Design*, where Knox (2011) suggests that “power and authority become stabilized and legitimized through codes of consumption and the symbolic content of landscape” (30) and argues that “the relationship between urban space and people has to do with aesthetics and identity” (35).

In Toronto, the implications of planning have been complicit in the creation of marginalized spaces, often based on the racialization of certain low-income neighbourhoods. My argument echoes the sentiments of the late Jane Jacobs (1993) who argued that the issues with planning for Toronto’s (postwar) suburbs “consisted of the virtues of omission – a mirror image, as it were, of sins of commission” (xi). On a municipal level, the City of Toronto has acknowledged the fact that it has inadequately planned for various communities and has proposed several revitalization projects aimed at restoring character, implementing mixed-income residents, and reducing the social ills associated with poverty. This recognition has culminated in the designation of some neighbourhoods being labelled “priority neighbourhoods”, areas that share similar characteristics in levels of crime, education, employment single-parent families, and percentage of youth, to name a few. John P. Smith (2012), a community development officer for the City of Toronto, is actively involved with community partners and stakeholders in a dedicated effort to bring (more) investment into Lawrence Heights. According to Smith (2012), “[g]enerally, all neighbourhoods in Toronto that have a large social housing community are stereotyped when you have a mix of social housing, newcomers, and people of colour.” Smith (2012) insightfully remarks that “the working poor are spending more time working and taking care of themselves than defending an image that in some senses has been cast on them” (Smith, 2012). Evidently, the roles of

race, space, and power are inextricably linked, a relationship that has been mapped onto the landscape in this city.

As Jacobs (1993) explains in the foreword of John Sewell's *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning*, "although racial prejudices and discriminations infest Toronto too, these evils were not exacerbated and intensified by creation of racial ghettos. Creating ghettos actually requires much deliberate and calculated effort: for instance, redlining; well organized 'blockbusting' on the part of ruthless developers or real estate vultures; and contrived property value panics to empty Whites out of ghettos-to-be" (xi). To juxtapose this situation with a U.S. perspective, Karen Brodtkin (2007) explains that although racially discriminatory practices such as redlining were prohibited (placing the highest real estate value on White neighbourhoods while lowering the value on non-White neighbourhoods) African Americans were still prevented from integrating into certain neighbourhoods during the suburban boom shortly after the end of Second World War. The redlined neighbourhoods cautioned banks not to lend money to revitalize or insure mortgages, inevitably turning these areas into nothing but bad investments (Brodtkin, 2007), reproducing ghettos and racialized bodies (see also Lipstiz 1998).

Lawrence Heights is one of the most diverse communities in Toronto; a microcosm of the cultural diversity that this province and country has to offer. The structural, institutional and systemic causes for the high concentration of immigrants in marginalized communities are no secret. Driving on Bathurst Street towards Eglinton Avenue, neighbourhoods seem somewhat homogenous in population. Ironically, it seems as though the best display of "diversity" in Toronto is witnessed in places like Regent Park, Malvern, Jane-Finch, Jamestown, and Lawrence Heights – all of which have been given "priority" status. The Canadian narrative often uses diversity and multicultural rhetoric because on the surface it seems as though this country is tolerant *relative* to other nations. Statistically speaking, one is likely to find the highest concentration of diverse populations in marginalized communities. Why is it that it is acceptable to showcase race to promote tourism and immigration, but the subject is relegated to the fringes when discussing pivotal social issues in this country? Saihuk (2008) encapsulates this finding as she argues "[r]acialized bodies are visible through labeling but are rendered invisible through the placement of these bodies in isolated and inaccessible areas of the city" (15).

Through the news media, racialized bodies of “priority neighbourhoods” are often at the forefront of violent or dangerous imagery. This trend can be explained in part with the sentiment of John P. Smith (2012) as he comments: “There’s an economics (component) to it but larger than that there is an ideology that says there is a certain archetype that has been developed in terms of the marginalized person...the stereotype is that they’re all the same, but the reality is that they’re all different.” It is no coincidence that Lawrence Heights is portrayed in the media as a crime-ridden space of depravity, yet it is undeniably regarded as a Black space, and thus, the connection is often implied. There are other races in this space but they too have been racialized. After searching through various archives on the internet from the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Toronto Sun*, I discovered that topics surrounding Lawrence Heights pertained to crime, plans for revitalization, or social housing issues in that particular order.

Before recently moving out of the area, Jesse Zorzella was a resident of Lawrence Heights for twenty-two years. One could hardly tell that he no longer lives in the neighbourhood as he juggles his time working as a food justice coordinator for the Lawrence Heights Community Centre and Food Justice Working Group, along with a multitude of other roles in the neighbourhood. When asked about the makeup of community, Zorzella (2012) saw the neighbourhood as “mixed but compared to the rest of Toronto, you would say it is more ‘Black’... like Somali, East African and West Indian.” It is an understatement to argue that Lawrence Heights is portrayed in the media as a space of violence – a Black space of violence – which has far-reaching consequences for residents and outsiders. The relationship between the community and local law enforcement is tense, as the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS) – a specially-trained unit of the Toronto Police Service (TPS) – has been assigned to Lawrence Heights. It is apparent that rather than focusing on relationship-building with residents, TAVIS aims to target, arrest, and detain young Black males who at times are innocent of any wrongdoing; a larger scale indication of the somewhat omnipresent DWB (Driving While Black) phenomenon – yet this issue is not limited to those of African descent. Councillor Josh Colle (2012) argues that the stigmatization of Lawrence Heights also negatively impacts residents in other ways. Colle (2012) confides that “young people have said to me that it is hard to get a job... they think even putting their [Lawrence Heights] address on their resume or

covering letter hurts them in getting a job.” When a postal code has turned into a representation of self-worth, this must have a bearing on an identity, ultimately for the worse.

Kyle Knoeck, Senior Community Planner with the City of Toronto, has been a key figure in the LARP process, most notably as author and editor of the Lawrence Heights Secondary Plan. Forming a team with an assistant planner and project manager, their tasks included hiring consultants to determine design stages and analyses of study, organizing community consultation events, and collaborating with TCH, to name a few. When asked about the issue of race, Knoeck (2012) replied:

“Lawrence Heights is such a reception area for immigrants. I don’t know the demographic profile over history but I suspect that at the time Lawrence Heights was first built that it was a white neighbourhood. Obviously immigration policies changed particularly in the seventies (when) Canada started encouraging immigration from all parts of the world and I think that’s probably really affected the racial profile of the Lawrence heights neighbourhood. You have to wonder, does that affect the way people perceive it? Because people bring their attitudes towards different races and that will influence the way they think about different parts of the city as well, whether fairly or unfairly.”

Oddly enough, it is said that during the 1960s and 1970s Lawrence Heights was home to many Newfoundlanders. It is hard to imagine that this area received the negative media attention and stigmatization that it did, being a White space during that era. This is not to say that the new residents at the time weren’t stigmatized, but it was likely a stigmatization to a different degree. What it boils down to is that race and space are interconnected. This association has materialized in the ineptitude of planning in Toronto, where Lawrence Heights has become a racialized space, resulting in little-to-no access to services, an amplification of crime through news media, isolation from surrounding neighbourhoods and a rather acrimonious relationship with local law enforcement, to say the least. As Bauder (2002) contends, “[d]iscourses of race are undeniably tied to processes of residential segregation. The discourse of race is not located outside of residential space; and racial categories produce residential space as much as they are produced through it” (73). Race and space are socially constructed phenomena that continue to dominate the

placement of citizens in the Canadian landscape. The production of racialized bodies is tied to the (re)production of space, creating identities for those very same bodies.

Space, Spatiality, Spatialization

“There is no unspatialized social reality. There are no aspatial social processes” (Soja, 1996: 46).

For the purpose of this paper, it is important to know that space is not simply a fixed, quantifiable property. Cheryl Teelucksingh (2002) identifies the concept of space as being relational, as there is a dynamic between space and social relations. Space may act as an intermediary between users and relations whilst serving as a vehicle through which bodies are produced. Through his spatial trialectic theory, Lefebvre (1991) argues that subjects are produced in and throughout space; given meaning through surrounding space; and heavily influenced by the space in which one resides (Saihak, 2008). Jaihan Saihuk (2008) argues that we must understand “who produces space and who has the power to change the perception of space” (13), as space may foster or inhibit the development of its inhabitants, allowing the producers of space to influence how they think and live. I refer to the concept of space as something more abstract – an enigmatic concept and its importance cannot be disregarded. Space can be physical *and* metaphorical because meanings are attached to the space itself, those who live within it, and affect the occupant-outsider perspectives (Nelson, 2008). Space is an intricate subject that encompasses the physical, social, and abstract. At the same time, the power and privileges of space cannot be understated.

When conducting interviews, interviewees often referred to space as a physical, tangible entity. As Tim Cresswell (2004) notes, “[w]hen we think of space we tend to think of outerspace or the spaces of geometry” (8). This understanding of space is in no way erroneous, but there are other dimensions to the concept. In “Linking Discourse and Space: Towards a Cultural Sociology of Space in Analysing Spatial Policy Discourses”, Richardson and Jensen (2003: 8) suggest that “[the] sociology of space hinges on dialectical relation between material practices and the symbolic meanings that social agents

attach to their environment.” In other words, the concept of space takes on different contexts. The built form is often overlooked and before structures take shape or places are formed, there are decisions made about what those structures, places, or built forms are intended to become (Sewell, 1993). Space is not independent of its occupants; those who occupy the space are influenced by its context and vice versa. For example, in a ghettoized space where chaos, violence, and overall misconduct are (relatively) undetected, the bodies that are produced often reflect this dynamic. These bodies provide context, whilst informing residents and outsiders what is contained in the space and what is being produced. Space is pivotal to the lived experience of individuals because it “mediates the experiences of people in places and shapes the structure of opportunity set available to them” (Heikkila, 2001: 266). On that same note, Richardson and Jansen (2003: 11) argue that “spaces and places are not isolated and bounded entities, but material and symbolic constructions that work as meaningful and practical settings for social action because of their relations to other spaces and places.”

According to Razack (2007: 76), “[s]pace seems to us to be empty. Either we fill it with things (houses, monuments, bridges) or nature fills it with trees, a cold climate, and so on. Space, in this view, is innocent. A building is just a building, a forest is just a forest.” The reality is that a building is not simply just a physical, enclosed structure – its location and layout have implications. Space is therefore not limited to what is tangible; it also has a social capacity. It can be concrete and it can be abstract. We must look at space by examining the social hierarchies that reproduce it where, “to denaturalize or unmap spaces, then, we begin by exploring space as a social product, uncovering how bodies are produced in spaces and how spaces produce bodies” (Razack, 2007:80). It is important to note that the process of spatialization occurs when particular contexts are connected to certain spaces. To outsiders, the Lawrence Heights Community Centre (LHCC) may be an outdated building that does not live up to a certain level of standards. To residents, the LHCC may be a space of solace, and perhaps is regarded as a landmark of the area. Again, to outsiders, Lawrence Heights may be seen as a space that harbours the negative characteristics associated with low-income areas. These characteristics are then mapped onto the inhabitants of the space. In a space where the Black body is visible, actions are explicit and deviant behaviour is amplified. Where Whiteness permeates, the White body

can be rendered invisible as it is frequently not seen as a raced entity, and their economic status as a population is never in question regardless of their financial situation. Lower-class Whites are seen as an exception to the “norm” – therefore, their inclusion in a racialized space does not reflect onto the White body. As planners, we cannot downplay the role that space plays in keeping people “in” and “out” of place, so to speak. The placement and spatial management of bodies may be a difficult concept to grasp through pseudoscientific thought, but it is imperative that we understand that historically Canada has not been exempt from these processes.

There are various technologies of control which serve as a channel for racial-spatial governance. The Pamela George murder trial was a tragic example of the intersections between race and space. Pamela George, a Native woman who worked as a prostitute in Regina, was brutally murdered in 1995 after two White men beat her to death, leaving her face-down in the muddy terrain (Razack, 2002). The men were given (what many perceived to be) a light sentence of six-and-a-half years in prison and the vitriol that spewed criticized the justice system for trying the accused for manslaughter rather than for second-degree murder (Razack, 2002). It was because George belonged to a space of prostitution and Aboriginality – a space where violence had become the norm – while her killers were associated with Whiteness, and middle-class suburbia, ultimately downplaying the circumstances (Razack, 2002). Razack (2002: 130) shed some light on the role that stereotypes play in “maintaining the spatial and symbolic boundaries between settlers and Natives” which can be administered to the geographic history of the colonist and colonized. In this instance, George was taken by her customers to the Stroll – an isolated area on the outskirts of Regina where illicit sexual activity and violence were rampant – and was dehumanized in a space where the racialized frequented and where violence occurred without (severe) penalty (Razack, 2002). Marginalized communities are populated by racialized persons, many of whom are first-generation immigrants. It is hard not to equate lower-income spaces with raced peoples when they comprise the majority of inhabitants. Razack (2002: 143) puts the importance of space into perspective where she notes that “[i]n a racialized space, violence may occur with impunity.” This obviously implies that in a neutral space, unlawful actions do not go unpunished. The question is why this dualism still exists today.

In Toronto, the case of *R. v. Hamilton* was just another example of how Black men are racially profiled and often face cruel detainment practices by law enforcement. The defendant, Hamilton, noticed some friends in a park on his way to a nearby store and stopped to visit them (Nelson, 2004). After briefly socializing, a plainclothes police officer in the neighbourhood searched Hamilton and took the money that he was carrying with the intention to purchase shoes (Nelson, 2004). As Hamilton attempted to retrieve his money, he was tackled to the ground by a nearby uniformed officer and subsequently pepper-sprayed in the eyes after resisting (Nelson, 2004). During the struggle, the officers were heard using racial epithets towards Hamilton (Nelson, 2004). Consequently, Hamilton was charged with the possession of marijuana, assaulting a peace officer, in addition to resisting *and* escaping arrest (Nelson, 2004). The judge in the case found that “the police considered a group of black men sitting in a park to be sufficient grounds to warrant an aggressive criminal investigation... [which was] consistent with the racist presumption that the congregation of young black males provides a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity”, ultimately resulting in the finding that the Charter rights of the accused were violated (Nelson, 2004: 88). Here, a space where Blacks were visible was regarded as one of criminality and illegality. A “Black space” like Lawrence Heights, undoubtedly suffers from this misconception, but on a much larger scale.

In a space akin to Lawrence Heights, residents do not possess the same amount of social capital as those in the adjacent Lawrence Manor, and therefore cannot influence decision-makers as heavily as their neighbours to the east or the west. This may explain why the luxurious vehicles that are often whizzing through Varna Drive (and by several accounts, these vehicles do not belong to Lawrence Heights residents) are able to dismiss the forty-kilometre speed-limit without penalty. This may also account for some reasons why many Lawrence Heights residents may feel awkward passing through Lawrence Manor, even though the two neighbourhoods are essentially within the same community. Perhaps residents of Lawrence Manor view their space as one of respectability, lawfulness, and morals where Whiteness is the ubiquitous common denominator. Racialized communities are not bestowed with these same qualities because “[i]t’s not that people that are living in Lawrence Heights are not hardworking, educated or anything like that,” says Angelina Conte (2012), executive assistant to Councillor Colle, “[t]hey are, but they just

don't have the same opportunities because they've been confined to this very specific space and their personal identity has been tied to their geographic location.” Heikkila (2001: 266) discusses how perhaps notions of Whiteness and Blackness are cemented through space: “Location and boundary are important if not vital attributes for the definition of the objects, events, and relationships existing in the world around us... The relationship between ‘self’ and ‘other’ [is always] a spatiotemporal construction.”

Place is a concept that those of us who live in the urban environment usually take for granted. What exactly is a place? For instance, a familiar setting or real estate property may come to mind. As academics, planners, urban designers or architects we spend an extensive amount of time studying “place” and how it impacts the pedestrian, cyclist, driver, or natural environment (and vice versa). It has also been established that people experience a place through various senses and elements that come into play through architecture, urban design, engineering, and planning. As Conte (2012) notes, “[w]alking through different types of spaces influences how people feel about their environment and their place in the world.” To any of these professionals, this is not mind-blowing information. Yet, the relationship between place and identity has been neglected, and this is felt in both affluent and poor communities.



Figure 2: The Physical Isolation of Lawrence Heights (Source: K. Webster).

When asked about the significance of the name “Jungle” for Lawrence Heights, Andrew Cox (2012) stated that “[with the] negative stigma from outside viewers and onlookers, [the perception] is ‘stay away from that place... it’s wild... those guys are

animals.’ When something [bad] happens, it’s like ‘of course it will happen – that’s the Jungle. Don’t you know that’s the Jungle?’” While the majority of interviewees acknowledged the existence of crime in the area, generally, media (re)presentation of Lawrence Heights was seen as perpetuating outside anxieties. In the space of the (J)ungle, lawlessness prevails and survival is paramount – these connotations may be internalized in the minds of residents growing up. As a result, the space of lawlessness and spatialization of race often intersect. As John P. Smith (2012) suggests, “[t]here is an ownership of the name ‘Jungle’ but there is also a stigmatization of that as well so there is a dualism in that identity. A lot of young people identify with the name ‘jungle’... but there are others that don’t and want to move from that.” I regret not being able to use a word association exercise with the interviewees to see what comes to mind with the word “jungle.” Officially, the area is referred to as “Lawrence Heights”, but as Jesse Zorzella (2012) indicates, this is perhaps somewhat esoteric: “You see how you said you never knew it was called Lawrence Heights? [I nod]. For a while, I never knew it as ‘Lawrence Heights’ and I lived here my entire life. Probably not until I was a teenager did I find out.” This is not to indicate that all residents are oblivious to the official (political) name of the community, but what does it say about the community identity when the youth are more likely to connect with the primitive-sounding “Jungle” rather than the refined title of “Lawrence Heights”? Some identify with ‘Jungle’, while others do not. Trudy-Ann Powell, a resident who spends her time as a youth representative with TCH, literacy worker with Frontier College, and community animator is quite familiar with the perceptions of the area. “It depends on who you ask” Powell (2012) asserts, “[f]or me, it’s a positive thing because if you live in the jungle you have to know (how) to survive to live in the jungle.” From a planning perspective, Knoeck (2012) acknowledges the unofficial name of the community; “I think that is an interesting point that there are people who probably just know it as ‘The Jungle’– and that, of course, [that name] has a whole set of images that comes up with it. A lot of the answers are evident just in the way people talk about it and the terms people place on it. It’s also changed over time... it’s an interesting comparison... the perspective that (former residents) look at it from isn’t one that I hear when I’m out talking to the public today.” Perhaps it is possible that as the representation of Lawrence Heights changed, the inhabitants of the space changed.

Lawrence Heights is a different space when contrasted with that of Lawrence Manor physically, socially, metaphorically— and as a result, the residents are regarded differently. The space was planned differently, and consequently, it has been perceived differently. Mitchell (2003: 200) argues that the problem with public space is often articulated as being a problem of order, where "disorder is the primary threat facing urban neighbourhoods." According to John P. Smith (2012): "I would say traditionally it has been two communities in one area. Two very distinct communities: Lawrence Heights is social housing [where] the average family income is \$16,000 wherein Lawrence Manor is over \$90,000... there is not a tradition of Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor connecting... it's two separate spaces." Traversing one space does not translate into the same behaviour for the other. "If you look right there [pointing to a catwalk outside]" Zorzella (2012) begins, "they (Lawrence Manor residents) don't want anything to do with Lawrence Heights. They do not like Lawrence Heights. Yesterday, I was walking in (Lawrence Manor), walking head on with a lady and she just crossed the street. That kind of stuff happens. Walking to the store because Metro is right there kids are playing road hockey, they just stop and look and wait for you to pass." It is evident that when two spaces collide, the result is not always something positive.

Nelson (2008: 29) alludes to the acts of inhumanity that occurred in Africville stating that "[t]o trace the historical events, policies, relations, and struggles that have made [space] as they are is to reveal that spaces are socially produced, whether the results of comprehensive planning or of indifferent neglect." The discourse surrounding the concepts of "urban" and "disorder" construct the persons who inhabit these areas, impacting the marginalized exponentially. The American Planning Association (2006) identifies housing as a sort of barometer of investment, determining where schools, employment centres, and community facilities are located. Notably there is not much investment or an institutional presence in Lawrence Heights. Vulnerability of being impoverished is constructed as individual failure and once stigmatized, these individuals harbour social fears and anxieties (Johnson, 2004). As Nelson (2008: 46) explains, space can serve as a marker of the body and informs the activity of the space itself because "[t]he spaces of racial marginality are frequently viewed as zones where lawlessness prevails, and thus where deviant activity can take place without retribution." To disregard what has happened in Lawrence Heights as

something natural or incidental is to ignore the fact that every space has this genealogy from which it cannot detach itself. In so doing we ignore the powerlessness of coloured persons. From an economic standpoint, Lawrence Heights has been a site of disenfranchisement and disinvestment with the residents being affected by such conditions.

James S. Duncan and Nancy G. Duncan (2003: 100) assert that planning undeniably produces social constructions through “land use planning, zoning, and development practices [which] are a shorthand of the unstated rules governing what are widely accepted as correct social categories and relationships.” This is not to suggest that the *Ontario Planning Act* is deeply rooted in prejudice and discriminatory practices which regulate land development. Rather, the legislation may reproduce a situation that has been a result of systematic and institutionalized practices. As Duncan and Duncan (2003:100) argue, “[z]oning not only reflects but also plays an active structuring role... in grounding the practice of an aestheticized way of life in a place – attempts to maintain different sufficient social homogeneity within territorially bounded and defensible space to achieve a collective sense of place and landscape.” When a space has been labelled as “poor” or “ghetto”, and has become undeniably racialized, producing spatialized bodies, unmapping these processes becomes a crucial planning exercise. The *Toronto Official Plan* will not explicitly guide planners on how to plan for racialized neighbourhoods and does not list “Black”, “Brown” or “White” areas but it may result in a similar effect where visible minorities are relegated to certain spheres and when development is deterred from occurring in particular zones.

S. Saeed, an active Lawrence Heights resident and youth representative is keen on the idea that the Toronto experience is not uniform. Saeed’s familiarity in different parts of the city through her residence, employment and education has allowed her to offer a unique perspective on the influence of space on identities. In terms of identity construction, Saeed (2012) shares:

“I think ultimately there is a sort of a shame living in this housing. I know I ultimately feel it whenever I bring my posh Deloitte friends around to drop me off I feel kind of ashamed to bring them here. I know sometimes I’m almost tempted to just ask them to drop me off on some corner and then walk the rest of the way here. That feeling of shame that society puts on you... making it seem as if it’s

your fault for not being able to make changes happen is part of the psychological problem.”

While Saeed feels there is a disincentive to leave this neighbourhood, like several other residents she is aware that a different Toronto exists beyond the borders of Lawrence Heights.

When asked about the challenges facing the community, Knoeck (2012) responded, “I always describe [Lawrence Heights] as both physically and socially isolated. Those two things reinforce each other.” Many residents rarely leave this space (for reasons that will be explained in subsequent chapters) as their world has been relegated to the confines of this community. For some, Lawrence Heights *is* Toronto. Speaking as a (former) resident, Andrew Cox (2012) explains:

“I remember back in the day, I was sitting down with my friend and everyone was outside. Summer was going by and I said ‘Do you know there’s life outside of here?’ and my boy said ‘Yeah.’... That really only happened when we stepped outside of the priority neighbourhood... our minds were opened. We started mixing with different classes and cultures, seeing different ways of doing things. ”

Oddly enough, this anecdote somewhat parallels Plato’s celebrated work, *Allegory of the Cave*. In this analogy, Plato describes a group of individuals who have spent their entire lives in a cave, chained and facing a wall, with their backs to the opening of the cave. The shadows cast on the wall from the world outside become reality to these prisoners until they are set free to experience (true) reality. Imprisonment represents the absence of transcendence and the release is a metaphor for becoming enlightened. Although the allegory trudges through much deeper and philosophical thought, a parallel can be established between the residents who never step foot outside of Lawrence Heights and those who are fortunate enough to experience different parts of the city. It is hard to argue against who is right or wrong but the fact remains that there are different realities for people in Toronto and there are varying degrees of the urban experience.

Razack (2002: 127) argues, “[i]n the elite spaces of middle-class life (the university, suburban homes, chalets, and cottages) they learn who they are, and more important, who they are not”, and this has important implications for Lawrence Heights. Essentially,

Lawrence Heights stands as a space of degeneracy to outsiders, where they can reflect upon their own space of privilege in stark contrast to this low-income neighbourhood. Much like the two White males who learned about the immunity of belonging to a space of Whiteness when they visited a space of depravity, those outside of Lawrence Heights have their own values reaffirmed when they begin to traverse the area. Space is not simply some physical dimension between two people or the infinite void that surrounds this planet. Nelson (2008: 30) expands on this note by stating that “[space] influences the relations and processes that can take place within it. Space is not only a mirror of social actions, but space and the processes of social life are dynamic; they reinforce one another.” This reinforcement from space and social life helps inform some of what occurs in Lawrence Heights. If we examine Lawrence Heights through a Lefebvrian lens, it is evident that the world that Cox experienced was largely influenced by the space in which he resided and ultimately gave him meaning as a subject. It was not until he became familiar with spaces outside of his own that he became cognizant of the type of production occurring and through these transgressions he realized that his own identity was space-related. Space is produced, and then reproduced through power relations, a process that works to “reinscribe the colonial subject” (Saihak, 2008: 40). An old adage theorizes that as people we come to know ourselves – through the perceptions of our “self” – from those around us. Evidently, it seems as though people come to know themselves through the spaces to which they belong and this arrangement is organized through various factors which intersect literally and figuratively producing geographies throughout the city.

The Built Form in the Lives of Residents

“Relations of power, structures of inequality, and practices of domination and subordination are embedded in spatial design and relations. The spatial arrangements are both products and sources of other forms of inequality” (Tickameyer, 2000: 806).

Lawrence Heights is a marginalized community suffering from the aforementioned indicators of low-income – a deteriorating infrastructure, large youth population, heavy police surveillance, and lower levels of education and income than other parts of Toronto. I

am not arguing that such a poorly built urban fabric accounts for the sole reason as to why these issues exist in this community, but it does have the ability to impact feelings of safety, walkability, and the overall enjoyment by residents. Larice and McDonald (2006) assert that planners and designers have placed emphasis on the physical character to insert meaning into a place. Moreover, inadequate design features tend to contribute to the perception of those outside the community. Poor planning and design arise from the fact that planners are often “torn between serving employers, fellow planners, and the public” while simultaneously striving to meet the economic, social, and environmental objectives which tend to conflict (Campbell and Fainstein, 1996: 7). The interests of developers, social justice advocates, and the protection of the environment as a whole are key issues that a planner is often vacillating between through this entire process (Campbell and Fainstein, 1996). This ambivalence explains why planning has long privileged a rational approach while the particular needs of the people and neighbourhoods have been relegated or largely ignored.

Impacts of Basic Design Principles

Following the Victorian-style era in design that dominated Toronto architecture during the nineteenth-century, modernism was a movement in the early-to-mid-twentieth century that recognized three basic principles of cities: they are “bad”; cities are “physically, socially, aesthetically, and morally” unhealthy; and they add counter-productivity towards family life (Sewell, 1993: 4). As John Sewell (1993) explains, the modernist view rejected the “traditional housing forms” and streets aligned in a grid pattern while it espoused an abundance of green space, separation of land uses, and a pedestrian-friendly environment. Modernism (pioneered by E. Howard, C. Stein, F.L. Wright and Le Corbusier) was a “wave of avant-garde artistic movements that has responded in various ways to changes in sensibility and experience... [and was] not concerned with being fashionable... [while being] rooted in the ideals of collectivism, standardization and social egalitarianism” (Knox, 2011: 17). Popular principles such as “form follows function” and “less is more” were mantras of the modernist movement (Knox, 2011). Yet in its standardization, modernist ideology paid little attention to people and tended to isolate transportation, open space, and buildings (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). In Toronto, this wave of modern

architecture was best illustrated in the design of Regent Park, Flemingdon Park, and Don Mills where the traditional grid system was abandoned (Sewell 1993).

The American Planning Association (2006) identifies six basic street patterns through which cities are typically designed: grid, grid-square combination, web, radial, curvilinear, and irregular. Looking at Toronto from an aerial view, the city demonstrates some diversity in street-pattern design. The two major functions of streets are connectivity and legibility, rather than the actual pattern itself (American Planning Association, 2006). Street connectivity indicates the associations or linkages (intersections, nodes) between different places and is integral to the level of accessibility and mode of travel for drivers, pedestrians or cyclists (American Planning Association, 2006). Kevin Lynch (1960) argues that people understand their physical environment through visual signifiers which impact legibility and allows users to better orient themselves in space. From an urban design standpoint, legibility allows a person to find their way easily through a city or space (Larice and McDonald, 2006) and this concept is often overlooked in the construction of low-income neighbourhoods. Lawrence Heights is plagued by a flagrant network of low-connectivity which is articulated throughout Varna Drive and Flemington Road. This system is problematic in neighbourhoods dominated by cul-de-sacs because connections to the space are indirect and few routes are created. There are issues with low connectivity of the public realm, an area comprised of open space, streets, and overall space between buildings, and sidewalks. Low-connectivity can invite illicit activity and foster an environment for crime. Resident surveillance – the "eyes on the street" philosophy – ensures that visibility is maximized (Jacobs, 1961; American Planning Association, 2006).

Like the quality of the public realm, space and place are concepts that are frequently taken for granted, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods. Cresswell (2004) argues that although "place" is a word used in everyday conversation, we lack a true understanding of the concept. This concept recognizes the experience of the individual user and the importance of sensory perception with visual stimuli. This is evident when looking at the work of Tickameyer (2000: 806), who states that "the design of space and place shapes social relations... [as] environments are socially constructed which ends up embodying the same principles as other social relations." Consequently, planning and design are informed by experience, identity, and the livelihood of residents.

The Holden McAllister Partnership (2004) created a guide on the management of safer places which could directly relate to Lawrence Heights. Lawrence Heights is a community that is unsupported by a well-defined pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular network (Holden McAllister Partnership, 2004). There should be definitive clarity between public and private space as “crime or antisocial behaviour is more likely if private space is easily accessible to those who should not be there... [or] an offender’s presence in area doesn’t attract attention” (Holden McAllister Partnership, 2004: 30). An indicator of a low-income neighbourhood is crime – the proliferation of drug-related activity, theft, robberies, and burglaries – and the current design of Lawrence Heights have little to no features of crime prevention. This is evident when Hodge and Gordon (2007: 121) assert that “[w]hile good aesthetics could not overcome poor social conditions, poor physical design could make a public housing project quite dangerous.” While crime is a problem in Lawrence Heights, shootings and stabbings are rare, but these are the incidents that tend to be sensationalized throughout the news media. Councillor Colle (2012) expressed his concern for the safety issues in Lawrence Heights:

“Yeah, there are safety issues because of the poor planning of the neighbourhood and (with) it being isolated, it’s kind of cut off so you don’t have the same natural foot traffic, activity, and eyes on the street that you would in another neighbourhood. [Also] because of the planning error of putting a low-income community [together by] isolating them like that, I think with that comes some safety challenges that we’ve seen play themselves out in some negative ways in the community in terms of some violence and criminal elements that have flared up.”

Knox (2011: 3) eloquently summarizes the importance of design when he writes: “[d]esign can make urban environments more legible and can assist people in wayfinding... It can promote and ensure public health... and bring order and stability to otherwise complex, chaotic and volatile settings.” The lack of a clearly understandable environment where the public space ends and where the private space begins, followed by the absence of a cohesive network amongst the users of the space, only adds to the illegibility in this community. Regrettably, Lawrence Heights will remain in this purgatory of urban design unless drastic measures are undertaken.

Implications of Planning and Design Concepts

As maligned as the neighbourhood layout may be, Lawrence Heights was clearly modeled after very distinct and, at the time, quite revolutionary design concepts. The intent, as dubious as it may be, is not so much under scrutiny, but the consequences have been nothing short of calamitous. Clarence Perry, architect of the “neighbourhood unit” concept, aimed to employ “[a] continuous system of parks and playgrounds, central location of community facilities and clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic” along with a “clear hierarchy of roads” (E.R.A. Architects, 2010: 6). Though the idea was proposed during the 1920s, these criteria are evident in the layout of the neighbourhood as it currently stands. The neighbourhood unit concept was guided by six principles for neighbourhood organization: size, boundaries, an internal street system, parks and open space, community facilities, and local shops (Gavan-Koop, 2011). It proposed that families and amenities are to be spatially located; aimed to implement a ring-road structure that surrounds “clearly defined residential enclaves” intended to provide safety for children and families, but lacked of recreational space or access to shopping (E.R.A. Architects, 2010: 5). The layout was to be regarded as an entity in itself whereby residents would not have to go out of their way for services (Larice and MacDonald, 2006). A community centre would be at the center of each neighbourhood under this concept and only the institutions would be in close proximity. Particularly important planning and services institutions of Lawrence Heights included the Lawrence Heights Community Centre (LHCC), Toronto Community Housing offices used as hubs for community meetings, and the Unison Health Services Centre.

In addition to the neighbourhood unit concept, Lawrence Heights was designed adhering to Ebenezer Howard’s “Garden City” model. Howard aimed to provide a balance between the rural and urban, where the metropolis was surrounded by “satellite” neighbourhoods acting as small towns (American Planning Association, 2006). This model intended to have increased interaction between residents through large, communal spaces while advocating for the separation of the automobile and pedestrian traffic (Gavan-Koop, 2011). The Garden City model was initially a response to overcrowding, poverty, and disease in British industrial cities during the nineteenth century – a method of curbing the slum problems (Hodge and Gordon, 2007) – but it also aimed to restrict urban sprawl and

protect agriculture (Knox, 2011). It was planned for the “rationalized systems for movement, the storage of vehicles and the separation of those systems from exclusive pedestrian networks... [with] the creation of a hierarchy of a wide curving collector road as the main ordering route for parking and cul-de-sacs” (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.: 7). The overall picture was of an attractive neighbourhood with large communal open spaces (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). Like most design prospects, the romanticized ideals greatly exceeded what was realistic. Unfortunately, Toronto witnessed the ineptitude of the neighbourhood unit and the Garden City principles through the construction of Lawrence Heights.

There is often a discrepancy between the intentions of the design and the consequences of the layout on the lives of residents and passersby. As Sterling and Cappe (n.d.: 6) note, Lawrence Heights was constructed as a “series of linked open spaces that traverse the site with little contact from public streets...[where] buildings [are] sited around court spaces with a single point of access from the main collector road.” Residents tend to notice the layout as they traverse the neighbourhood. “Most communities that I’ve seen are more grid-like” and as Saeed (2012) argues, “the cul-de-sac type really makes you feel isolated because you have small communities that are just within each other and don’t really interact with all the other communities and cul-de-sacs.” The built form has contributed to extreme feelings of social and physical isolation. While some marvel at the neighbourhood unit and Garden City conceptually, the translation between the built fabric and the users of the space is definitely one of the murkiest problems in Lawrence Heights.

In this low-density neighbourhood, the roads of Lawrence Heights “loop” in complex ways, isolating the community from local surroundings (Sewell, 1994: 105). This circulation system impacts pedestrians, cyclists and drivers who may find the neighbourhood to be highly illegible. In a heritage impact statement, E.R.A. Architects Inc. (2010) articulate that Lawrence Heights “was designed to provide a clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic” where the vehicles use the ring-road or parking areas and the pedestrians are “managed through a network of pathways that link the apartment and townhouses with parks and schools” (E.R.A. Architects Ltd., 2010). Knoeck (2012) effectively captures the road configuration in Lawrence Heights and the numerous issues associated with it when he says:

“The basic neighbourhood structure of Lawrence Heights is the ring-road that is made up of Flemington [Road] and Varna [Road]. Off of that ring-road are a number of courts... there is a diagram of that neighbourhood [showing] the idea of a ring-road, central open space in the middle, residential development on the edges of that. There was an idea around easy pedestrian access to this large civic open space in the centre of the neighbourhood.”



Figure 3: Road Network of Lawrence Heights (Source: Google Maps).

Lawrence Heights is infamous for its ring-road layout which has caused more problems than benefits in this neighbourhood. On a positive note, it keeps the road structure relatively simple (this is not to say that it is easy to navigate, but it lacks the complexity of a web or irregular layout) through this curvilinear system. Unfortunately, the disadvantages overshadow the advantages. Despite its simplicity, the circulation design of Lawrence Heights has been expressed as entrapping, confusing, and discouraging for pedestrians and cyclists. As Knoeck (2012) explains, a user navigating his or her way through the neighbourhood may find some difficulty:

“I think that’s the same for vehicles as it is for pedestrians. If you’re driving into Lawrence Heights, it’s hard to find. Once you’re on that ring-road, you don’t know when it ends or where you should be turning or how to get out of the neighbourhood if you’re trying to leave the neighbourhood or where you’re going exactly. That said, the pedestrian environment really is quite poor.”

It goes without saying that a road structure that neither favours pedestrians nor vehicles poses overall problems for users of that space. “I think some of the people also feel that the roadways form a circle around the community that it actually is even more exclusive and becomes like a fishbowl,” says community development officer John P. Smith (2012). This “fishbowl” sentiment is echoed by Andrew Cox and several other former or current Lawrence Heights residents. Cox (2012) eloquently illustrates the divide as he observes that the design “perpetuates [confusion and isolation]. Nobody comes in and nobody goes out. If you’re stuck somewhere with the same people and no help is coming in, you’re not going out because there’s just no motivation and a lack of interest for anything else... The design further perpetuates all the characteristics and outcomes of poverty – single-parents, extreme violence – that sort of thing within this enclosed and trapped design.”

On a positive note, the neighbourhood unit and Garden City model offer an abundance of open space throughout the community. Open space is preferred because it allows the natural environment to gel with the built environment. When the open space is green, it adds a human and natural nuance to the space. Unfortunately, this abundance of open space has also contributed to safety issues and the development of an established identity for this community (Sterling and Cappe, n.d.). John P. Smith (2012) takes issue with the abundant open space: “Lawrence Heights has fantastic green space, but the way that the roads were created around the green space... can inhibit someone’s feeling of being in a place that is easy to get around. If you live in the community, you’ll easily understand that and you’ll find your way through but you want to have a community where visitors can easily have access, find their way out and [where] they’re not going to get lost in the community.” This particular design feature may deter outsiders from passing through or visiting, which in turn, affects the perception of the neighbourhood from residents – feelings that become internalized. Knoeck (2012) notes, “it also affects the way people behave because we have a whole sort of learned behaviour around how we behave in different kinds of spaces. You behave differently in public space than you do in private space. You recognize when there’s private space... there’s a whole sort of acceptable behaviour and understanding. When those lines between public and private are blurred, our innate understanding of what is acceptable behaviour in any space starts to blur as well.” Lawrence Heights lacks a clear sense of public/private ownership in addition to a sense of

place. In this case, ownership refers to a clear articulation of the public-private divide or where communal and semiprivate space begins (Holden McAllister Partnership, 2004). Such weak articulation may slightly explain the proliferation of crime in Lawrence Heights in contrast to Lawrence Manor, as well as the over-policing and underinvestment of underprivileged communities. What the public-private dynamic comes down to is the confusion of open space in Lawrence Heights.

This community has vast open space, but very little is actually pedestrian-friendly. For Knoeck (2012), there is “a lack of definition between public and private space so as you walk around the neighbourhood there’s never really a clear [distinction between] what land is public parkland, publicly owned, [and] what is meant to be private amenity space for residents of the townhouses or apartments. That raises all sorts of questions. Whose responsibility is it to maintain one space versus another space?” Walking from end to end, it seems as though the neighbourhood stretches for miles upon miles. Some may attribute the negative attention surrounding the neighbourhood to the vast open space, a feature that invites crime and misbehaviour into the area. Some residents, like Saeed (2012), enjoy the open space: “I think open space is always good because it allows people to use that space towards recreation, community building, socializing. Social interaction is always beneficial because we’re social beings.” Sewell (1994) argued that one gets a sense that Lawrence Heights is comprised of housing overwhelmed by a grassy landscape – where buildings “float in a sea of green” (105) – and where connections to the street have not been established. Coupled with this issue is the fact that the apartment buildings (which are dispersed infrequently throughout the lot) lack connectivity as well.

“From a planning perspective, I’m guessing at time they thought maybe the design would have a village kind of feel it, but it did quite the opposite and has created a really isolated space and has created a maze that really makes travel through it difficult by foot, bike, (and) car, which again, further isolates people. If you assume that because it’s social housing, in many cases it’s new Canadians, new to the city or people with other challenges, well that’s the last thing you want to do with people with those categories. You want them to be integrated but that’s the furthest thing from that” (Colle, 2012).

Urban planners and designers often aim to build a seamless, yet understandable relationship between the streets or roads and the sidewalks, street wall, and overall streetscape. Cox (2012) argues that “[b]ecause it’s a maze and garden [city] design, and because retail spots are outside the community, it makes for one hell of a walk.” Walkable, enjoyable streets tend to exhibit smooth transitions between buildings and the overall urban fabric – something that Lawrence Heights is sorely missing. Moreover, “the toughest issues are when you try to leave or enter Lawrence Heights because the connections to the adjacent urban fabric are so poor,” says Knoeck (2012).

An entrapped design has implications for residents as well. For Zorzella (2012) the physical layout of Lawrence Heights differs from other communities because “[i]t’s a circle. It’s like its own town. Its own mini-village... a lot of people don’t leave. They don’t go anywhere, just stay in Lawrence Heights. ” It is apparent that residents are privy to the basic design elements and the consequences of those very principles. For Colle (2012), Lawrence Heights is neither pedestrian nor vehicle-oriented, “it is not conducive for any mode of transportation because the road system is limited and convoluted. Not to mention the fact that the roads there are in some of worst conditions you’d see in the city.” The term “maze” is often associated with the design of this community. Imagine this labyrinth of a neighbourhood to the perception of outsiders, and the resulting results on the psyche of insiders. “Walking around that ring-road,” notes Knoeck (2012), “[a]t some point you lose track of where you are. It’s not very legible or readable. I think at some point you become disoriented.” Disorientation and illegibility go hand-in-hand in terms of the built environment. When you are lost in your own neighbourhood it is easy to feel lost in the city. This sentiment is echoed by Councillor Colle (2012) when he observes, “[t]he roads don’t take you anywhere. If you look at the map behind you [pointing to map of his constituency], you kind of see the one ring road [showing Varna Drive]. It’s just a big circle... so unless you had to be there, you’d never be there.” This is the reality that Lawrence Heights residents face: isolation from a physical standpoint which translates into social isolation in the city.

The ring-road structure of Lawrence Heights has produced the controversial open spaces around the buildings. Oddly enough, in a community suffering from isolation, open spaces known as "courts" have produced further desolate spheres in the area. There are

differing opinions on the effects, but overall it seems to be the least maligned design feature. While most residents do not seem to mind the courts, Councillor Colle (2012) dismisses them:

“What strikes me with Lawrence Heights is how it’s so much like an island. Not only is the whole neighbourhood cut off because there are so few entry points into it, but even within the neighbourhood they replicate the mistake on a smaller scale many times over with this court system. Everyone’s really cut off from each other in the neighbourhood and the neighbourhood as a whole is cut off from surrounding communities.”

Colle’s comments contrast the views of Zorzella (2012), who states that “this community is close because of the courts. I like that kind of design.” Knoeck (2012) argues that the courts are somewhat successful: “the courts in Lawrence Heights that the townhouses are built around have been very successful in terms of creating a localized community. The people who live on the courts talk about good neighbourly relations that they have with other people who live on the courts.” John P. Smith is in Lawrence Heights on a weekly basis and has become quite familiar with the area after serving as a recreation coordinator from 1991 to 2002. He is also conscious of middle-to-high income areas, where similar design is often more pedestrian-friendly. He (2012) argues: “[g]ranted, the reality is that in a lot of other areas it may take you fifteen or twenty minutes but you may be walking down one street. In Lawrence Heights, you may be curving around or you may go through a court. It’s a different kind of experience.” These opposing views of the courts show that experience of place is something that is extremely fluid and dynamic. In Lawrence Heights, open space is abundant and if there is an absence of lighting in these areas, anxiety about access, safety and crime becomes paramount. The curvilinear street layout of the neighbourhood is not conducive to the poor lighting and residents may find travelling through the neighbourhood at night to be bothersome. To illustrate this point, Saeed (2012) explains: “You just feel safer and like you can breathe easily when you’re walking in other neighbourhoods because [the streets are] wider, more well lit, there’s more green space, stores that you can pop into that are well kept, not like what you see on Eglinton [Avenue West].” While she may not speak for everyone in Lawrence Heights,

Saeed's comparison to downtown neighbourhoods illuminates the issues of the urban-suburban mistreatment.

Planning and Design Divides

In addition to the entrapment, isolation and confusion created by the planning and design of the neighbourhood unit and Garden City concept, Lawrence Heights suffers from dividing elements. A network of chain-link fences and iron gates overwhelms the neighbourhood. While fences and gates can structure both physical and symbolic spaces, delineate public and private spaces, and direct circulation to desired pathways, overzealous fencing has the tendency to make residents feel trapped, isolated, and stigmatized. As Cox (2012) notes, this trend is troubling: “[The fence] builds a sense of entrapment because it’s physical fences and walls. You just can’t see anywhere outside of [Lawrence Heights]. You walk to one end and you’re stuck. You’ve got to turn around.” When walking through the area, I often felt enveloped by the overwhelming presence of metal. According to Colle (2012), “[t]here are more fences, unnecessary fences, in this community than I’ve seen in any other community in my entire life.” Fencing contributes to feelings of institutionalization, entrapment, and being removed from society. The omnipresent fencing contrasts particularly with the sparse street furniture (benches, bus shelters, garbage/recycling receptacles) or other amenities in the community. In Lawrence Heights, “[t]here aren’t really any amenities for pedestrians to make it a comfortable space to walk – with the exception of the trees,” says Knoeck (2012), adding that “[i]t is a very green neighbourhood and that makes it more pleasant than it would otherwise be.”

The biggest divide in Lawrence Heights is arguably The Allen. The construction of The Allen greatly weakened the conceptual ideals of the neighbourhood. As Knoeck (2012) remarks, the planning and design of the neighbourhood “was done before the Allen Road was conceived of [and] then there was a decision to build the Spadina Expressway or Allen Road through the middle of that diagram. They went ahead and built Allen Road and Lawrence Heights neighbourhood without changing that basic concept of what the urban design was meant to be.”

The Allen was built with the intention of forming the Spadina Expressway, a proposed route that was to connect North York to the downtown core. After facing extreme

opposition, the extension was never completed. The Allen was then supposed to connect residents through Ranee Avenue and Lawrence Avenue West, but public outcry impeded the construction in the late 1960s (E.R.A. Architects. 2010). Currently, the road contains an overpass at Flemington Road and an underpass at Ranee Avenue. Boasting eight-lanes and an eighty-metre right-of-way, this road is not only a physical obstruction for pedestrians and cyclists, but it is symbolic of a community lacking unison. In its urban design report that outlined many of the challenges facing the physical layout of the Lawrence-Allen area, the City of Toronto (n.d.) identified the obstruction of The Allen, lack of arterial frontage, physical isolation, and low connectivity as the main issues. When moving around the area, Lawrence Heights residents are faced with The Allen, regardless of whether they are travelling on foot, bicycle or car. For Cox (2012), the expressway “created a separation between sides...people from this side hardly ever go to that side.” The two sides of Lawrence Heights, dubbed “over-bridge” and “under-bridge”, have essentially been created by the expressway. It is not advisable to cross the Allen on foot, especially with an eighty-kilometre speed limit that most drivers tend to dismiss. Furthermore, Lawrence Avenue West has several pedestrian crossways which run along the exit ramps, constantly endangering the lives of Lawrence Heights residents and commuters in general. The physically imposing grey slabs of concrete do not mesh well with the abundance of asphalt and fencing. For John P. Smith (2012) “the biggest signifier (of exclusion) is probably The Allen. The Allen Expressway bisects the community... and most of the facilities are on the east side of the Allen... so even within Lawrence Heights, and this is from residents, there is a feeling that the west side doesn’t have as much access as the east side.” In an underprivileged community, resources are scarce enough that there should be no reason for stratified sections in the area. It is certainly not unconscionable to think that the current state of Lawrence Heights is the result of haphazard planning. As previously mentioned, the intention of the built form is not under suspicion. The process driven behind the planning for Lawrence Heights and the final product are under scrutiny as human lives in the neighbourhood are impacted daily.

It comes as no surprise that Councillor Colle (2012) expressed his disdain for the overall design as he admits that “the built form does not reflect some of our best moments.” Until 1998, Lawrence Heights was within the geographical parameters the (then) North

York municipal government. As an amalgamated region, the “megacity” needs to atone for the mistakes of the planning past. It is important to keep in mind that the built environment as designed and planned by professionals impacts the human experience of residents, and while it does not directly create identities, our experiences of where we live shape who we are and who we will become. As John P. Smith (2012) describes, everything is related: “It’s not just police and crime. It’s about the vibe and sense of safety that you feel in your community to do different things. How you connect, whether you’re isolated socially. It goes from the extreme – shootings happening – to the everyday – which is, walking down and not feeling safe – or even just knowing and talking to your neighbour.”

The built environment of socially diverse and economically marginalized neighbourhoods is a topic that tends to be avoided in planning discussions in Toronto. There is a focus on beautifying underutilized avenues, animating transit hubs and centres, and intensifying sparse areas, but only recently has the planning community looked at proposing revitalization projects of this nature in low-income neighbourhoods. Lawrence Heights suffers from low connectivity between open space, buildings and roads; an isolating open space (court) system; and both a convoluted and fragmenting road system. These design flaws have turned Lawrence Heights into a racialized neighbourhood where victimized residents bear the brunt of the blame for the inept decisions of early planners.

In quite the astute argument, Paul Stollard (1990: 1) indicates that “[d]esign, on its own, does not cause crime or cause people to become criminals; however, some design features do appear to exacerbate local crime problems, although the same features in a different situation may not have the same effect.” Examining the built form in Lawrence Heights allows planners to elucidate the fact that social relations, particularly subordination and marginalization, are exhibited through physical design (Tickameyer, 2006). Judging from the testimonies of current and former residents, the impact of the physical features may be internalized in residents’ feelings of being lost, isolated, uncertain, and disorganized, resulting in further social and physical disenfranchisement. Not every single resident will feel this, nor will each individual even be conscious of the forces at play. It is unlikely, however, that the non-racialized spaces will carry these very same design flaws, shedding light on *who* is planned for and the manner in which these spaces are planned.

Public Consultation, Participation, Engagement, Inclusion

“Planning is intervention with an intention to alter the existing course of events”
(Campbell and Fainstein, 2003: 6).

In *Towards a People-Sensitive Planning*, Healey and Gilroy (2007: 21) provide a very thorough definition of the role that planning plays in the lives of the people, asserting that it intermediates conflicting interests between different groups through technical knowledge as “[an] exchange of values and knowledge between people and the development of ideas among people” (21). Lawrence Heights is not a homogenous area by any means, as it boasts a diverse population with residents of different ethnicities. Many languages are spoken and different cultures are shared within this space; a microcosm of the multicultural landscape of the city. Emily Talen (2006) argues that early urban planning in America featured the physical separation of people into different environments, but now, planning must be cognizant and plan for socially diverse neighbourhoods. Although this is a more egregious feature of the U.S. urban landscape, this is not to say that these processes have not taken place in Canada.

Until the 1960s, the paradigm framing the relationship between the public and planning processes in North America was based on rational theory. Oddly enough, this philosophy assumed that the public was unable to fully grasp the troublesome planning implications and preferred that it would be devoid of political meddling (Gavan-Koop, 2011). The aim was to plan *for* the people rather than *with* them. Over the past fifty years, planning in North America has witnessed a fundamental shift where the focus has turned to collaboration and civic involvement. The public participation process can be seen as a positive and a step in the right direction for planning in Toronto. While those with the resources and knowhow may be able to capitalize on these largely civic opportunities, oppressed communities are beginning to exercise their “right to the city.” Public consultation in Canadian planning began after this period when residents became more involved in the execution of the plan rather than just providing advice (Hodge and Gordon, 2008).

Public meetings are a method of assessing public opinion about a subject or to provide information to citizens while simultaneously gaining their input (American

Planning Association, 2006). This method of communication is integral to public participation. There are three basic reasons to have public meetings: sharing of information, seeking advice, and solving problems (American Planning Association, 2006). According to the City of Toronto (2008), “the purpose of public meetings is to consider staff reports, and provide public forum for debate on the merits of the application. Applicants have the opportunity to present their proposal, the public can write in or attend to make their views known and Community Council has the ability to evaluate the application” (in Gavan-Koop, 2011: 21). Robert Fishman (1996) argues that inclusion is not simply achieved by giving citizens a voice in the process but involves their awareness of the stages, savvy, and familiarity with planning jargon. As Gavan-Koop (2011) argues, urban planning requires public participation which is essentially designed to allow for the opinions on planning issues to be expressed, creating an open forum for discussion. Through open house events, public meetings, charrettes, and the overall meticulousness in the involvement of citizens in the process, marginalized communities are able to have a voice albeit in somewhat of a limited capacity.

Planning issues often use language surrounding inclusion, engagement, and participation – concepts that are erroneously conflated. There is a substantial difference between inclusion and participation, which, according to Quick and Feldman (2011) are different dimensions of public engagement. Inclusion occurs when the community is actually involved in public issues; participation entails retaining public input on programs or policies (1). Quick and Feldman (2011) argue that the manner in which public participation is carried out can either improve or worsen relations between the government and citizens. This process is fundamental to building and maintaining some semblance of a relationship between the government and its people. Inclusion does not always refer to participation that has *successfully* integrated the public and the rhetoric is usually limited to a “demographic diversity of participants” (Quick and Feldman, 2011: 14). A truly “inclusive” process “builds the capacity of the community to implement decisions and tackle related issues,” and makes connection amongst the people (Quick and Feldman, 2011: 3). Furthermore, critics such as Hough (2006) argue that planners do not address the fact that socially diverse neighbourhoods should not be planned for in the same manner as homogenous areas.

Beleaguered with physical issues including a deplorable housing infrastructure and isolation from neighbouring communities, as well as social problems ranging from poverty to safety issues, TCH and City of Toronto aimed to revitalize Lawrence Heights and the surrounding area (Gavan-Koop, 2011). Due to the fact that Lawrence Heights is so diverse, many challenges accompany the inclusion of residents in the public participation process (Gavan-Koop, 2011). Resident inclusion is crucial in planning because it helps to build strong communities, empowers the powerless, and bridges the gap between the government or private sector and the public. The LARP aims to redevelop the physical infrastructure and revitalize the social fabric of Lawrence Heights, making public consultation critical. The plan seeks to intensify and gentrify the neighbourhood, an approach that was embraced by many inside the community but met with opposition by many of those outside. Paul Knox (2011: 139) defines gentrification as “the renovation of housing in older, centrally located lower-income neighbourhoods through an influx of more affluent households seeking the character and convenience of less expensive but well located residences.”

Unfortunately, through the public participation process, albeit via public meetings, deputations, and protests, the divide between Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor became extremely discernible. According to Knoeck (2012), Lawrence Heights “has a very distinct neighbourhood structure or neighbourhood diagram which has some similarities to the Lawrence Manor neighbourhood. They look very different but there are some design ideas that are similar between the two. You can tell [that] they both came from the same era of neighbourhood design.” The main difference is that these two areas were planned for different peoples. At the time, social housing tended to attract particular people whilst others gravitated towards the privately-owned market. The colour lines were drawn and two very different spaces ultimately clashed.

Gavan-Koop (2011) contends that the polarization amongst both communities manifested through the revitalization proposals. On the surface, residents of Lawrence Manor and neighbouring communities were picketing and protesting in Baycrest Park, voicing their concern over the new development. Contested issues related to transportation, barriers to access, opening roads and pathways to Lawrence Manor, increased density and traffic problems in currently congested areas (Gavan-Koop, 2011). Here, a racialized space was forced to interact with a relatively wealthy and homogenous space. Opponents argued

that the proposed redevelopment would worsen traffic and that the physical makeup of the neighbourhood would change. Proponents were vehement about the positive potential stemming from revitalization. During the public meetings, protests included chants echoing “Save our streets!” – intimating the notion that middle-class neighbourhoods were under siege. Why exactly did their streets require salvation? On the surface, the rhetoric involved intensification and traffic congestion but the bigger issue may have been the *types* of people bringing in the traffic. Whether the municipal government acquiesced is another issue in itself. As Knoeck (2012) explains, residents outside Lawrence Heights did not hold their concerns back:

“There were lots of things that came up. People are afraid generally and I think that’s an unusual idea or notion. People who expressed concerns would often talk about the level of intensification or the amount of density –the number of units proposed– as part of the revitalization, the amount of traffic that the revitalization would generate, the ability of the sewer and infrastructure system to accommodate that density and intensification, the ability of the City to adequately serve a more densely-built neighbourhood with services community services, police services, parks, social work. ”

These consternations were certainly reasonable for an established neighbourhood hoping to preserve its presence but, ultimately, deeper issues were uncovered in public meetings when many of those outside of Lawrence Heights complained to the planning staff about the implications of a proposed joint community. With fingers pointed, raised voices, and statements beginning with “you people” the concerns shifted from the disruption to issues of race and space. Cox (2012), who was present at many meetings, vividly remembers the tension: “There’s a big fight about removing the fence, opening it up and creating a street to go through Lawrence Manor but Lawrence Manor residents are fighting for it not to be opened up. It signifies a lot to the residents. If we’re going to revitalize and give this place new life, let’s be one community.” Ironically enough, the removal of a fence was at issue – an object that provides both physical and symbolic significance. Perhaps the fence was seen as a safeguard, keeping Lawrence Heights residents out of Lawrence Manor. Conversely, the fence may have acted as a buffer for Lawrence Manor – similar to

quarantining a form of pestilence during an outbreak – where their space was not encroached by the racialized Other.

The connection between identities and the public participation process cannot be overlooked. Citizens are reaffirmed of their role in the city through these types of engagement, especially when faced with belligerent opposition. How the planning community responds to resistance indicates the level of power that a segment of the population controls. Lawrence Heights residents were belittled and condemned throughout the protests by neighbouring communities, shedding light on the perception of that particular space from outsiders. Despite its priority status, Lawrence Heights as a community does not exhibit deficiencies in mobilization and participation. Councillor Colle (2012) states: “I’ve never seen residents more involved in any community I’ve dealt with as a councillor otherwise. It’s a really engaged group. Lots of leadership relentless engagement.” While Colle admits that there may not have been a full turnout, many residents were dedicated to being involved. “I think there is a proportion of the population here that don’t have a voice for different reasons” Carmen Smith (2012) explains, and “I would characterize it as institutional oppression [as to] why people don’t speak out about community safety or planning stuff because they feel that what they say isn’t going to make a difference.” While Carmen Smith (2012) attributed resident absenteeism to structural reasons, Knoeck (2012) saw it from a different viewpoint. One of the benefits of planning is the fact that there are different skill-sets collaborating with one another, providing an opportunity for differing, yet complementary perspectives to coalesce. Kyle Knoeck (2012) explains:

“The problem with planning processes and public consultation on planning is that the people who are in favour of urban change tend not to participate. The people who will participate are more likely the people who are opposed to change or are afraid of change... so you can’t always use planning processes or engagement as the barometer of what overall public opinion is or [measuring] the relationship between Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor residents.”

This was the case with the public consultation in Lawrence Heights, where Lawrence Manor was cast as an intolerant, rigid community opposed to any sort of change. While it may have appeared that Lawrence Manor was undeniably opposed to integrating with

Lawrence Heights, I certainly have no intention of condemning those who rejected the proposed revitalization. On that same note, this is not an attempt to portray either community as being homogeneous or sharing the same opinion on planning matters. There were other neighbourhoods that irrefutably opposed the LARP, and this resistance was simply not limited to the residents in Lawrence Manor. There were residents in Lawrence Heights itself *and* neighbouring communities who also contested the approval of the LARP. The public participation process, while serving as the most explicit remnant of planning that showcases civic engagement, is not always representative of the overall climate. There may be a large segment of that particular population that chooses not to voice their opinions, albeit because of myriad reasons.

The revitalization project in Lawrence Heights had a tremendous outpouring of residents eager to become involved. The public participation process in this regard allowed for civic engagement in a space where these residents normally may not have been quite so enthusiastic. At the same time, it elucidated deeper issues that are prevalent in Toronto. Through public protests and capitalizing on opportunities to depute, residents outside of Lawrence Heights veiled xenophobic apprehension and racist fears as concerns surrounding density. Different races and spaces intersected – perhaps even collided – in a forum that aimed to allow all citizens to be heard. They were claiming their “right to the city” – “a claim for recognition of the urban as the reproducer of social relations of power and the right to participation in it” (Gilbert and Dikeç (2008: 254). As such, residents’ claims were also about the right to the neighbourhood and to space. This forces certain histories to be repeated and the dominant-subordinate roles to be reprised. These communities may or may not collaborate peacefully, but only time will tell. This resistance is not uncommon, especially in the suburbs of the amalgamated city, where change is perhaps regarded in binary outcomes – good or bad – and residents may not be ready to face this perceived transition. Knoeck (2012) is quite experienced in dealing with redevelopment in areas that are already well established, and his advice for the ongoing struggle is:

“As the city matures, our suburbs are about to change so I think there are lots of people who live in suburban areas and they understand themselves as living in a suburban area. Maybe they have a cultural desire to live in a suburban area and they’re seeing in this part of the city, Downsview, and around York University...

[where] we're seeing the first intimations of the next phase of urban development in the inner suburbs that will transform large parts of the city over the coming decades. So there's a bit of a disconnect between the vision that some residents have of the suburban lifestyle and the future evolution of the city."

The issues surrounding the suburbs in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area are only compounded by incorporating race, space, and identity concerns but these intersections must be created in order to reconcile mistakes of the planning past. The effects of the LARP remain to be seen as it is still in its infancy stage. Although there seems to be a glimmer of optimism, any judgment at this point is premature. It is apparent that, until the 1990s, the concerns of Lawrence Heights residents fell on deaf ears but there are currently efforts underway to atone for the previous blunders. Regardless of the outcome, it seems as though the public participation process will compel outsiders to acknowledge the existence of Lawrence Heights and hopefully accept some form of collaboration between them.

Conclusion: Planning for Toronto; Planning for All Torontonians

In the twenty-first century, great strides have been made in planning as a whole, especially in Toronto. Nevertheless, the Canadian narrative is told from the perspective of European settlers and seen through a White lens, even though this country is known for its cultural diversity and alleged acceptance of the racial Other. While Toronto is a multicultural metropolis promoting racial tolerance and harmony, bodies and spatialities are being managed through the governance of space. By establishing an intersecting analysis of race, space, and planning we can learn from our mistakes from the past as planners, engineers, architects, urban designers, and social workers. I do not argue that the implications of planning (through the built environment and public participation) have ghettoized an entire community. I do not expect that a plethora of amendments to the existing *Toronto Official Plan* or some revolutionary secondary plan will bring about the change that is necessary to transform those who have been marginalized into first-class citizens. My argument is that we cannot ignore, trivialize or disavow the role that race and space play in the everyday lives and neighbourhoods of the city. While the idea of these concepts may seem extremely nebulous and convoluted to some, the continued denial of

this connection only increases the likelihood of its reproduction. Sherene Razack (2002: 129) eloquently addresses issues of racial and spatial governance through space:

“The city belongs to settlers and the sully of civilized society through the presence of the racial Other in white space gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space. Planning authorities require larger plots in the suburbs, thereby ensuring that larger homes and wealthier families live there. Projects and Chinatowns are created, cordoning off the racial poor. Such spatial patterns, often achieved through law (nuisance laws, zoning laws, and so on), mark off the spaces of the settler and the native both conceptually and materially.”

This issue prompts us to look critically at the city, which we regard as a prototype for diversity. As Teelucksingh (2002: 122) notes, “examining how space becomes reproduced involves a consideration of both structural and political economic processes and the manner in which various stakeholders act as agents in the reproduction of space reflecting their particular interests.” However, as theoretical as it may sound, there is no denying the fact that there are racialized spaces in Toronto that can be physically marked on a map or which can be recognized when passing through the city.

Planning topics in Canada rarely focus their attention on what this country may consider “sensitive” issues. Planners and urban designers emphasize landscape, place, and the physical space but seem to neglect race, racialization, spatialization, and processes of identity-construction. Needless to say, the current literature hardly fuses these concepts. We must not dismiss these concepts as being irrational or lacking a scientific or empirical basis. The intersections that can be drawn between the landscape and the social realm cannot be underestimated. Planning as a profession is a social activity and in a sense it is playing with human lives as identities continue to be moulded and contorted in society as a whole.

In the face of the revitalization of a neighbourhood, public participation processes are mired in idealistic concepts of inclusion and participation, but these tenets are easily conflated, and the discursive practices exercise the two interchangeably. The aptly-used term “involvement” should be used over “inclusion” and “participation” in planning jargon. On a positive note, the LARP can be seen as an early success due to reasonably widespread resident involvement and the meticulous steps that planners took to engage the community.

Why was this not undertaken in the first place? Perhaps there is a level of misinformation or lack of understanding between the public and the government or planning community, as Knoeck (2012) explains.

“In Regent Park, people didn’t understand that. They didn’t get the fact that there were public processes making decisions about their neighbourhood and community that were separate from their landlords... there is an immature knowledge around how local decisions are made. There is a similar challenge in Lawrence Heights [but the] community has made huge strides in understanding the distinction between their landlord and the municipal government, what the roles and responsibilities of those two things are, how decisions are made in those two bodies; and how to influence those decisions... Like most communities they need to develop that ability if they’re going to be empowered and be able to influence the outcomes that are being decided for them.”

A huge institutionalized barrier was broken down through planning, where, residents from a space that was underprivileged, became empowered (if only briefly) to determine how their community would develop over the next several years. This was a monumental step in the LARP process because in the city, the processes of marginalization and empowerment are rendered invisible but work incessantly.

This paper used an interdisciplinary framework to formulate an analysis of marginalized neighbourhoods in Toronto. Again, this is not to suggest that the implications of planning specifically work *against* racialized persons to contain them in racialized spaces. I have shown that planning is at least complicit in the reproduction of these forces. The built form can have an immense impact on resident identity – a driving force towards motivation, ambition, and a sense of fulfillment. These virtues can affect the racial body through interaction with the education, employment, and the criminal justice system. Planning as an entity has not created racialized spaces and spatialized raced bodies, but through the prevalence of marginalized neighbourhoods it is apparent that planning in this city does not bring about methods to alleviate these forces. There are structural influences at work that continue to reproduce these spaces and bodies in Toronto. Echoing the sentiment of Kyle Knoeck, Lawrence Heights is one example of these neighbourhoods. “I think the way it’s perceived, certainly from what I can tell from dealing with the public so much over the last number of years it’s a neighbourhood apart (and) separate, there are

boundaries” says Knoeck (2012). Perhaps the tragic reality is that this neighbourhood is just *one* example. On that note, Knoeck (2012) continues:

“You see a neighbourhood that isn’t well connected to the rest of the city or neighbourhoods around it, [which] provides poor living conditions relative to lots of neighbourhoods in the city, and isn’t well connected to opportunities across the city. I don’t think Lawrence Heights is the only example of that, but obviously we’re in a big city with lots of opportunities and lots of wealth, and there are pockets of the city that for some reason aren’t able to connect into those opportunities. This is an example of one of those neighbourhoods.”

The City of Toronto has officially designated twelve other neighbourhoods with priority status, prompting the city as a whole to reflect on its history, values, and overall, the Canadian narrative. Lawrence Heights exemplifies the manifestation of racialized and spatialized processes working in tandem to produce a space that has been physically and socially marginalized. Again, with respect to the built environment and public participation processes, the implications of planning have created a “black hole” on the outskirts of the city through physical isolation stemming from a poorly-designed built form and social isolation resulting from identity-construction and barriers in the public participation process. This has a bearing on residents from the young to the elderly. This case study allows planners to look at race, space, geography, urban design, and the implications of planning, ultimately showing how the race-space relationship is a catalyst in the production and reproduction of identities.

It is important to note that not everything is negative in Lawrence Heights. This neighbourhood contains potential not only through the economically viable interests of development, but invaluable elements from a social and political perspective. Carmen Smith (2012), emphasized that the positive aspects in the community must be articulated:

“I think when we talk about Lawrence Heights, we talk about the fact there are challenges here but I think it’s important to identify there are lots of strengths here. This community has huge assets. They’re amazingly engaged. They have very strong social networks that support each other. They are really resourceful. They’re vocal about issues that impact them... The youth that live in Lawrence Heights are very articulate, organized, and committed.”

John P. Smith (2012) is also quite familiar with the negative imagery surrounding Lawrence Heights and recognizes that “[the] stigma and stereotype exists because it’s about who’s telling your story, who controls the narrative... and part of my work is to support local stakeholders to take hold of that narrative and to present a counter-narrative to the overall negative.” This counter-narrative needs to be articulated to the media and to communities in the city in order to change their perceptions of the neighbourhood.

As city councillor for the constituency, Josh Colle is in Lawrence Heights several times per week and has formed tight bonds with many residents. When asked how he felt outsiders perceived Lawrence Heights, Colle (2012) responds: “I think it’s a bit mysterious to outsiders. I think they don’t know much about the neighbourhood. They judge it a lot on some of the stereotypes that have evolved over the years so I think for most people, they actually don’t know a lot about Lawrence Heights. They focus sometimes on some of the negative headlines that have come out of that neighbourhood but really they don’t have a good sense of what a great community it is.” It is the mystery that adds to the undeniable negativity resonating in the area. There are still some tensions between the two neighbouring communities: Lawrence Heights and Lawrence Manor – the sort of tensions that lay with a social housing area comprised of a largely Black population and privately owned homes with predominantly White Jewish residents. These two communities rarely cross paths but ended up butting heads during the public participation processes surrounding the LARP. Here, the lines between Black and White spaces blurred, where different cultures were forced to interact and collaborate. Lawrence Heights has a lot to look forward to because the Secondary Plan and upcoming Social Development Plan are monumental steps towards the ultimate achievement. Thirty years ago this may not have been realistic. It is not utterly inconceivable to imagine that in twenty years or more Lawrence Heights can become a space where the priority status is perhaps removed, barriers are eroded and integration is successful. Again, it is too early to judge whether the LARP will be triumphant but hopefully Lawrence Heights as a case study and as a neighbourhood can serve as a conduit for social and political empowerment through planning.

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