

THE LIMINALITY OF INDIGENOUS URBANISM IN SASKATCHEWAN

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By

ROBERT BENJAMIN FAWCETT

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OR

Dean of College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
University of Saskatchewan  
116 Thorvaldson Building, 110 Science Place  
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Canada

## Abstract

This dissertation explores conditions and possibilities for enhancing Indigenous urbanism in prairie cities, and it examines how mainstream spatial production impedes this objective through two examples of urban change: First Nations' urban reserves in Saskatchewan cities, and inner-city 'revitalization' in Saskatoon. By centering Indigenous resurgence as an analytical frame of reference, as well as lived knowledge and perceptions of urban change among Indigenous individuals who experience or contribute to processes of spatial restructuring, the argument follows that urban Indigenous space, and practices of Indigenous urbanism, are *liminal*. That is, while settler governments and non-Indigenous society perpetually reinforce colonial boundaries around liberal property relations, Indigenous people adapt to and resist this apparatus, many of whom aspire and labour to regenerate land and kinship as territory beyond such imposed frontiers. Indigenous urban space is positioned as precarious in Saskatchewan cities, located 'in between' legal property regimes and traditional territoriality, and 'in transition' from settler-state jurisdiction to self-determined places flowing with distinctive rights and responsibilities.

Findings reveal that urban reserve creation takes place amid broader political and economic geographies that severely constrain their uses, binding First Nations' sovereignty to corporate participation in the market economy through municipalized forms of self-government regulated by and answerable to crown title and state authority. Yet, there exists a commonly held long-term goal among First Nations of transforming or transcending these systems, which points to a temporal dimension of urban reserves as expedient but provisional pathways to access urban space and markets for longer-term strategies to expand First Nations' legally recognized land base, financial self-sufficiency, governing capacities, and sociocultural revitalization. The transformative potential of Indigenous urbanism is emphasized in relation to the social economy amid core neighbourhood 'revitalization', revealing fundamental limitations and contradictions of mainstream settler urbanism in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and across the prairies. The repatriation of Indigenous land and life akin to resurgence includes rights and responsibilities to regenerate urban space – not to simply adapt to it – among diverse, multinational Indigenous inhabitants. This dissertation concludes with an argument for the expansion of urban Indigenous land, or an urban 'Indigenous commons' in support of community resurgence, and a material basis from which Indigenous urbanism can flourish in prairie cities.

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## **Dedication**

To my grandmothers, Dorothy Fawcett (1920–2020) and Elizabeth Zalys (1928–2021).

Thank you for your love, care, and strength. I miss you both dearly.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>AFN</b>	Assembly of First Nations
<b>ATR</b>	Additions to Reserves
<b>CIRNAC</b>	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
<b>CNYC</b>	Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op
<b>CUMFI</b>	Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated
<b>FNFMA</b>	First Nations Fiscal Management Act
<b>FNLMA</b>	First Nations Land Management Act
<b>FSIN</b>	Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations
<b>INAC</b>	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
<b>OTC</b>	Office of the Treaty Commissioner
<b>NRTA</b>	Natural Resources Transfer Agreement
<b>RCMP</b>	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
<b>SREDA</b>	Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority
<b>SUNTEP</b>	Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program
<b>SWITCH</b>	Student Wellness Initiative Toward Community Health
<b>TLE</b>	Treaty Land Entitlement
<b>TLEFA</b>	Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement
<b>WBYL</b>	White Buffalo Youth Lodge



# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and Objectives

Prairie cities across what is now western Canada are places where Indigenous people<sup>1</sup> increasingly live, visit, and consider ‘home’ (EnviroNics Institute, 2010; Andersen, 2013b; Peters & Lafond, 2013). They are complex places in which the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of indigeneity are ever more shaped by uniquely urban experiences, subjectivities, relationships, and agency (Lawrence, 2004). Every city contains a unique assemblage of Indigenous identity groups, as well as place-specific agglomerations of organizations and networks that have historically impacted upon and been shaped by each urban region’s Indigenous presence. In the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, roughly half of the relatively young and quickly growing Indigenous population now reside predominantly in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Prairie cities are Indigenous places, located in traditional and treaty territories where place-rooted knowledge and kinship continue to be practiced and increasingly applied to urban life. For many Indigenous peoples living in prairie cities, home is not simply the locale where one was born or resides; it also includes and flows from interpersonal, spiritual, relational, and ancestral connections to places and communities across larger territorial landscapes.

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<sup>1</sup> According to section 35.1 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, Canada recognizes ‘Aboriginal’ peoples as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. These identity groups are categorized and defined under specific government policy and legal rights frameworks. ‘First Nations’ represent hundreds of distinct bands or tribal groups, and the federal government registers individuals by their specific ‘Indian status’. However, First Nation bands also identify with larger confederated nations sharing cultural and linguistic traditions as well as traditional territories. The “Inuit” represent nine distinct linguistic groups from northern and arctic regions. The “Métis” are commonly misrepresented as people of mixed European and Aboriginal ancestry but principally represent the diasporic but distinct nation descending from the Red River settlement in what is now Manitoba, a province created by the Métis. This dissertation primarily refers to ‘Indigenous’ people and communities as the diverse descendants of the continent’s original inhabitants who formed complex societies and sovereign nations prior to Canadian confederation, who continue to uphold traditional territoriality, and whose contemporary identities are much more complex than the state’s legal categorization.

Settler society<sup>2</sup> and Canada's governing institutions, including municipalities, have tended to regard urban Indigenous residents and communities in policy, planning, and public discourse as less authentic than their rural kin and lacking the same legitimacy of identity and political claims as those who live on First Nation reserves, or 'on the (rural) land' (Belanger, 2013; Andersen, 2013b). This embedded assumption is akin to the colonial notion of blood quantum, or purity of lineage, as an authenticity qualifier of Indigenous identity; they are both politicized, racialized constructs (geographic and biological) that have vastly divisive social consequences in terms of community membership or national citizenship, political rights and recognition, and access to resources (Harris et al., 2013). Indigenous people have been commonly misrepresented by whitestream majority populations as culturally ill-equipped to succeed in 'modern urban life' and therefore destined to struggle with, succumb to, or gradually assimilate into cities and the larger Canadian polity (Andersen, 2013a). Western academic theory and urban research have likewise situated urban Indigenous peoples and communities according to what they lack (relative to markers of white settler normativity and liberal success indicators), much more so than what they offer or aspire to create – and regenerate – in modern cosmopolitan contexts (Andersen, 2013a; Denis, 1997; Newhouse, 2011).

The 'study of lack' (Newhouse, 2011) has tended to view urban Indigenous communities through a lens of 'urbanization', which is principally focused on the migration and adjustment of Indigenous residents to modern urban life. It is well known that Indigenous people disproportionately live in the poorest neighbourhoods in prairie cities (Peters, 2011). Experiences with urban poverty and precarity are comparatively prevalent among urban Indigenous residents, representing the social outcomes of colonization and the material conditions of economic exclusion and exploitation under capitalism, which significantly impact individuals' quality of life, daily choices, and lived spaces (Silver, 2008). On average, urban Indigenous residents in prairie cities experience higher rates of unemployment, residential mobility, subsidized and rental housing, proportion of income spent on rent, and experiences with houselessness, as well as lower levels of income, home ownership, and education attainment than non-Indigenous

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<sup>2</sup> 'Settlers' are commonly referred to throughout this dissertation as descendants of predominantly European immigrants, and 'settler society' refers to the non-Indigenous Canadian citizenry whose mainstream social characteristics, political values, and economic interests espouse and reproduce Eurocentric or Western (normatively white) supremacy.

residents (Andersen 2013a; Silver et al., 2011). These statistical indicators reflect the systematic omission of Indigenous society from settler institutions, and alienation from land and resources pillaged from Indigenous territories, but they also represent the Canadian state's ongoing violent suppression of traditional economies, law, and governance.

Social research, policy, and discourse that frames urban Indigenous inhabitants as people 'lacking' characteristics (i.e., employable skills, formal education, financial literacy, self-sufficiency, and so on) necessary to succeed in prairie cities negates the ongoing violence and trauma that settler colonial power and capital interests continue to inflict upon Indigenous lives and land. Positioning indigeneity as a deficit or a barrier that must be overcome also reflects long-held assimilatory ambitions of a white-dominant settler society that denies Indigenous people's desires to live good urban lives informed by and grounded in their personal and collective senses of identity, community, and place. The prevailing myth of an 'impossible contradiction' (Peters, 1996) between indigeneity and city life is rooted in a culture of whiteness that idealizes forms of urbanism constructed upon narrow, exclusionary, and alienating modes of production and socio-spatial organization (Tomiak et al., 2019).

Some urban researchers and Indigenous authors have persuasively argued, however, that Indigenous people's territorial connections, political claims, cultural identities, and community values are no less authentic in modern cities than in rural areas (Andersen, 2013b; Andersen & Denis, 2011; Belanger, 2013; Belanger & Lindstrom, 2016; Denis, 1997; Dorries et al., 2019; Howard & Proulx, 2011; Laliberte, 2013; Newhouse, 2011; Newhouse & FitzMaurice, 2012; Peters, 1996; 2005; Porter, 2013; Silver et al., 2011; Tomiak, 2011; 2017; Walker, 2013; Walker et al., 2017; Walker & Belanger, 2013). These authors have demonstrated that urban Indigenous residents form distinct and legitimate political communities who have contributed much to enhancing one another's qualities of life as well as the livability of neighbourhoods and cities in general. Many urban Indigenous residents aspire to exercise their distinctive rights, responsibilities, and values in everyday life (Environics Institute, 2010; Walker et al., 2017). Such aspirations and strategies for action may be defined as Indigenous urbanism, or the creative ways that Indigenous communities are transforming cities by enhancing the quality and wellbeing of urban life (Nejad et al., 2019, Newhouse, 2011; Walker & Belanger, 2013; Walker et al., 2017; Wilson & Peters, 2005).

As a departure from the lens of urbanization, which considers how Indigenous people might better acclimatize to ‘modern city life’ (Andersen, 2013b), Indigenous urbanism is a corrective concept that emphasizes how cities themselves might adjust or make space for indigeneity to thrive. Indigenous urbanism is performed in and produces a variety of spaces in everyday city life, perhaps most visibly through artistic enterprises and public art installations, education programs and institutions, public space design, the (re)naming of streets, parks, and buildings, and the many cultural and celebratory events that take place in prairie cities. Such representations of indigeneity may be acceptable to mainstream settler society as ‘invited’ practices of urbanism; however, Indigenous urbanism is also policed, regulated, and bounded by municipal governments and non-Indigenous residents who value the cultural capital that visual representations of indigeneity can add to cities, but who also dilute the potential of Indigenous communities to transform the material, social, economic, and ecological conditions of urban prairie life.

A significant example of Indigenous urbanism whereby First Nations are increasingly reterritorializing prairie cities, particularly in the province of Saskatchewan, is through the creation of new urban reserves. Urban reserves re-appropriate and transfer urban property into First Nations’ legally recognized territory, embedding culturally distinctive values, forms, and representations in urban space. Urban reserves are spaces produced through jurisdictional negotiation and conflict resolution (between band councils and municipal, provincial, and federal governments), representing important ‘contact zones’ (Porter & Barry, 2016) through which Indigenous and settler-state interests collide, converge, and reshape social, political, and economic relations in and through prairie cities. Urban reserves are also contradictory spaces of attenuated, delegated jurisdiction under the *Indian Act*, disciplined by the Canadian state’s jurisdictional authority and market logics of neoliberal governance (Tomiak, 2017). They represent one pathway through which First Nations are expanding their presence in prairie cities, and they are helping to facilitate communication and cooperation with municipal governments and non-Indigenous settler society (Barron & Garcea, 1999).

Given the recent elevation of First Nations’ urban reserves among federal, provincial, and municipal governments as well as some band councils as evidence of reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships, it is important to ask: to what extent do urban reserves represent or have potential to rejuvenate treaty relationships respectful of Indigenous sovereignty (authority to

govern territory and enact law) and self-determination (the embodiment of sovereignty in human action)? In what ways are urban reserves valued by First Nations in relation to their long-term strategies? How are urban reserves perceived by Indigenous residents who are not affiliated with urban land-owning First Nations or are excluded from/inhibited by dominant property relations? Prairie cities are part of traditional and treaty territories, and Indigenous people carry their territoriality with them through their urban relations and lived spaces. Prairie cities are Indigenous places flowing with rights and responsibilities that include but extend far beyond parcels of land that are now legally designated as reserves. As Michelle Daigle (2016, p. 8) asserts, “living self-determination depends on Indigenous peoples renewing relationships with kin beyond the boundaries of the territories that have been designated for them and recognized by the state.”

Indigenous peoples also create living geographies in cities that emerge through a multitude of everyday spaces, embedded organizations, and a largely ‘invisible infrastructure’ of social networks through which values of community, care, respect, trust, and reciprocity are envisioned, planned, and practiced (Newhouse, 2003). Much of this urban community development can be traced to the Friendship Centre movement that began in the 1960s in Winnipeg and has expanded to cities and towns in every province and northern territory (Newhouse, 2011). Friendship Centres have generated many other organizations and programs that enhance individual and community safety, wellbeing, and connectivity among diverse urban Indigenous residents, acting “as incubators of the social economy and human development, for the benefit of a growing Aboriginal population” (Desbiens et al., 2016). In this sense, Indigenous urbanism has emerged from creative and culturally grounded adaptations to, and of, material conditions that connect people to place, to community, to cultural knowledge and values, and to essential resources that are otherwise inaccessible to many urban inhabitants.

Indigenous urbanism may also be resurgent, meaning that it is performed through individual and collective actions that place liberation and decolonization at the centre of everyday life (Coulthard, 2008; Corntassel, 2012). Resurgence embodies tenets of resistance and responsibility to nourish respectful relations among people and with the land (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; L. Simpson, 2013). Land reclamation is intimately connected with sovereign Indigenous nationhood and self-determination, which necessarily challenges settler colonial jurisdiction and capitalist structures of spatial production, including relations of property, law,

and governance (Daigle, 2016; Dorries et al., 2019; L. Simpson, 2017; Tomiak, 2017). Resurgence invokes claims to land, territory, and justice beyond what the Canadian state and white settler society are currently willing to cede. It also encompasses inherent rights and treaty responsibilities that refute assimilative participation in coercive systems, structures, and practices that co-opt, pacify, or suppress these objectives (Coulthard, 2014). This dissertation centres resurgence as an indispensable and increasingly urgent paradigm that is shaping contemporary indigeneity, including *and connecting* cities and their inhabitants.

The geographic context of this research is focused on Saskatchewan generally, and Saskatoon specifically. Both the province and the municipality regulate jurisdiction and property relations across Indigenous territories, and so Indigenous urbanism and the production of urban space must be situated in relation to local and provincial political economies. The province of Saskatchewan is mapped onto the home territories of Nêhiyawak (Plains Cree), Nahkawiniwak (Saulteaux), Nakota (Assiniboine), Dakota and Lakota (Sioux), Denesuline (Dene/Chipewyan), and Métis nations (Stonechild, n.d.). Of the province's 1.1 million total inhabitants, 175,000 (16 per cent) 'officially' identify as Aboriginal, including 65 per cent First Nations and 33 per cent Métis (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The province's borders are completely enveloped by Treaties 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, and small portions of Treaties 2 and 7, providing an encompassing and longstanding basis for coexistence through shared territory and respect for mutual sovereignties. Saskatchewan is a province, however, whose market economy is dominated by extractive industries with powerful corporate ownership, and mainstream political support for private capital interests, which have facilitated the dispossession, enclosure, and industrial-environmental degradation of land that remains Indigenous territory. Saskatchewan is a provincial jurisdiction that oversees vast inequalities in the living conditions, health outcomes, and incarceration rates of Indigenous and non-Indigenous settler society, as well as considerable social distance and strained relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities due to the prevalence of systemic as well as overt racism in cities and rural areas (Macdonald, 2016; Macdougall, 2016).

Saskatoon is the largest city in Saskatchewan and the second largest in Treaty 6. It is an urban area that has been inhabited for at least 6000 years (E. Walker, 2021) and continues to be a place of significant Indigenous memory, materiality, and presence. The Métis community of Prairie-Ronde (Round Prairie) was one of the largest in Saskatchewan and was established in the

1850s as a permanent settlement just south of what is now Saskatoon. Its inhabitants hunted buffalo and harvested in the Saskatoon area prior to the arrival of European settlers (Barkwell, 2013). Families from Prairie-Ronde began moving into Saskatoon in the 1920s and 1930s, and they have continued to call this place home (Barkwell, 2013). In 2016 there were over 27,000 people (11.3 per cent of the total population) living in Saskatoon who identified as Aboriginal in Canada's census, including 12,225 Métis and 14,430 First Nations (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Saskatoon had the third highest share of Indigenous people among all of Canada's census metropolitan areas, behind only Winnipeg and Thunder Bay (Fawcett & Walker, 2020).

Saskatoon also contains the most First Nation urban reserves of all prairie cities (seven, with one in progress and several First Nation land holdings in the greater metropolitan area), owing much to the determination of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation to negotiate the first municipal services agreement with city hall in 1988. The creation and development of urban reserves represents significant spatial change in Saskatoon and other Saskatchewan cities through which indigeneity is increasingly embedded in the material and symbolic landscape of mainstream settler urbanism. In addition to the city's prominence of urban reserves, Saskatoon's large and historic Indigenous community presence has also cultivated a growing density of organizations, institutions, mutual aid networks, and socio-spatial practices that (re)shape urban life and hold "considerable promise for resolving the complex and now deeply entrenched problems arising from spatially concentrated racialized poverty..." (Silver, 2008, p. 1).

It should be noted that Indigenous people reside all over Saskatoon, and while there is evidence of a growing "Aboriginal middle class" which Newhouse and Peters (2003) have linked to an expanding Indigenous civil service, many continue to live, work, and maintain relationships with/in core west side neighbourhoods. The point of clarification here is that a focus on Riversdale emphasizes intersections of class and indigeneity; that many who continue to live in Saskatoon's inner-city neighbourhoods are economically depressed and therefore more vulnerable to fluctuating markets and material restructuring. Riversdale, a neighbourhood where indigeneity has long been a fixture of urban life, is currently experiencing a private and public property revitalization movement that threatens to displace low-income residents, non-profit organizations, and subsequently erase important features of Indigenous space from this significant urban place.

In other words, Saskatoon is an important urban context to examine the intersection of Indigenous urbanism and mainstream spatial production. The purpose of this research is to better understand the nuanced complexity of Indigenous urbanism and the political, economic, social, and altogether spatial landscape through which it is envisioned, planned, and practiced. It does so by centering the lived experiences, values, strengths, and aspirations among Indigenous communities within shared and rapidly changing urban environments. This inquiry is equally directed at the ongoing structure and functions of municipal colonialism and the Canadian state's contested and contradictory functions of jurisdiction; namely, the regulation of property relations in land. It is under this socio-spatial apparatus that Indigenous urbanism is structurally constrained, and from which resurgence seeks liberatory reclamation. The objectives of this dissertation are to:

- 1) Construct a conceptual and analytical framework to critically examine the political, economic, and social forces through which urban space is produced and Indigenous urbanism is practiced in Canadian and specifically prairie cities;
- 2) Explore First Nations' experiences and strategic priorities surrounding urban reserve creation, as well as their perceptions of land, territory, property, and urban value(s) in the context of treaty governance, sovereign nationhood, and self-determination;
- 3) Examine how urban Indigenous residents and social economy practitioners perceive neighbourhood revitalization in Saskatoon's west side core, to what they ascribe value in urban space and place, and in what ways they aspire to enhance self-determination and improve the qualities of urban life; and,
- 4) Develop a critical analysis of mainstream urbanism, governance, and planning in Saskatchewan cities, and an argument to (re)make space amid propertied landscapes in support of transformative Indigenous urbanism; a resurgent basis for decolonized coexistence in prairie cities.

This dissertation examines how mainstream urbanism influences the production of city space and intersects with Indigenous urbanism through two contemporary examples of urban change affecting Indigenous communities: First Nation urban reserves in Saskatchewan cities, and inner-city 'revitalization' in Saskatoon. The argument follows that urban Indigenous space, and practices of Indigenous urbanism, are *liminal*. Liminality is a concept that has been developed in anthropological and geographical literature to challenge nation-state-centric



binaries of inside/outside and citizen/other. It is, as Baker and Verelli (2017, p. 38) explain, “a state of simultaneous belonging and exclusion” that can be both spatial and temporal. Liminality has been deployed in postcolonial theory as a kind of ‘third space’ of sovereignty among Indigenous peoples who “are difficult to locate clearly either inside or outside of existing political boundaries” (Loh & Heiskanen, 2020, p. 294). According to Loh and Heiskanen (2020, p. 294), “it is the sustained efforts of the Indigenous peoples to resist colonial rule, whether by demanding rights and resources...or by asserting certain cultural practices in their daily lives, that produces a ‘third space of sovereignty’.” In everyday urban life, liminality represents socio-spatial practices that blur or transform dominant borderlines (for example, regulatory geographies that contour the state’s bureaucratic organization) and conceptions of citizenship (that is, individual subjectivities, rights, responsibilities, and collective social order) (March, 2021).

## **1.2 Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter Two develops a conceptual literature review and critical analytical framework to contextualize Indigenous urbanism and the production of urban space in Canada generally and prairie cities specifically. It consists of two main sections. Section 2.2 examines the political and economic spatiality of settler colonialism – the permanent occupation and accumulation of land and its resources by a colonizing society – that premises Canada’s contradictory and contested claims to territorial sovereignty, absolute governing authority, and radical underlying title to land despite unrelinquished practices of and inherent rights to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Indigenous territoriality and the Canadian state’s legal basis for sovereign territoriality are described as incommensurable forms of governance and socio-spatial organization; they are endemically regulated through forces of settler colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism that continue to dispossess, coerce, and constrain Indigenous peoples in urban and rural contexts.

The numbered treaties, negotiated between the crown and Indigenous nations, are contextualized not only as the legal foundation upon which Canada has legitimized its continuously colonizing apparatus and claims to territorial sovereignty across the prairies, but also as written, legal documents through which Canadian governments and courts commonly

misinterpret their spirit, intent, and negotiated rights, responsibilities, and respect for mutual sovereignties that First Nations uphold as sacred and enduring covenants. Canada's *Indian Act* and reserve system – placed in the geographic context of jurisdiction – are then discussed as colonial instruments through which treaties have been misappropriated and negated to inscribe settler geographies over Indigenous territories. Settler-state jurisdiction is described as a legal mode of dispossession and a spatial technology of Canadian sovereignty that is harnessed to manage the state's authority at multiple spatial scales with myriad overlapping boundaries. Jurisdiction enforces the state's bureaucratic territory and socio-spatial ordering power over localized property relations between and among people and communities.

Indigenous jurisdictions that are recognized by the state are systematically delegated, bracketed, and translated into legal language and categories amenable to the extractive, exploitative, accumulative, and market-centred logics and priorities of state and capital. However, Indigenous communities and nations also assert their own jurisdictional claims through multifaceted strategies of self-determination and resistance that have rendered the settler colonial erasure of Indigenous territory and society incomplete. First Nations' land claims are positioned as significant pathways of legal resistance that aim to exert Indigenous jurisdiction over reserve lands, to uphold treaty agreements and mutual responsibilities, and to expand First Nations' land bases through additions to reserves. In Saskatchewan, the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement (TLEFA) has enabled First Nations to use financial compensation from land claims settlements to purchase land as property, which can then be transferred to reserve status.

First Nations' new urban reserves, purchased with land claims settlements and transferred through the federal government's Additions to Reserves (ATR) policy, are introduced as complex, emergent spaces through which Indigenous urbanism is increasingly embedded in prairie cities, particularly in Saskatchewan. The potential for added value (in the forms of economic, political, social, and symbolic capital) to First Nations band members is discussed, as well as opportunities that urban reserves generate for employment and Indigenous enterprise, and the potential for cooperative partnerships with local governments, community organizations, and private businesses. Urban reserves are described as liminal spaces imbued with both jurisdictional conflict and cooperation. They are transitional spaces that are being harnessed by

First Nations to incrementally advance their struggles for freedom and more equitable political and economic relationships with the Canadian state and settler society.

It is argued, however, that the state's legislative and regulatory scaffolding through which ATRs are granted, and urban reserves are created, is indicative of Canada's liberal 'politics of recognition'; the strategic pacification of Indigenous resistance and attempted dissolution of the land and sovereignty contradiction through monetary compensation, the mobilization of First Nations' reserves as commodifiable land, and legislative options for increased economic and governing autonomy under the authority of Canadian legislation. When viewed through a critical resurgence lens, recognition of piecemeal rights within a largely unaltered colonial legal apparatus undermines the transformative potential of Indigenous peoples to reclaim land and regenerate a good balance of relationships among people and non-human life in shared territories. Resurgence represents a commitment among many Indigenous people to practice distinctive cultural values through political thought and action, sustainable economic practices, solidarity and mutual support among diverse and widespread communities, and resistance against the multiplicity of power structures affixing Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination to modalities of patriarchal, neoliberal whiteness.

Section 2.3 transitions to a more focused examination of prairie urban contexts in which Indigenous urbanism is practiced and systematically constrained. Settler urbanization across the prairies is described as the materialization of socio-spatial practices that are economically, politically, and culturally anchored to extractive industries and exclusionary property relations. The material development, 'creative destruction', and continuous remaking of prairie cities has and continues to play a central role in the expansion and increasingly inequitable concentration of social and financial capital in Canada. In prairie cities, the 'urban process' is intimately implicated in the settler colonial project whereby the production of urban space has relied on, and indeed has propagated Indigenous dispossession. Urban spatial production is concretized in the built form, but it also encompasses socioeconomic organization and resource distribution, local governance apparatuses and political mandates, laws, jurisdiction, policing, and the social relations of capital, labour, and property that contour the lived experiences of a city's inhabitants. For the past few decades, market-centred logics of neoliberal capitalism and governance have increasingly empowered owners of property and capital with an enhanced and exclusionary 'right to the city'.

‘Urbanization’ among Indigenous peoples – or, more accurately, the reclamation of cities as ancestral territories in which people live and visit – has subsequently taken place amid hostile social environments wherein the law (i.e., the enforcement of property rights, criminal justice, and federal and provincial legislation) overwhelmingly protects the interests, security, and *social order* of white settler society at the expense of Indigenous lives and land. Indigenous people in prairie cities, particularly those most susceptible to experiencing poverty and precarity (a living state of uncertainty and instability) in everyday life, are systematically neglected in federal and provincial policy, excluded from urban space, institutions of power, and essential resources, and exposed to the structural violence of settler colonial urbanism in its many forms. Indigenous people are disproportionately criminalized in prairie cities through municipal bylaws, aggressive and racialized policing, and compounded acts of ‘whiteness’ such as public surveillance; everyday performances of power and privilege that mark many Indigenous residents as *liminars* – or ‘out of place’ intruders who threaten the socio-spatial order of settler urbanism.

Whiteness, as a cultural and national identity that signifies social, economic, and political power, emboldens an antagonistic and racist settler culture rooted in class divisions that mark people as welcomed/unwelcomed and belonging to/out of place. Whiteness is inseparable from private property, which is increasingly harnessed as a commodity to absorb and extract surplus value, imbues owners with political, economic, and social power over the production of urban space. The enormous and unremitting power wielded by white settler society and its dominant institutions – power that has been accumulated through generations of colonization and the extraction of wealth from Indigenous territories – has constructed and continues to reproduce an urban property and planning paradigm that severely constrains many Indigenous people’s, new immigrants’, migrant workers’, and the working-class poor’s abilities to live nourishing urban lives. Mainstream settler urbanism reproduces borders and boundaries that impede rather than embrace indigeneity, placing severe limitations over the decision-making authority of Indigenous communities in prairie cities.

An attention to Indigenous urbanism helps to unsettle outdated narratives of Indigenous-urban incompatibility and the normative whiteness of mainstream urbanism. While urban reserves represent a significant movement among First Nations to reterritorialize cities and produce unique spaces and value(s), there are many more dynamic and ‘invented’ spaces and practices through which urban residents nourish communities and relational connections

(including with people and places outside of cities) and enhance the quality and wellbeing of urban life. A growing ‘invisible infrastructure’ of Indigenous organizations and mutual aid networks across prairie cities may be viewed through a social economy lens; that is, they not only strive to enhance wellbeing and relational connectivity in urban communities, but they do so by actively planning and carrying out the procurement, production, distribution, and sharing of resources among people.

The social economy represents collective actions taken by people and organizations to mitigate exclusionary and marginalizing outcomes of the dominant economic system and its constituent social hierarchy. An Indigenous ‘social economy’ is defined as self-determined, culturally valued, and transformative practices and organizing principles dedicated to nourishing people, communities, land, and territory. Nourishment is described as a fundamental tenet of Indigenous community development whereby people’s necessities of life as well as their emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical sustenance are prioritized. An economy of nourishment is not a new concept; it represents the continuity of ancient value systems passed on through many generations of accumulated knowledge in place. In prairie cities, the Indigenous social economy faces significant barriers of access to urban space (property), financial resources, and government support through policy and planning. Furthermore, many social economy organizations operate in central city neighbourhoods with deep-rooted Indigenous communities, some of which are currently experiencing mainstream ‘revitalization’ movements leading to the gentrification of urban Indigenous space (for example, Edmonton’s Boyle Street; Winnipeg’s West Broadway and Exchange districts; and Saskatoon’s Riversdale).

Urban revitalization refers mainly to material changes in the built environment (housing stock, commercial façade enhancements, public infrastructure improvement), and such changes are facilitated by governance processes (land use planning and zoning, infrastructure investment, stakeholder identification and consultation, public-private partnerships, development incentives). Revitalization becomes gentrification when those who already reside in devalued neighbourhoods with little economic power are exposed to private reinvestment in real estate, rising property and other commodity values, and an influx of newcomers with more access to social and economic capital. Gentrification implies the replacement of people, unproductive spaces, and local culture through renewed assertions of economic, political, and social power. Such power is wielded through property investment, *revanchist* actions such as evictions and

aggressive policing, ‘microtechnologies’ of social and spatial control such as public surveillance and prejudicial discourse, and the mobilization of municipal land use and planning regimes to accelerate investment. In prairie cities with depreciated central neighbourhoods that are home to large and established Indigenous communities, gentrification represents the recolonization of Indigenous territory, which Coulthard (2014) refers to as “*urbs nullius*” – a frontier mentality of resettlement to ‘take back’ spaces that are perceived by those with social, economic, and political power as empty, unproductive, or waste.

Chapter Three establishes the research context of this dissertation, my positionality and methodological considerations, and the project’s qualitative research methods. Positioning myself in relation to this project, its participants, and western academia is necessary for transparency about the limitations of my research design and interpretation. The methodological considerations that contour this inquiry are informed by a combination of critical geography (examining material forces influencing the spatiality of settler colonial power in and of Canada and prairie cities), structuration theory (understanding that human agency, perceptions of reality, and spatial production are mutually constitutive), and Indigenous resurgence (centering the lived and embodied experiences, transformative aspirations, and cultural values that inform Indigenous urbanism). The qualitative research methods are then described as a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with a wide range of differently identifying Indigenous participants who have experiential knowledge about urban reserve creation, social economy organizing, and neighbourhood revitalization. Interpretation of results relied on a critical-interpretive and grounded theory paradigm that attempts to balance an analytical ‘unsettling’ of status quo urban theory and practice in prairie Canada (the uncritical acceptance of whitestream governance, settler law, neocolonial planning, and neoliberal rationality) with attention to Indigenous thought and resurgence praxis.

Chapter Four conveys findings from interviews with First Nations participants associated with land claims, TLE, and urban reserve creation. The chapter begins with an overview of the Saskatchewan context in which First Nations land claims have led to the TLEFA and creation of new urban reserves. This context includes the federal government’s legislative, policy, and regulatory apparatus that conditions how First Nations use land claims settlement money to expand their reserve land base. The legal process for new reserve approval and creation under Canada’s ATR policy is outlined, and it is described as an asymmetrical power relation that

delays and delimits the objectives of many First Nations. Some First Nations are successfully navigating Canada's bureaucratic authority, due in part to their capacities to harness legislative options for sectoral self-government. This legislation replaces sections of the *Indian Act* such as those pertaining to land use, taxation, and management of own-source revenue. Sectoral self-government is practical for First Nations who are more advanced in their self-enterprising and administrative capacities to mobilize reserve land for market productivity, and they must demonstrate their readiness for economic development to opt in. However, sectoral self-government is also described as a liberal strategy of recognition; it placates First Nations' resistance with financial compensation and legislation that relinquishes the federal government's legal responsibilities but does not address treaty rights and obligations to share sovereignty and territory.

The strategic tensions of land selection and reserve designation are then examined, demonstrating the coercive structure of neoliberal governance and the state's politics of recognition, but also the strategic navigation among different First Nations of Canada's legislative, policy, and regulatory apparatus. TLE settlements and the ATR policy have enabled some First Nations to generate own-source revenue to meet the service needs and improve the material conditions of band members, but also to envision long-term possibilities for land expansion and increased autonomy. Urban reserves are valued primarily for their economic potential for return on investment, which is used for the collective benefit of band members, but also as a source of cultural pride and connectivity in cities. They have enabled some First Nations to provide services, support, and employment to urban members, but it is not yet practical to invest in on-reserve urban housing due to high construction costs and probable tensions with municipal governments and non-Indigenous urban residents.

First Nations' urban reserves are described as liminal spaces that are products of both Indigenous resistance via land claims *and* settler state coercion through a liberal politics of recognition. Indigenous movements toward self-determination are systematically co-opted or pacified by Canadian governments, in large part through monetary settlements and legislative options for sectoral self-government, while provincial jurisdictions continue to emplace and enforce unyielding boundaries around and across Indigenous territory. The state's overarching objective in its negotiations with First Nations over land claims is to fold Indigenous land rights and translate Indigenous territory into legal categories amenable to legal fixity and certainty

under the common law; a legal system that upholds the universal sovereignty of the state and prioritizes individual private property rights over all other forms of land tenure and socio-spatial organization. Indigenous title, law, jurisdiction, and governance are undermined through financial compensation for land claims that are largely settled in Canadian courts, or TLE frameworks subject to restrictive federal regulations, provincial legislation, municipal bylaws, land use plans, and zoning, as well as high costs associated with participation in urban real estate markets. Urban reserves represent spaces and practices of liminality in the sense that they are located somewhere between settler property and traditional and treaty territory, and somewhere between accommodation and self-determination.

Chapter Five presents findings from interviews and focus groups about neighbourhood revitalization and Indigenous urbanism in Saskatoon. The chapter begins with an overview of Riversdale's history related to its Indigenous presence, representations of indigeneity and the neighbourhood in mainstream public discourse, and its trajectory toward revitalization. Riversdale and other central city neighbourhoods are described as important Indigenous places reflected in relationships of mutual support, reciprocity, and security, as well as sociocultural familiarity. Many 'common' spaces in core neighbourhoods are meaningful for urban residents because they support relational values of care, trust, and responsibility. Community schools and education programs, as well as Indigenous service organizations are emphasized as essential spaces embedding cultural continuity and enhancing people's qualities of life in Saskatoon. Yet, such organizations and common spaces operate with minimal resources and little support from governments, often in deteriorating buildings and with limited capacities to support community members in ways that are needed and desired.

Indigenous common spaces are also described as liminal due to their boundedness in propertied landscapes that are experiencing significant reinvestment and 'creative destruction' of space to regenerate property values. Despite the immeasurable labour of love put into the development of culturally significant common spaces, rising exchange values, property taxes and utility rates, and whitestream political NIMBYism threaten to hinder rather than enhance community resurgence. Neighbourhood revitalization is perceived by participants as an economically exclusionary process with contradictory results: public spaces and private buildings are materially and aesthetically improved, but the economic growth and culture of consumption that revitalization produces are inaccessible, unwanted, and threatening changes for



many residents in their home neighbourhood. Racialized class antagonisms between people with vastly unequal social capital and power have resulted in aggressive surveillance and policing of primarily young Indigenous residents, evictions of tenants by landlords and hard-to-house people from public spaces, and exclusionary private business practices and commodity prices that mark people experiencing poverty and precarity as out of place trespassers.

Landed property – a commodity imbued with ownership rights to exclude – is described as a fundamental mechanism enabling a frontier mentality of resettlement through revitalization in Riversdale. The City of Saskatoon has actively mobilized public and private property for reinvestment through its land use and planning apparatus and development tools such as zoning changes, renovation incentives, tax abatements to property developers, public investment to generate cultural capital, and the restructuring of public space around commercial corridors. Community planning consultations have been implemented by the municipal government, but public input is typically balanced with priorities related to economic growth, amounting to inclusion to the point of input but with no sharing of planning agency nor decision-making authority with Indigenous residents and organizations who are most negatively affected by gentrification. Given that private property interests and speculation are driving forces of neighbourhood revitalization, enabled by the ‘micro-authorities’ of the City of Saskatoon under Saskatchewan’s jurisdiction, it becomes clear that the municipality plays a contradictory roll reproducing a market logic of urbanism while also attempting to mitigate harmful outcomes of market fluctuations, all while promoting reconciliation.

An economy of nourishment is centred in the last section of Chapter Five – a resurgent urbanism concept developed by an interview participant – as a common ambition to connect Indigenous residents to a quality of life that is deeply meaningful. Relationships are integral to nourishment, as are other core values that are incommensurable with the individualistic, inequitable, and exploitative structure of colonial-capitalist urban property relations. To frame Indigenous urbanism through the concept of nourishment opens transformative possibilities for the reorganization and regeneration of urban space. This dissertation concludes with an argument for the strategic and planned expansion of urban Indigenous common land, or an urban ‘Indigenous commons’ that supports cultural resurgence, community nourishment, and a material basis from which Indigenous urbanism can flourish in prairie cities.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Indigenous Urbanism and the Production of Settler Cities**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides both a conceptual literature review and theoretical framework that weaves through historic and geographic contexts in which Indigenous people experience, contribute to, and transform urban life in prairie cities. The research and findings of this dissertation both centre and elevate urban Indigenous people's lived experiences, their perceptions of valued urban spaces, neighbourhood change, urban land use, social relations with settler society, and their future-seeking aspirations in a medium sized prairie city – Saskatoon – as well as perspectives of those who have contributed to the development of First Nations urban reserves across Saskatchewan. In so doing, this project aims to unsettle normative conceptions of mainstream urbanism that uphold liberal individualism, landed property ownership, private enterprise, and the extractive accumulation of capital as determinants of power and privilege over the production of urban space. To better understand the context in which Indigenous urbanism is practiced, and which resurgent forms of urbanism seek to transform, it is crucial to examine how dominant configurations of urbanism and the institutions that regulate the production of urban space – including land use, planning, and legal property regimes in prairie cities – materialize and reproduce settler colonial power 'on the ground' and in the built environment (Blomley, 2017a; Dorries et al., 2019; Porter, 2010, Tomiak, 2011).

The objectives of this chapter are to critically examine historic to recent social, economic, political, and altogether spatial structures contributing to state, capital, and settler licence over Indigenous land and territory; the strategies through which harmfully asymmetrical Indigenous-settler relations are (re)produced in rural and urban places; and to give serious consideration to literature and praxes of Indigenous refusal (of colonial-capitalist-imperialist power, coercion, and injustice), resurgence (of Indigenous ways of being and relating in the world), and transformative Indigenous urbanism (the material remaking of cities with respect to self-determination, treaties, and relational responsibilities). I establish a historic-geographic context of urbanization in Canada – across prairie regions in particular – through which the

materialization, growth, decline, and redevelopment of cities are essential functions enforcing a local to national colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order. Prairie cities, Tomiak et al. (2019, p. 4) argue, “do not exist outside of the tangled interactivity of settler colonial processes but are actively shaped by it.” This review bridges multiple scales and geographies of Indigenous-state relations through which urban space is (re)produced in prairie cities. It culminates with an argument that Indigenous urbanism emerges from a continuum of ‘invited’ to ‘invented’ spatial practices (Miraftab, 2009; Shrestha & Aranya, 2015), reflecting the liminality of Indigenous space amid continuously colonizing and dispossessively propertied cityscapes. This analysis concludes with an argument for the expansion of an urban Indigenous commons, or collectively stewarded and creatively reclaimed land and space in support of community resurgence; a concept which has significant implications for mainstream urban studies, urban planning, and urban governance, all of which systematically diminish the transformative potential of Indigenous urbanism to enrich the quality of life and place in prairie cities.

## **2.2 Geographies of Sovereignty and Self-Determination**

Settler colonialism represents Canada’s and settler society’s fundamental and ongoing thrust for territorial consolidation and the violent, persistent ‘structure of elimination’ that is endured and resisted by Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonialism is a specific form of imperialism that signifies the permanent occupation of land, and settler colonial geographies therefore refer to systems of spatial production and social organization that seek to supplant Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. Both sovereignty and self-determination are loaded with different meanings of which there are no clear cut, universally accepted definitions. Indigenous sovereignty is typically framed in legal discourse as First Nations’ constitutional and international rights to self-government (i.e., political authority to make laws over the use of a territory, including its citizens) and land title (i.e., ownership and tenure). However, Indigenous sovereignty, which is itself an insufficient concept to describe Indigenous peoples’ territorial imaginaries and socio-spatial practices, is limited in its legal framings (Morton-Robinson, 2015).

Joanne Barker (2005, p. 21) explains that sovereignty is “historically contingent” in that it “is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning”.

Summarizing arguments made by contemporary Indigenous scholars and activists, Barker (2005, p. 3) suggests that “sovereignty emanates from the unique identity and culture of peoples and is therefore an inherent and inalienable right of peoples to the qualities customarily associated with nations.” As Pasternak (2017) explains of the Algonquians of Barriere Lake in what is now Quebec, sovereign Indigenous nationhood arises from land-based governance through legal orders of relational responsibility, or ‘ontologies of care.’ Self-determination refers to the embodiment of sovereignty in the actions of individuals and collectives. For Indigenous peoples living in and under Canada, self-determination generally represents the pursuit of a good life through individual agency, self-actualization, and collective autonomy exercising cultural knowledge acquired through generations of land-based ethics of responsibility and care (Alfred, 1999; Corntassel, 2008; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 1999; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Indigenous individuals’ and communities’ abilities to affect good relations and qualities of life requires dismantling, in all its contemporary forms, the settler colonial ‘structure of elimination’ that continues to guide mainstream governmentality and socio-spatial organization in Canada. James Tully (2000) suggests that Indigenous resistance against settler colonial power can be summarized as struggles *for* freedom, which are enacted on local to global scales as Indigenous societies across the world struggle for independence from governments comprising an international order of imperialist nation-states, and struggles *of* freedom, or strategic maneuvering within the confines of the nation-state to secure improved life conditions. These are not clearly separable positions. Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination are simultaneously struggles for *and of* freedom replete with contradictions and possibilities (A. Simpson, 2014).

The enhancement of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in Canada has been theorized through the reconstitution of settler states and societies around postcolonial constitutional orders (Henderson, 2000; Maaka & Fleras, 2005; 2008) toward the fulfilment of treaty federalism and treaty governance in Canada (Borrows, 2002; Henderson, 2008), political autonomy through Indigenous self-government (see Belanger, 2008; Little Bear et al., 1984), the co-management of land and natural resources (Howitt, 2001; Lane & Hibbard, 2005), and at urban scales through the co-production or indigenization of local planning and policy making (Fawcett et al., 2015; Walker, 2008b; Walker & Belanger, 2013) and increased support, space,

and decision-making power among urban Indigenous community organizations (Andersen & Denis, 2011; Walker, 2008c; Newhouse, 2003).

However, some authors suggest that Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are incommensurable with Canada's colonial-capitalist political economy and its territorialization of land as property, regulated through authorities of jurisdiction (Brown, 2014; Corntassel, 2008; Coulthard, 2008). This section positions sovereignty and self-determination at multiple scales – from nationhood to the embodied self – and emphasizes the resurgence of Indigenous ways of being that both refuse and seek to transcend state-centric and colonial-capitalist political, economic, and socio-spatial systems and practices (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Corntassel, 2008; 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Coulthard, 2008; 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; L. Simpson, 2008; 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012). To grasp the complexity of Indigenous strategies to enhance sovereignty and self-determination in what is now Saskatchewan – and its cities – demands that such struggles be situated alongside historic and spatial assemblages of settler colonialism, capitalist relations, and state-determining authority.

### ***2.2.1 State Territoriality and the Misappropriation of Treaties***

Predating Canadian confederation in 1867, Britain's *Royal Proclamation* of 1763 bestowed upon itself – under authority of the crown – the sole legal right and obligation to negotiate Treaties with Indigenous nations for peaceful relations and the purchase of land (Borrows, 2002). To expand Canadian territory westward across the prairies following confederation, the numbered treaties (1-11) provided a conciliatory legal foundation through which European settlement was facilitated (Henderson, 2008). First Nations uphold treaties as sacred and timeless covenants incorporating vastly different mutual rights and responsibilities than their written versions suggest:

Elders and leaders in some circles speak of treaties in sacred terms. They are regarded as blessed by the Creator. They are seen as the product of and are viewed with profound reverence. Law is 'spiritualized' in this account; it is more than the product of human action. This vision is particularly prominent in the prairies and among the numbered treaty nations (Borrows, 2017, p. 22).

To First Nations, the numbered treaties embody a continuity of sovereign Indigenous nationhood<sup>3</sup>, the existence and practice of which do not rely on Canadian constitutional recognition.

According to Chickasaw and Cheyenne legal scholar and human rights lawyer Sakej Henderson (2008), treaties affirm the equal but distinct authorities of Indigenous nations and the crown (now Canada) in international and Indigenous law, and should form the basis for shared treaty governance that is respectful of “the inherent sovereignty of the tribes of the confederated nations, their system of law and rights, their right to choose their destiny and relationships, and their way of life...” (p. 21). Treaty governance is therefore vested in the *sui generis* nature of Indigenous nationhood, meaning that it existed before European contact and continues to exist independently of Canada (Henderson, 2008). Treaty rights are formally but narrowly recognized in Section 35 of Canada’s *Constitution Act*, 1982. In effect, it is up to Canada’s judiciary to fill in the ‘empty box’ of Section 35 with legal precedents that recognize specific rights and responsibilities. This narrow recognition is inherently inadequate as the courts’ interpretations of Treaty and inherent rights rarely coincide with those of Indigenous nations. As an example, Canada’s written version of Treaty 6 states that “all Indians...do hereby cede, release, surrender, and yield up to the government forever, all their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to the lands included” and “also their rights, titles and privileges whatsoever to all other lands wherever situated in the Northwest Territories, or in any other Province or portion of Her Majesty’s Dominions, situated and being within the Dominion of Canada” (Duhamel, 1964).

Tully (2000, p. 44) highlights the absurdity of the Canadian West’s foundational myth that First Nations willingly and knowingly agreed to such oppressive terms:

Incredibly, the officials asserted that scrawled Xs...on written documents constituted agreements to cede and extinguish forever whatever rights they might have to tracts of land larger than the European continent. The signatories were said to agree to this in exchange for tiny and crowded reserves (which were soon reduced further) and a few usufructuary rights that exist at the pleasure of the Crown.

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<sup>3</sup> Indigenous conceptions of ‘nationhood’ do not fit neatly within political theory emanating from European intellectual traditions. I use ‘nationhood’ loosely to encapsulate the linguistic, cultural, spiritual, kinship, and territorial bonds that connect Indigenous peoples to place in complex political societies predating and continuing after Canadian confederation, including the Métis. For a Treaty 6 Cree perspective, see Sylvia McAdam’s (2015) *Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems*.

First Nations' verbal agreements with crown negotiators differed substantially from their documented versions, which renders state jurisdiction over 'ceded' land contested by Indigenous nations (Johnson, 2007; Miller, 2009; Tully, 2000; Henderson, 2008). For example, historians and Indigenous knowledge keepers of oral histories maintain that Commissioner Alexander Morris did not mention any such surrender clause during negotiations for Treaties 3, 4, 5 and 6 (Krasowski, 2019). The point here is that the Canadian state and settler society have regarded treaties as agreements of submission whose limited, written interpretations afford Indigenous people and nations minimal access to and authority over their territorial lands and resources.

Treaty governance through mutually respected sovereignties – or shared territorial authority – is an agreed upon responsibility among the numbered treaties; an obligation that has never been upheld or implemented by the Canadian state. In 1876, the same year that Treaty 6 was signed, Canada's parliament passed the *Indian Act* to administer its fiduciary relationship with First Nations. The *Indian Act* quickly became a paternalistic mechanism used to submit Indigenous peoples and their territories to Canada's Indian Affairs bureaucracy and state jurisdiction. The Canadian state has imposed its will onto First Nations through the *Indian Act* and Indian Affairs policy by restricting free movement and traditional economic activities outside of reserves, denying agricultural technologies and economic self-sufficiency, implementing a colonial band council system of elected government, regulating and removing band membership and Indian status (most egregiously against women and children), illegally expropriating reserve land promised in treaties, restricting First Nations' ability to sell agricultural products, and prohibiting First Nations from raising funds or hiring lawyers to pursue land claims in court from 1927 to 1951. These strategies empowered Canada's and the provinces' inscription of 'crown land' and private property over supposedly 'unsettled' territory (Prout & Howitt, 2009), and these grievances permeate First Nations' pursuits of contemporary land claims against the state.

Canada's establishment of First Nation reserves under the authority of its Indian Affairs bureaucracy and the legal framework of the *Indian Act* was meant to physically isolate Indigenous tribal groups; to subvert and sever their connections to land, territory, place, cultural identity, and widespread kin to embed settler orders of property under the common law, and socio-cultural (white) supremacy across Indigenous territories (Harris, 2002). Although reserved

land was promised to First Nations among the numbered treaties for inhabitation and agriculture, they became, as Howard Adams' (1989) book describes, "prisons of grass." Adams explains how the deliberate destruction of bison leading up to the 1870s – the primary source of food, life, and sovereign spatial practices of First Nations and the Métis across the prairies – was aided by the Northwest Mounted Police (now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police), inducing widespread starvation, coerced relocation, dependency on spasmodic government support, and menial, transient, and sometimes indentured labour for white settler landowners (Laliberte & Satzewich, 2008).

Isolation on reserves was reinforced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) through an unofficial Pass System that empowered Indian Agents with indiscriminate authority to restrict people's mobility outside of reserves. Invoking Marx in the context of British Columbia, Harris (2004) argues that the crown's implementation of the colonial reserve system ensured that:

native lives...were being detached from their own means of production (from the land and the use value of their own labour on it) and were being transformed into free (unencumbered) wage labourers dependent on the social relations of capital. The social means of production and of subsistence were being converted into capital. Capital was benefiting doubly, acquiring access to land freed by small reserves and to cheap labour detached from land (p. 172).

To convert Indigenous territory into 'settled' space, technologies of surveying, mapping, and the cadastral grid functioned to carve up and overlay the landscape with legal orders of "real property," or property *in* land, which were, and continue to be, secured under threat and deployment of state violence (Blomley, 2003).

One of the fundamental contradictions of Canada as a settler colonial nation-state is the unresolved antagonism between crown sovereignty – enacted and legally enforced through radical underlying title over all land within its national borders – and the continued existence of Indigenous peoples and nations, their territorial laws and relations, their distinctive forms of governance, land tenure, and spatial practices, and their inherent, constitutional, and international rights to self-determination (Tully, 2000). The legitimacy of Canada's governing authority has always been contested by Indigenous peoples. Michael Asch (2014, p. 32) explains that the Canadian state's political and legal responses to Indigenous resistance are rooted in the



illegitimate assertion that “Aboriginal rights, whatever their content, are subordinate to the sovereignty of Canada.” To that end he asks, how did Canada attain its sovereignty, and what gives settler society the right to stay if there is no clear or just answer to that question?

Although treaties provide a lawful foundation for crown sovereignty to coexist with Indigenous sovereignty, Canada has historically relied on British common law and international (imperial) law to claim absolute authority within its territorial borders (Borrows, 2002). While the federal government claims absolute sovereignty and radical underlying title over all land within its territorial borders, the sovereign coexistence negotiated in treaties has been further skewed against First Nations with the expansion of provincial powers, particularly since the 1930 *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA)* (Borrows, 2017). Borrows (2017) explains that the decentralization of crown authority from the federal government to the provinces has eroded First Nations’ territoriality and self-determination. For example, Section 88 of the *Indian Act* “drastically constrains jurisdictional areas over which Indigenous peoples should have had sovereign authority,” which “makes First Nations largely subject to provincial legislation and regulates them without their consent” (Borrows, 2017, p. 25).

### ***2.2.2 Settler Colonial Boundaries and the Authority of Jurisdiction***

If sovereignty represents the authority to govern and establish laws within a territory, then jurisdiction embodies “the authority to have authority,” or legitimate power to uphold the law (Pasternak, 2017). Canadian state sovereignty does not, on its own, account for Indigenous dispossession; rather, it is through everyday practices of jurisdiction on the ground – or the material, spatial, and social relations between laws – that Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty, and self-determination have been undermined (Dorsett & McVeigh, 2012; Pasternak, 2014). Pasternak (2017, p. 3) argues that “jurisdiction is not a technicality of sovereignty... It is the apparatus through which sovereignty is rendered meaningful, because it is through jurisdiction that settler sovereignty organizes and manages authority.” Settler-state jurisdictions categorize laws and delegate authority for specific purposes such as to enact and manage policy, to tax people and property, to regulate commodity routes and circuits of capital, to police communities, and to enforce property rights and regulations pertaining to ownership, control, use, or transfer; ultimately, to standardize social, economic, political, and altogether *spatial* relations across Canada.

In most of Canada (excluding Quebec), property rights are secured by the rule of the common law, enforced under the state's monopoly on legitimate violence, which serves to regulate "relations among people by distributing powers to control valued resources" (Singer, 2000, p. 3, as quoted in Blomley, 2003, p. 121). 'Legitimate' jurisdictional authority systematically privileges crown title and liberal property rights over the territorial laws and relational responsibilities of Indigenous nations (Pasternak, 2017). Settler jurisdictions rely on what Blomley (2015) calls "legal bracketing" to emplace fixed boundaries around meanings and relations of property; in other words, to facilitate certainty, or normalized expectations of movement, interaction, and exchange "that secure social and political order conducive to state aims" (Schmidt, 2018, p. 13). Bracketing codifies spatial boundaries which, in the case of Indigenous jurisdiction, are conditionally "translated" into the state's legal language of property (Patton, 2000).

Canada's limited recognition of First Nations' territory through legal bracketing and translation is evident in its negotiation of comprehensive land claims with First Nations in regions with no prior treaties. In 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada's *Calder* decision first recognized, in constitutional law, the existence of unextinguished "Aboriginal title" over "unceded" land in traditional Nisga'a territory, which, as Egan and Place (2013, p. 135) suggest, problematically embodies "fuzzy borders" and a "collective nature" in the eyes of state practitioners. Translation and bracketing were then exemplified in *Delgamuukw*, as the Supreme Court adjudicated on whether Gitskan and Wet'su'wet'en nations have "Aboriginal title" and "self-government" rights within British Columbia despite those nations' initial arguments for sovereign "jurisdiction" and collective "ownership" of their territory (Pasternak, 2017, p. 17). In response to this push for legal clarity through state-derived concepts, British Columbia and Canada have jointly pursued a comprehensive land claims policy to negotiate modern treaties affixing "Aboriginal title" to delegated self-government rights over limited tracts of traditional territories through fee simple property ownership (Blomley, 2015; Egan & Place, 2013).

Blomley (2015, p. 171) explains that the Court's interpretation of Aboriginal title absent of treaties "is not, it should be made clear, a recognition of autonomous Indigenous property, akin to that of the Crown," because the judicial "assumption of Crown sovereignty means that this has been modified into a form of domestic title" in order to clarify the murky terrain of "use and possession" rights that might otherwise cause jurisdictional conflicts over land use and

occupancy. In regions covered by the numbered treaties, First Nations' jurisdiction is severely curtailed by legal parameters that have historically circumscribed First Nations' governance as *Indian Act* self-administration over reserve lands and resources (Adams, 1989; McAdam, 2015; Thobani, 2007). Not only is this due to the systematic denial of treaty rights and responsibilities by the Canadian state and the subsequent complacency of a dominant white settler society that enjoys privileges and wealth accumulated from Indigenous land, but also to the narrow and self-serving legal language of English-written treaty documents.

Crown title and Canadian sovereignty are enacted through practices of delegated jurisdiction (Macklem, 2001), which in all prairie provinces have overwhelmingly prioritized the extractive potential of land as property over collective Indigenous interests and distinctive forms of land use and occupancy. Local state jurisdictions regulate and reproduce liberal property rights and relations that embolden settler landowners to assert power and privilege in their interactions with Indigenous communities 'on the ground' (Pasternak, 2014). But, in Canada, jurisdictional overlap and conflict are the norm, not the exception. Multiple overlapping jurisdictions can exist simultaneously at varied scales with an assortment of contradictory purposes and powers (Pasternak, 2017; Valverde, 2009). As Ford (2012, p. 2) argues, "settler state making is still a work in progress. The exercise of settler jurisdiction over Indigenous people remains patchy, and evolving definitions of Indigenous governance and Indigenous land rights by settler courts constantly redefine the relationship among sovereignty, territory and jurisdiction." Indigenous assertions of territorial jurisdiction have persistently challenged, perforated, and sometimes reappropriated settler-state jurisdiction (Pasternak, 2017). Due in large part to Indigenous resistance against incursions of the state and settler jurisdiction, Canada's bureaucratic territory comprises a patchwork of graded entitlements that are not settled nor geographically tidy (Pasternak & Dafnos, 2017).

### ***2.2.3 Land Claims Settlements and the Liminality of First Nations' Urban Reserves***

Though Canada has long exerted its coercive power over reserves and the lives of Indigenous people who reside therein, First Nations have also anchored their resistance to reserve land as nominally 'protected' vestiges of their traditional territories. This was clearly demonstrated following the introduction of the 1969 White Paper proposal by the Minister of Indian Affairs at

the time, Jean Chretien. The White Paper sought to dismantle the *Indian Act*, the reserve system, and all existing treaties to assimilate First Nations into the Canadian polity and dissolve the contradiction that Indigenous nationhood has always posed to Canada's sovereign territory. Indigenous peoples protested vehemently against the White Paper, arguing that treaties affirm their pre-existing sovereign nationhood, while the *Indian Act* and the reserve system offer the only legally recognized protection of their political rights and distinctive claims to land, territory, and nationhood under Canada (Cardinal, 1969).

Canada has neglected its treaty promises, and the crown's shortfall and subsequent theft of reserve land has been consistently challenged by First Nations who began appealing to Ottawa for reparations in the first half of the 20th century (Hubbard & Poitras, 2014). Through legal land claims and modern additions to reserves, First Nations have endeavored to expand not only their legally recognized land base, but also their agency over on-reserve governance. The distinctiveness of First Nations' claims against the Canadian state and colonial power arises from two political logics: first, as restitution for the ongoing legacy of settler accumulation by Indigenous dispossession. As Ivison et al. (2000, p. 10) argue, "Indigenous claims are not just for rights to any fair share of...Canadian resources, but to a particularised share (Simmons, 1995, p. 174); one that must be understood against the background of the denial of their equal sovereign status, the dispossession of their lands and the [attempted] destruction of their cultural practices."<sup>4</sup> Secondly, land claims affirm cultural values that govern relations with the land and with human and non-human kind while rejecting the dispossession of land and territory, which informs their strategies for political organization that are, in fundamental ways, irreconcilable with state-determining sovereignty premised on liberal democratic ideology upholding a colonial-capitalist political economy (Pasternak, 2017).

First Nations and their reserve land must also be recognized as contested political and geographical categories, created by the Canadian state, that represent fragmented forms of Indigenous nationhood, governance, and territory. Under the *Indian Act*, the organizing structure of First Nations' administration varies between pseudo-traditional and colonial systems, but in Saskatchewan many First Nations are administrated by band councils who are chosen through elections overseen by Canada's Indian Affairs bureaucracy; an apparatus that does not embody

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<sup>4</sup> Parentheses added by author.

governance structures, practices, and territoriality indicative of Indigenous nationhood (McAdam, 2015; Thobani, 2007). Rather than flowing from the spirit and intent of treaties, First Nation band councils enact a form of statutory authority delegated by Canada under the *Indian Act* (Macklem, 2001, p. 199). Due to the historic and ongoing coercive authority of the Canadian state, the internal politics of First Nations are complicated sites of struggle in which grassroots or hereditary leaders, including traditionally recognized matriarchs, may perceive elected Chiefs and Councillors as mere administrators of the *Indian Act*, or self-interested politicians who reinforce colonization through their willing engagement with the state on its terms (Alfred, 2009; Coulthard, 2007; McAdam, 2015). For generations only men could run for band council elections under the *Indian Act*, which, along with Canada's gendered discrimination and strategic erasure of women's status, institutionalized an expectation that "resources available to communities would be channeled largely through men" (Thobani, 2007, p. 49).

The point here is not to discredit any strategic decisions of First Nation band councils, but rather to highlight that the strategies enacted by those in elected or administrative positions of authority may not represent or reflect the views of grassroots community members. Canada's tendency to privilege a 'comprador class' of Indigenous elites (Coulthard, 2007), and to elevate First Nations who seek political and economic collaboration more so than resistance or refusal, has important implications for how land claims, urban reserve creation, treaties, legislation and policies, and reconciliation are bounded by the Canadian state and settler society. Responding to First Nations' resistance, and in part to mitigate potential costs of court challenges over land claims, the federal government of Canada has developed a range of legislative and policy options that enable First Nations to create economic development projects that generate own source revenue through corporate partnerships, free market participation, and ultimately the mobilization of reserve land for productive, value-seeking uses (Pasternak, 2015; Tomiak, 2017).

Urban reserves are spaces produced by and productive of this shifting political economy among First Nations. Urban reserves are one strategy through which First Nations are reclaiming territory, culminating from long trajectories of resistance against settler colonial assertions of jurisdiction. Land claims negotiations and urban reserve creation might therefore be conceived as platforms of cautious cooperation over conflicts of jurisdiction. Typically, First Nations use funds from specific land claim settlements or, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, a Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement (TLEFA) to purchase urban parcels. Land claims

settlements, financial compensation, and Canada's Additions to Reserve (ATR) policy reconfigure settler space to include more First Nations' legally distinctive land holdings, but they are also embedded in socio-spatial orders dominated by a liberal ontology of property (Schmidt, 2018; Tomiak, 2017). Blomley (2016, p. 595) urges us to consider how property "produces territory, polices its borders, frames its identities, and organizes its inhabitants. Such territorializations, in turn, serve to materialize property in the socio-spatial world, while also obscuring many of its powerful relational effects." Urban reserves help to recast cities as Indigenous places, but they also fold First Nations' jurisdiction into settler and state geographies of property.

Most new urban reserves are land parcels initially purchased in a city's real estate market on a willing buyer from willing seller basis. The parcel then undergoes an application process submitted through a band resolution to transfer the 'fee simple' land holding to reserve status in accordance with the federal government's ATR policy. Once approved, the parcel is then designated reserve status by the Minister of Indian Affairs, or what is now called the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), as "a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a Band" (*Indian Act*, 1985). An urban reserve is therefore an extension of a First Nation's legally recognized jurisdiction (without underlying title), held in trust by the crown within Canada's sovereign territory. They are typically harnessed by First Nations for administrative, service, and economic development purposes, and they are commonly celebrated by municipal, provincial, and federal governments as evidence of their willingness to facilitate partnerships and 'reconciliation' with First Nations. Urban reserves are also expected to merge with municipal zoning, bylaws, and existing land use plans regulated by Saskatchewan's *Planning and Development Act*, 2007.

Urban reserve creation is now an important facet of municipal-Indigenous relations in Saskatchewan, which contains over 50 urban reserves – nearly half of all urban reserves in Canada – and Saskatoon is often cited for its best practices. Academic interpretations of new urban reserves are somewhat sparse, but their growing influence on Canada's urban landscape has recently drawn the attention of researchers from several disciplinary backgrounds (for examples, see Barron & Garcea, 1999; Belanger, 2018; Bezamat-Mantes, 2018; Flanagan et al., 2011; Loxley & Wien, 2003; Tomiak, 2017; Walker, 2013; Walker & Belanger, 2013). Barron

and Garcea (1999) developed a broad and foundational analysis of Urban Indian Reserves and their effects on Forging New Relationships in Saskatchewan. Their edited volume combines academic research with experiential perspectives of individuals who have been instrumental in the creation of their own communities' urban reserves in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and Yorkton. Except for Michael Gertler's chapter, which cautions against wholesale market economy participation at the expense of Indigenous community wellbeing, the book is largely an appreciative examination of intergovernmental relationship-building and a descriptive outline of the history and legal-institutional architecture contouring urban reserve creation in Saskatchewan.

Other analyses of urban reserves suggest that co-produced land use planning between municipalities and First Nations, and emergent forms of urban Indigenous placemaking should help to combat localized racism while also increasing the depth of shared civic identity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous urban inhabitants (Garcea, 2008; Walker, 2013; Walker & Belanger, 2013). The economic development potential of urban reserves has also been emphasized in academic research highlighting benefits for band members such as increased wage-employment, job training, and entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as the revenue-generating capacity of urban land if it is acquired and 'improved' via rational market strategies (Flanagan et al., 2011; Loxley & Wien, 2002). Beyond academic literature, many reports have been commissioned by governments and non-governmental organizations to investigate the benefits and best practices of new urban reserves (Flanagan & Harding, 2017; Hubbard & Poitras, 2014; Peters, 2007; Western Economic Diversification Canada, 2005).

These works offer insights into maximizing the uses and benefits of urban reserves through improved political economic relations and increased market integration at local scales. In so doing, they presume that Canada's state-determining authority will endure indefinitely, or that jurisdictional conflicts are nominally settled. This body of literature also does little to interrogate the contradictions inherent in a capitalist national economy structured upon the necessity for perpetual growth while a rapidly warming climate is predicted to magnify the frequency and compounded disastrous impacts of ecological, political, humanitarian, and economic crises in the imminent future (arguably, already in the present) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018). The scope of these studies is largely confined, therefore, to improving the policy paradigm of urban reserve creation without necessarily acknowledging nor

challenging the Canadian state's colonial-capitalist entanglements and structural barriers to First Nations' sovereignty and self-determination.

Julie Tomiak's (2017) work is vital to this conversation because it explicitly locates new urban reserves within an historically contested and unsettled context of settler colonialism, which has increasingly relied on neoliberal governance to secure circuits of capital under the state's regulatory authority (Pasternak & Dafnos, 2017). Tomiak urges us to consider: "what does it mean that cities in what is now Canada are Indigenous places and premised on the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples? How are the relationships that are governed in and through urban space decolonized and recolonized? What roles do new urban reserves play in subverting or reinforcing the colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order?" (2017, p. 2). The root of Tomiak's argument is that urban reserve creation "has not fundamentally disrupted state power and discourses that have constructed Indigeneity as incompatible with urbanism and modernity" (p. 3). In other words, urban reserves are contradictory spaces: they are products of land claim victories and First Nations' collective rejection of dispossession, but they are also spaces of limited, delegated jurisdiction covering a small portion of prairie cities; they are being developed by First Nations to generate economic self-sufficiency and self-determining autonomy, yet they are anchored to Canada's neoliberal logic of property, productivity, and accumulation (Tomiak, 2017).

Urban reserves might therefore be conceived as spaces that, despite being semi-autonomous Indigenous land in prairie cities, are subject to rigid boundaries that constrain their uses (Tomiak, 2017). The process of urban reserve creation reflects what Porter and Barry (2015) describe as a "bounded recognition" of Indigenous self-determination, which shares similarities with Patton's (2000) analysis of "legal translation" and Blomley's (2015) conception of "legal bracketing", all of which subject Indigenous territory to spatial categories and regulations amenable to settler and state property. It is due to the coercive authority of state jurisdiction and Canada's politics of recognition that urban reserve creation and First Nations' development strategies appear contradictory. While Tomiak positions First Nations' strategies for urban land acquisitions and reserve creation in relation to Canada's settler colonial machinery and capitalist mode of production, they also suggest that First Nations' expansion of reserve land and economic self-sufficiency will enhance their capacities to "undermine or transcend the spatialities and modalities of settler colonial rule" (2017, p. 8). Tomiak connects urban reserve



creation to a broader contemporary movement of Indigenous resurgence, “a fundamental aspect” of which is “(re)connecting to and reclaiming Indigenous lands and waters” (2017, p. 3). The complexity, contradictions, and reterritorialization of urban reserves might therefore be conceptualized as spaces of *liminality* (Howitt, 2001).

Liminality represents the porous ‘edges’ of geographical spaces wherein interaction, interrelations and co-production, more so than separation, takes (and makes) place. Liminal spaces are produced by actions and interactions that create new meanings. They are zones, as Howitt (2001) describes, of “transformation, transgression, and possibility” (p. 240) through which coexistence is shaped in large part through Indigenous peoples’ distinctive socio-spatial practices. In human geography literature, as March (2021, p. 457) writes, liminality has been developed

as a kind of in-between where life as usual is suspended, or a socio-spatial rift where new kinds of collective politics and forms of citizenship are produced; new hybridities, meanings and ways of being emerge; and gaps in existing frameworks allow for both subversions and abuses of power.

In the context of Australia, where Indigenous political relations with the state and white settler society share similarities with those in Canada, Howitt (2001, p. 241) describes liminality as the transformation of geographical through Indigenous peoples’ active participation in resource development projects:

...they are not simply creating space for development to proceed or emptying landscapes of their value. Indeed, that is unthinkable in most Aboriginal people’s terms. Rather, they are confirming coexistence and reasserting the imperative (and inescapability) of co-constructing new geographies. They are implicating all of us in the creation of new liminal spaces (edges) in which we are all embedded.

Cities continue to be (re)produced via deeply asymmetrical ‘frontier relations’ favouring settler geographies of property that inscribe many boundaries over Indigenous territory, but First Nations are operating within this fabric, creating new ‘edge’ spaces to enhance their urban influence and strengthen their decision-making autonomy and authority. First Nations’ urban reserve creation is linked to political and economic strategies to co-construct a more equitable coexistence by practicing indigeneity in all relations with settler society, but they also incorporate a temporal dimension of *transition* through which urban reserves contribute to the

density of indigeneity in Saskatchewan cities (Andersen, 2013a) and to the longer-term empowerment of First Nations' legally recognized jurisdiction across Saskatchewan.

The creation and uses of urban reserves are bounded by the Canadian state's legislative and bureaucratic apparatus but are also negotiated between municipal governments and First Nations. These government-to-government transactions have facilitated emergent political-economic relations and unique spaces of overlapping jurisdictions. Yet, it is vital to also consider how cities take shape; they are geographies wherein neoliberal restructuring is magnified, and colonial-capitalist relations are reproduced in densely propertied, socially complex, and frequently reorganized spaces (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2009). To appropriately contextualize urban reserves therefore requires that they be situated within local property relations organized and regulated under specific jurisdictional authorities and mechanisms, with attention paid to the ways that settler state governance and colonial-capitalist geographies influence, and are reshaped by, First Nations' political and economic strategies (Tomiak, 2017).

#### ***2.2.4 Indigenous Resurgence and the Liberal Politics of Recognition***

Onondaga scholar David Newhouse (2000) describes capitalism as an adaptive and unremitting "Borg" that will inevitably absorb Indigenous societies into its totality. Writing in the context of Australia, Austin-Broos (2009) argues that contemporary Indigenous societies have undoubtedly become enmeshed with capitalism. Practicing self-determination is therefore inseparable from people's abilities to achieve viable livelihoods within this dominant mode of production. Newhouse (2000) describes this mentality as such: "What we can do is mediate the worst effects of capitalism *through* the continued use of our values and the transformation of these values into institutional actions. The world that we used to live in no longer exists" (p. 154). Many Indigenous authors have attempted to unsettle this narrative, arguing that a politicized resurgence of Indigenous cultural practices, territorial law, and land- and relationship-centred ethics must directly confront the colonizing power of state, capital, and settler institutions rather than align with and attempt to benefit from this structure (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Coulthard, 2008; 2014; Daigle, 2016; Wolfe, 2006; A. Simpson, 2014; L. Simpson, 2017). To Coulthard (2008), settler colonialism maintains its spatial dominance through the ceaseless "primitive accumulation" of land and capital, which

relies on the continuous alienation of Indigenous territory and governing authority by a variety of state and non-state actors in search of new commodities and markets.

Mohawk theorist Taiaiake Alfred (2009) contends that a resurgence of Indigenous orders of law, governance and economic organization that ground people's livelihoods in their territories is essential for self-determining people and nations. Such a reorganization entails a rejection of colonial-capitalist ideologies that are synonymous with centralized Canadian state governance and private accumulation through landed property. To Alfred, self-determination begins with an individual's freedom to choose their own interests, affiliations, and destiny, while collective self-determination is possible through the inheritance and practice of cultural knowledge and values, creating a principled backdrop for group dialogue and decision-making. To Alfred, society is inseparable from land, which is inseparable from governance, and all depend mutually on healthy, reciprocal relations. Dependency on a detached central government and its pecuniary resources (extracted from Indigenous land) for survival therefore erodes the self-determination of Indigenous nations (Alfred, 2009). Corntassel and Bryce (2012, p. 153) agree, arguing that "Indigenous self-determination can be rearticulated as part of a sustainable, community-based process rather than solely as narrowly constructed political or legal entitlements."

In a more intersectional and ethnographic approach, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) articulates a Nishinaabeg understanding of precolonial Indigenous society near what is now Peterborough, Ontario. She explains that every person embodied an inalienable degree of self-determination to "figure out their gifts and their responsibilities through ceremony and reflection and self-actualization, and that process was really the most important governing process on an individual level..." (2017, p. 4). Self-actualization was fulfilled through intimate relationships with the land and all human and non-human life that are reciprocally affected by patterns of hunting, fishing, gathering, and harvesting, while systems of governance arose from such practices and the cyclical, interconnected needs of all lifeforms that share resources in a territory. According to Simpson (2017, p. 3), "our knowledge system, the education system, the economic system, and the political system of the Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg were designed to promote more life." Simpson acknowledges that pre-colonial Nishinaabeg society sounds idyllic, but only because the proliferation of the settler colonial state and its capitalist relations has made it difficult to imagine possibilities beyond contemporary realities.

The difficult challenge of imagining decolonized futures is hindered by generations of lived experience with settler colonial-capitalism (Daigle, 2016). Coulthard (2007) argues that generations of coercion and conditioning under state authority has spawned a class of Indigenous political elites or “subjects of empire” who favour cooperation more so than conflict as the best pathway to material benefits for themselves and their communities. These strategic contradictions among Indigenous struggles for freedom reflect the complex reality that resistance is not simply external to colonial-capitalist systems; rather, it is “shaped to a certain extent by the structures it opposes” (Brown, 2014, p. 8). In other words, “primitive accumulation is contingent...on the forms of resistance it encounters” and “it is equally contingent on the forms and subjects of resistance it produces. And reproduces. These subjectivities, in turn, are managed within liberal and settler-colonial contexts” (Brown, 2014, p. 8). First Nations’ willingness, for example, to participate in the asymmetrical political and economic structures that “reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that Indigenous peoples’ demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 2) must therefore be contextualized alongside the disciplining power of the settler state.

The efforts of Indigenous peoples to liberate themselves from oppression and dispossession in and of Canada have been largely absorbed into a state-sponsored liberal politics of recognition (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017), which does little to accommodate the political separateness, cultural distinctiveness, territorial sovereignty, or self-determining autonomy of Indigenous peoples (Andersen, 2009). Recognition equates to negotiation over piecemeal rights, economic development, the return of some land, monetary settlements, and local self-government (municipalized self-administration or outright surrender of title in exchange for delegated authority) (King & Pasternak, 2018; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; Pasternak et al., 2013). Recognition ultimately and actively reproduces the sovereign authority and socio-spatial ordering power of the nation-state. Borrows and Tully (2018) contend that “recognition can be a Trojan horse-like gift; state action often operates to overpower or deflect Indigenous resurgence” by placing “the state or its imperial networks at the centre of social, political, and economic affairs” (p. 5). Recognition of a limited set of special rights within Canadian law is a strategy deployed by the state to “narrowly frame self-determination” by “diverting energies away from more substantive discussions regarding the reclamation of Indigenous territories, livelihoods,

natural resources, and the regeneration of community languages and culturally based practices” (Corntassel, 2008, p. 107).

As Pasternak et al. (2013) argue, Canadian governments at all levels have actively sought to co-opt or pacify Indigenous struggles for self-determination through a liberal recognition framework that ‘compartmentalizes’ political and legal rights separately from claims to customary law and stewardship over ancestral land and resources (see also Corntassel, 2008). Recognition does not alter the fundamentally dispossessive architecture of colonial governance and settler geographies. Recognition is a strategy to assuage the foundational contradiction between Canada’s state-determining authority predicated on sovereign territoriality and lawful jurisdiction over property, and the continuity of sovereign Indigenous nationhood and territorial law. The numbered treaties affirm Indigenous peoples’ collective rights and valued responsibilities to maintain reciprocal relations with all of Creation, centred on the vitality and responsible sharing of land and resources, and should ideally have provided a covenant of respect for the mutual sovereignties of First Nations and the crown. However, Canada’s long and continuous colonial trajectory of subjugation and coercion through political statecraft, disciplinary violence enforced by police and criminal justice systems, and the legal emplacement of boundaries and enclosures that produce highly inequitable and exclusionary property relations, has dispossessed Indigenous nations of much of their land, territorial connections, and self-determining authority and autonomy. In the contemporary era, Indigenous resistance to settler colonial incursions over First Nations’ land, lives, and law has been carried out both within and in opposition to state institutions such as judicial courts, as well as the legislative and regulatory apparatus which places conditional boundaries around land claims settlements and ATRs.

Conflicts between settler-state and Indigenous jurisdictions, which represent contradictory authorities to speak and practice the law, are mediated largely through legal property regimes embedded with liberal cultural values that produce racialized and unjust socio-spatial relations in local places. The Canadian state maintains a structural compulsion to mobilize land and space for perpetual capital investment, circulation, and accumulation toward market expansion and economic growth, and in so doing overwhelmingly favours private ownership of land as an exchangeable and exclusionary commodity. To mitigate the disruptive threat that Indigenous resistance to settler-state assertions of jurisdiction poses to the extraction of surplus value from land and the efficient circulation of commodities and capital across the country,

Canada has pursued a liberal policy of recognition that aims to pacify Indigenous resistance. The politics of recognition seek to dissolve the land and sovereignty contradiction by folding Indigenous rights and translating Indigenous territory into legal categories amenable to the fixity and certainty of settler-state jurisdiction (Mackey, 2014). Predicated on generations of Indian Affairs control and deliberate conditions of poverty on reserves, many First Nations have negotiated monetary settlements and are harnessing government mechanisms to generate own-source revenue through urban reserves as well as increased participation in the market economy.

And yet, urban reserves are much more complex spaces than simply First Nations-owned property in cities. They are spaces that can support First Nations to generate financial independence and political influence, as well as materially and symbolically embed a distinctly Indigenous presence amid urban propertied landscapes (Tomiak, 2017). Liminality describes not only the interstitial character of First Nations reserves as spaces somewhere between settler property and traditional territory, but it also characterizes land claims settlements and urban reserves as expedient but transitional pathways that are being harnessed by First Nations to advance their long-term struggles for freedom. Furthermore, urban reserves and First Nations' cooperative partnerships with settler governments, enterprises, and communities may potentially shift social, political, and economic relations toward a more respectful understanding of Indigenous people's grievances and self-determined aspirations. But can First Nations' urban reserves meaningfully support or contribute to Indigenous resurgence in cities that are produced through, and productive of, a chronically proliferating colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order dominated by exclusionary property rights and jurisdictional boundaries? How might urban Indigenous residents who regularly face structural violence and systematic exclusion from land, space, and resources be better enabled to live good lives and shape the city as urban Indigenous people?

### **2.3 Indigenous Space and Place in Prairie Cities**

Geographies of urban indigeneity – or spatial practices that affirm the political separateness and cultural distinctiveness (Andersen, 2013b; Maaka & Fleras, 2005) of Indigenous people's social lives in cities – exist within, alongside, and in contrast to propertied urban landscapes. Prairie cities are geographies in and through which articulations of indigeneity are continuously

transformed as Indigenous people and communities adapt to and transform their social and material conditions (Andersen & Denis, 2003; Belanger & Lindstrom, 2016; Dorries et al., 2019; Newhouse & Peters, 2003; Peters & Lafond, 2013). Indigenous people and communities are transforming prairie cities through what Miraftab (2004; 2009) describes as a continuum from ‘invited spaces’ (i.e., permissible, and even supported by neoliberal institutions and whitestream society; seen as adding value or capital to urban places) to ‘invented spaces’ (i.e., material, spatial, and symbolic re-appropriations, resurgence practices, and actions of insurgence or resistance; typically seen as valueless or threatening to settler socio-spatiality).

More radical, transformative practices and aspirations of Indigenous urbanism (circumscribed largely to invented spaces) are habitually resisted and sometimes violently suppressed. Politicized expressions of indigeneity, as well as socio-spatial practices that seek to enhance the relational and material qualities of urban life in prairie cities, are commonly perceived to imperil the efficient and accumulative functioning of settler urbanism. While urban reserves were framed as liminal spaces due to their delegated jurisdiction amid densely propertied landscapes and their utility as long-term, transitional pathways to financial independence, increased political autonomy, and a larger recognized land base, the liminality of urban Indigenous space encompasses both the marginality *and* transformative possibilities of alternative and emancipatory pathways of Indigenous urbanism. As an analytic concept, liminality requires a critical interrogation of political economic processes at localized scales, and the material forces and conditions through which urban space is produced. Furthermore, this analysis must be positioned alongside the multiplicity of constraints, borders, and enclosures through which capitalism and colonization are reproduced, reshaped, and compounded in urban places.

### ***2.3.1 Prairie Capitalism and the Urban Process***

Prairie cities in Canada developed as distribution, industrial, and commercial centres of regional economies (Filion, 2020) through which white settler values became embedded in property relations, civic governance, labour relations, and the built form. Urbanization across Canada has accompanied, and indeed has been enabled by the dispossession and enclosure of Indigenous land and upheaval of Indigenous peoples from their home territories (Edmonds, 2010; Harris, 2004; Coulthard, 2014; Tomiak, 2017). For example, The Métis of Red River in what is now

Winnipeg were denied title over their land after the creation of Manitoba. They were instead offered a scrip system of parcel allotment which extinguished their Aboriginal rights, allowed land speculators to fraudulently purchase scrip from Métis individuals at very low cost, and ultimately displaced families, many of whom relocated to the margins of prairie towns, cities, and crown land such as tracts allotted for road construction (Laliberte, 2013). The scrip system was also implemented across what is now Alberta and Saskatchewan.

First Nations were forcibly enclosed on reserves to allow for the colonization of Indigenous territory and the extraction of wealth from Indigenous land. For a century and a half, Canada's attempted consolidation of territorial sovereignty through jurisdictional authority and private and crown property has relied on the *Indian Act* and what Wolfe (2006) calls 'elimination' or 'replacement' policies: isolation on reserves; dissolution of traditional governance structures; state regulation and gendered erasure of women's Indian status and band membership if, for example, they married a non-status man; criminalization of ceremony; restriction of traditional economies and denial of agricultural technologies; the violent indoctrination of Indigenous children into western knowledge and value systems through Canada's genocidal residential schools; and the systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families during and since the 'Sixties Scoop' (Warnock, 2004). These policies have wrought immense intergenerational harm onto Indigenous peoples in ways that are scarcely understood by non-Indigenous Canadian society and must be understood as instrumental to the expansion and enforcement of state jurisdiction and the proliferation of private property across the prairies.

A continuously colonizing 'frontier' ethos, embedded in the state's and settler society's dominant modes of spatial production, holds powerful weight in both rural settings and prairie cities – where land and space are mobilized as productive forces in highly competitive and exclusionary property markets (Granzow & Dean, 2007; Tomiak, 2017). The materiality and socio-spatial organization of prairie cities has been overwhelmingly produced according to Eurocentric systems of knowledge and authority, assumptions of white cultural supremacy, and a deeply engrained liberal property ontology that mark indigeneity as antithetical to economic and therefore societal progress (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Denis, 1997; Peters, 2005; Wolfe, 2006). Penelope Edmonds (2010) argues that the colonizing underpinning of the Canadian nation-state project has always been informed by British Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution-era ideals



of hierarchical stages of human progress of which manufacturing, commercial, and labour productivity, property ownership, continuous spatial ‘improvements’, and the profitable extraction of the natural environment are highly valued. Such values are commonly upheld by mainstream settler society as ‘good’ in themselves, and their ascendancy is embedded in Canadian governance, law, jurisdiction, and spatial production.

An examination of spatial production must therefore critique the Canadian state’s and settler society’s co-dependent entanglements with capitalism, the power and structural necessities of which continually reify property relations under authorities of legal jurisdiction that dispossess Indigenous peoples of territorial sovereignty and self-determination (Pasternak, 2014; 2016; Tomiak, 2017). Nichols (2018, p. 5) describes dispossession as “a unique historical process, one in which property is generated under conditions that require its divestment and alienation from those who appear, only retrospectively, as its original owners,” referring to “not only the forcible transfer of property but transformation into property, albeit in a manner that is structurally negated for some, i.e., ‘the dispossessed’.” The growth and development of Canadian cities as densely populated and propertied socio-spatial landscapes has relied on, and indeed has contributed centrally to the dispossession of Indigenous territory.

David Harvey (2009) argues that the “urban process” in advanced capitalist societies (including present-day Canada) reproduces a particularly exploitative mode of production (owner-labour relations, legal apparatuses, jurisdictional authority, governance systems, and the investment, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, and consumption of commodities) that requires exclusionary and enforceable enclosures as well as stratified modes of social organization, which are realized and reproduced through increasingly neoliberal property relations. Urban individuals’ range of choices in advanced capitalist societies like Canada (of dwelling, sustenance, social organization, access to resources, and so on) are largely determined, regulated, and constrained by inequitable power relations dominated by exploitative, extractive, and exclusionary market rationalities requiring coerced and enforced socio-spatial divisions (Chouinard, 1997).

Capitalism perpetuates the contradictory logic that to survive is to remain competitive; to compete is to continuously innovate; and to innovate requires ever-expanding surplus value in the form of profit (Harvey, 1982; N. Smith, 1982). Because of this system’s implicit mantra of profit for profit’s sake, dominant capital interests forever seek new markets to extract and spaces

to absorb surplus value, which are increasingly realized through investments in landed property (Blomley, 2017b). The economic power of private interests among capitalist and petit bourgeois<sup>5</sup> (ownership) classes wields tremendous influence over the production, destruction, renewal, and policing of urban space. Such authority over spatial production in many ways excludes, displaces, or ‘keeps in place’ the working-class poor, racialized communities, and people who experience systemic discrimination (i.e., single mothers and their children, immigrant newcomers, queer and trans people, people with disabilities, and people experiencing mental illness and addictions) (Harvey, 2005).

The wealth and power of ownership classes are continuously asserted over urban space and particularly during crises of overproduction of commodities, falling rates of profit, and/or too much idle surplus capital or surplus labour (Harvey, 2005). Since capitalism is predicated on the principle of infinite growth, Harvey Molotch famously conceptualized the contemporary North American city as a “growth machine” (Jonas & Wilson, 1999). Growth, here, does not simply imply expansion of population, jurisdictional boundaries, or even job opportunities in urban contexts. Rather, the urban growth machine highlights the influence of urban elites with landed interests – that is, interests in economic activities that mobilize and extract exchange value from urban land – on city governance and spatial production. Growth coalitions, or conglomerations among an elite rentier class including investors, bankers, developers, and builder-contractors, vie to propagate political conditions amenable to capital investment from economic actors who increasingly operate extra-locally (Jonas & Wilson, 1999). Such investments add value and revenue to those who already benefit from their financial mobility, property titles, and intergenerational wealth. Echoing Molotch’s growth machine thesis, Iris Marion Young (1990) argues that municipal governments make decisions about land uses and zoning in ways that are heavily decided by “capitalist developers, city bureaucrats, and elected city officials” (p. 244). As a result, decisions about spatial organization, resource distribution,

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<sup>5</sup> Class structuration is more complex and stratified than signifiers of capitalist and petit bourgeois suggest. Property owners are positioned in a wide range of income brackets, some yielding more economic power than others; some with more access to generational wealth than others. Here I focus on those private individuals and enterprises who generate surplus value (profit) not only from their ability to produce material spaces (through design, planning, legal work, construction, and operation), but also from their economic power to invest in property, extract wealth from ground rent, and purchase labour.

land uses, and spatial (re)development can negatively affect the opportunities, choices, wellbeing, and the ‘right to the city’ of urban residents with little political and economic power (Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2012).

### ***2.3.2 Indigenous Urbanization and Municipal Colonialism***

Rapid Indigenous ‘urbanization’ since the 1950s – particularly across the prairie provinces – has many causal factors that are intricately connected to the outcomes of settler colonial policies. *Indian Act* legislation and federal policy entrenched conditions of poverty on reserves to accelerate the disintegration of Indigenous society and integration into the ‘multicultural’ Canadian polity (Cairns, 2000). When people chose or were forced to leave their reserve communities and relocate to cities, which was an implicit goal of Canada’s assimilationist agenda (Belanger & Lindstrom, 2016; Coulthard, 2014; Stanger-Ross, 2008), they were determined by the state to have relinquished their Indigenous cultures, their Indian status, and therefore their Aboriginal rights (Newhouse & Peters, 2003). They had not, nor did they intend to simply be absorbed into settler property geographies.

Urban policies akin to ‘municipal colonialism’ aimed to keep Indigenous people contained on reserves and peripheral to cities, which were perceived by their predominantly white inhabitants as ‘settler’ places (Edmonds, 2010; Harris, 2002; Stanger-Ross, 2008). As Belanger & Lindstrom (2016, p. 168) explain, “[c]ompounding the self-imposed isolation from orbiting First Nations was municipal-colonialism’s belief in the need to physically segregate Indigenous peoples onto reserves as a means of thwarting their potential urbanism.” Indigenous people who moved into prairie cities have struggled to survive amid hostile material conditions in antagonistic social environments while carrying the psychological, spiritual, and physical traumas inflicted by settler colonial and state violence. Sherene Razack (2002, p. 129) traces these threads from a spatial perspective:

At the end of the colonial era, and particularly with [Indigenous] urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s, the segregation of urban space replaces...earlier spatial practices: slum administration replaces colonial administration. The city belongs to the settlers and the sullyng of civilized society through the presence of the racial Other in white space gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space.

Belanger and Lindstrom's (2016) analysis of urban homelessness among Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) people in southern Alberta reveals how individuals' decisions to leave their reserve communities for cities are largely an outcome of state violence, control, and the subsequent fracturing of relationships and connections between people and their land, territory, kin, and cultural knowledge and identities. The authors contour the complex reality of participants' personal senses of loss and liminality; their 'lived space' (Lefebvre, 1991) self-described as somewhere between their home reserves (which often represent feelings of loss and disconnection), and cities (in which they share struggles of poverty, precarity, violence, and myriad exclusions).

In this sense, the liminality that Belanger and Lindstrom's participants experience and embody represents a "spiritual homelessness" – a state of deprivation and 'in-betweenness' resulting from the colonizing fragmentation of land into bounded property and the severing of relational connections through which Creation is rendered meaningful:

Now trapped in a liminal space characterized by the trauma associated with territorial dispossession and colonialism's psychological wounds, the participants helplessly watch as interpersonal relationships crumble based on choice of residential site (or a lack of choice thereof). Colonialism thus emerges as not an historic footnote but an active process that continues to influence Niitsitapi society's unraveling (Belanger & Lindstrom, 2016, p. 178).

Yet, despite their systemic exposure to conditions of precarity and exclusion, Niitsitapi people who experience urban homelessness continue to see themselves as connected to their home territories through stories and ancestral memory of place. Furthermore, participants expressed some sense of comfort and belonging amongst a community of people who not only share similar cultural, ancestral, and place identities, but who are also fellow survivors of settler colonial violence and its dispossessive structure.

As urban Indigenous populations grew immensely in the second half of the 20th century – particularly in prairie cities – urban policy became dictated by the goal of assimilation into mainstream society rather than support to live good urban lives as Indigenous people. Andersen (2013a, p. 267) explains:

Canadian governing rationalities were anchored in the assumption that Aboriginal society was not evolutionarily equipped to compete with the complexities of civilization (now terminologically evolved into apparently less odious euphemism 'modern life'), and as such, Aboriginal policy was predicated either on absorbing 'the Indian problem'

into the Canadian body politic in the assimilationist era, or to correct the problems that existed in Aboriginal communities to ‘bring them up to speed,’ in the integrationist era. Such assumptions were rooted in the similar assertion that contemporaneous Aboriginal ways of life were developmentally delayed – the only difference in policy rationality was related to how to correct it.

This narrative of Indigenous peoples’ incompatibility with ‘modern life’ influenced academic thinking as well, contributing to assumptions about what they ‘lack’ in relation to whitestream normativity (Newhouse & FitzMaurice, 2012), as well as assumptions about ‘authentic’ Indigenous people and cultures as underdeveloped and essentially rural (Peters & Andersen, 2013).

Indigenous urbanization in settler colonial contexts has more recently been associated with countless individual and collective actions that reclaim and re-territorialize cities as Indigenous places (Barker, 2015; Porter, 2013; Tomiak, 2017; Tomiak et al., 2019; Wilson & Peters, 2005; Walker & Belanger, 2013). The socio-spatial presence and agency of urban Indigenous people has largely been constructed (and embattled) by settler society and whitestream institutions as disruptive, threatening, and ultimately unsettling to the possessive individualism and economic fixity, certainty, and stability of liberal property geographies (Blatman-Thomas, 2019; Mackey, 2014; Shaw, 2007; Tedesco & Bagelman, 2017). Tomiak et al. (2019) describe an ethic of settler urbanism that constructs and enforces socio-spatial boundaries in, across, and around prairie cities:

The concept of the settler city...is also limited by an imaginary that sees the city as bounded by and disconnected from what (and who) is constructed as outside of it. The mythic separation of the city from its surrounds in settler colonial discourse—which imagines the city and the reserve/reservation as completely disconnected spaces—renders invisible the violence upon which settler city-building relies. Settler colonial violence entails the maintenance of a false distinction between urban and non-urban space, a distinction that in turn serves to obscure linkages between urban and non-urban space through Indigenous geographies (p. 2).

Indigenous claims to urban land, space, and self-determination are largely regarded by settler governments and whitestream institutions as illegitimate because the city is viewed as ‘settler space’, while Indigenous land and territory are confined in settler imaginaries to First Nation reserves in rural places, external to and incompatible with the city.

Indigenous peoples' 'right to the city' (Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2012) or 'right to urbanism' (Nejad, 2018) is severely limited, and they continue to disproportionately experience conditions of precarity with little access to and control over space and resources (Peters, 2011). Experiences with urban poverty are prevalent and represent material conditions of settler colonial dispossession and economic exclusion under capitalism, which significantly impacts upon individuals' quality of life and daily choices (Peters & Lafond, 2013; Silver, 2008). On average, urban Indigenous residents experience higher rates of unemployment, residential mobility, household crowding, proportion of income spent on rent, homelessness, and lower levels of income, home ownership, and education attainment than non-Indigenous residents (Andersen 2013a; Silver et al., 2011; Statistics Canada, 2018).

### ***2.3.3 Indigenous Urbanism and Transformative 'Economies of Nourishment'***

Urban Indigenous people and communities have not simply adjusted to life in Canadian cities; they have laboured to adapt and create institutions, spaces, and networks to support their cultural identities, their shared needs, and their distinctive collective ambitions. Through their lived spaces, they have forged relational connections to navigate, resist, and transcend settler geographies and their many boundaries. Indigenous urbanism is a concept referring to the adjustment of our cities, so that Indigenous approaches to the production of urban space gain greater priority and currency (Walker et al, 2017). Ryan Walker (2013) has argued that this should lead to better lives for urban Indigenous peoples, and for non-Indigenous peoples that would see the depth of shared civic identity and a strengthened attachment to community and place as a result.

Self-governance and cultural density (Andersen, 2013a) – that is, the proliferation of Indigenous spaces, organizations, networks, relationships, and practices of self-determination – are important to shaping “Pimatisiwin” in the city (Settee, 2013), a Cree concept meaning the good life or pursuit of the good life. Indigenous communities working to nurture good lives and relations in the city may find that decades of negative symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 2005) has been generated, led by a non-Indigenous mainstream society that has produced an enveloping perception that Indigenous culture does not belong in the city (Nejad et al., 2019). Associated with this negative symbolic capital has been the dominant social discourse centred on what is 'different' or 'lacking' in Indigenous communities and cultures, relative to the markers of

positive symbolic capital attached to mainstream urban society as a whole (Newhouse, 2011). Indigenous urbanism will be important to ‘unsettling’ the colonial urbanism in Canadian cities, leading potentially to an urban coexistence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples wherein power relations account for Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination at the urban scale, as within broader territories (Tomiak, 2016; Porter & Barry, 2016; Heritz, 2018).

A network of Indigenous urban organizations has grown in cities across Canada, in sectors ranging widely from housing, education, health, human resources, child and family services, culture and spirituality, legal services, art, and design, to name a few (Peters, 2005). This network of organizations owes much, directly or indirectly, to the Friendship Centre movement that developed out of cities like Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver in the 1950s, and spread to cities and towns across Canada to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples who were urbanizing (i.e., moving from reserve and rural communities to settler cities) in large numbers in the second half of the last century, and who needed help getting established and finding some sense of community in the city. Urbanization and the challenge of adaptation to urban life, which was of central importance in the 1900s, is joined to a much larger degree in the 21st century by a focus on urbanism; adapting cities themselves so that they are positively cast Indigenous places in which the large and relatively young urban Indigenous communities can participate in and pursue a good life (Walker et al., 2017). Urbanism encompasses the rich vibrancy and density of Indigenous cultural identities, experiences, connections, and knowledge that can inform valuable insights about living well together.

Pursuing a good life and living well together do not mean that Indigenous peoples simply gain more opportunities to participate in local labour markets and mainstream institutions, though this would certainly help to alleviate some conditions of precarity under capitalism. Indigenous urbanism is also not restricted to symbolic and visual representations in placemaking such as public art, the (re)naming of streets and buildings to reflect Indigenous history, people, and stories, and the many celebratory cultural events that take place in cities. These forms and expressions of indigeneity are important for reclaiming identity and ceremony, connecting people and community to place, and supporting cross-cultural understanding, but they are typically supported by settler institutions and private enterprises because they are relatively easy adjustments that produce cultural capital without disrupting circuits of accumulation in cities. A broader and necessarily politicized framing of Indigenous urbanism also encapsulates ideas and

strategies for urban change that would alter the *materiality* of cities and the production of urban space in support of culturally grounded, emancipatory, and regenerative conceptions of the good life.

In the context of Winnipeg, Silver et al. (2011) emphasizes the common propensity among Indigenous residents to value “sharing, community, and decolonization” in core neighbourhoods, arguing that “cultural retrieval” is crucial to inner-city Indigenous community development because of its power to heal the social harms of colonization through positive identity formation (Silver et al., 2011, p. 216). Silver (2006, p. 67) has also explored Indigenous-centred strategies for core neighbourhood community development in prairie cities, arguing that:

A community development approach that celebrates the expression of urban Aboriginal cultures is the foundation upon which Aboriginal people will be empowered to engage with the dominant culture. Community development for Aboriginal people means taking charge of their own affairs and deciding what they want their community to look like. It is about having the right to invent their own future.

A promising area of theory and practice in support of community agency and self-determined livelihoods is the emergence of social economies. The social economy is a concept that potentially incorporates many collective forms of socio-spatial organization such as co-operatives, non-profits, community land trusts, and social enterprises with diverse agendas.

Organizations that contribute to the social economy engage in collective economic activities for the purpose of generating social benefits for the community, otherwise referred to as Community Economic Development (CED). Fontan and Shragge (2000) identify two broad directions among literature on the social economy: one that focuses on pragmatic approaches that generally amount to filling social welfare gaps created by, and meeting people’s needs who are excluded from, market economies dominated by private interests; and more radical approaches that strive to exist outside of mainstream markets and ideally transform the profit-seeking structure of capitalism itself (Lionais & Johnstone, 2010). Much of the social economy literature focuses on CED, or the creation of projects and strategies that can generate enough collective income to be financially sustainable. McMurtry (2010) argues that CED is unlike economic forms rooted in profit-seeking philosophies due to its pursuit of workers’ rights (and ownership of labour), community harmony, and collective wellbeing, but should be understood as a continuum. In other words, social economy organizations and practitioners may decide to utilize



state and market resources to achieve their social goals. What separates a social economy from a liberal market economy is that labour is not exploited through property relations, profits are reinvested in communities, and ownership and decision-making are democratically shared (McMurtry, 2010).

Silver and Loxley (2007, p. 7) outline the CED principles of a significant inner-city Indigenous workers' co-op in Winnipeg called Neechi Foods; a widely respected Indigenous social economy framework:

- 1) Use of locally produced goods and services;
- 2) Production of goods and services for local use;
- 3) Local re-investment of profits;
- 4) Long-term employment of local residents;
- 5) Local skill development;
- 6) Local decision-making;
- 7) Promotion of public health;
- 8) Improvement of the physical environment;
- 9) Promotion of neighbourhood stability;
- 10) Promotion of human dignity; and
- 11) Mutual aid support among organizations adhering to these principles.

It is important to note that Neechi Commons – the community space in which Neechi Foods and other Indigenous co-operatives and programs operated – closed in 2019 due to its unaffordable property and operating expenses (Sinclair, 2018). This example demonstrates the difficulty of creating and sustaining not-for-profit CED spaces that strive to meet people's needs in dense and highly competitive urban property markets.

Municipal governments sometimes support the social economy sector in Canadian cities, as Kain et al. (2010) summarize, through expressions of intent, financial support, in-kind support, planning, research, and advising, human and social capital development, land use, and procurement practices. The range of supports offered by local governments depends on their resources and capacity, political will, and the degree to which their social interests converge with the objectives of CED organizations. Quint Saskatoon, for example, is a social enterprise that provides low-income rental housing, supportive housing for mothers and children, transitional housing for young men, employment services, and other 'wrap-around' supports. The City of Saskatoon has aided Quint, which is the founding organization of the Station 20 West social enterprise centre, by assembling and providing land, a library branch, research, and financial

support for affordable housing. Quint, however, must compete with many other enterprises in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods for financial resources such as tax abatements, project and program grants, and rebate fees (Kain et al., 2010).

A social economy's effectiveness is measured by its ability to meet people's needs in a community and its collective capacity to create economic and social change that alleviates people's subjugation and marginalization under market capitalism (McMurtry, 2010). According to McMurtry (2010, p. 28),

The social economy...is developed to create an alternative economic and social space for those excluded from the necessities of life by the functioning of market capitalism. The very reason to articulate its presence is to highlight the fact that all is not working well within the dominant system. Social economy forms, from co-operatives to non-profits, emerge as alternatives to existing forms precisely because they are seen to be more ethical in the view of academics, practitioners, students, and policy-makers alike... the social economy itself is not just a recent phenomenon but is based on historical practices that have developed, often over centuries, to respond to human needs.

Social economy practices represent a collective dedication to expand the 'commons' – the collective 'ownership' of land, material spaces, resources, labour, strategic decision-making, and economic production. Practitioners strive to enhance many aspects of individual and community cooperation and wellbeing, including through accessible housing, food security, health services, education, sustainability, and so on, all of which are valued above individual accumulation and the private ownership of property. However, settler mobilizations of 'the commons', particularly as a political slogan of spatial reclamation (the Occupy Wall Street movement, for example), have been criticized for their disregard for Indigenous claims to land, territorial sovereignty, and spatial justice (Fortier, 2017).

An Indigenous social economy, while also dedicated to reclaiming 'the commons', is culturally and politically distinct; it represents the continued commitment of Indigenous peoples to reclaim territorial stewardship and relational responsibilities from the grasp of settler colonial power. Rauna Kuokkanen (2011) conceptualizes an Indigenous social economy as traditional and "subsistence activities" that "manifest Indigenous worldviews characterized by interdependence and reciprocity that extend to all living beings and to the land" as "an expression of one's identity, culture, and values" (pp. 217-218). While traditional practices of gathering, harvesting,

trapping, hunting, and fishing are central to Indigenous economies, subsistence also encapsulates emergent adaptations of Indigenous value systems through local modes of spatial *regeneration* that underscore sharing, sustainability, and social cohesion (Kuokkanen, 2011). An ‘economy of nourishment’ is a similar concept that was developed by an interview participant who emphasized community principles of reciprocity, care, and connectivity empowered through Indigenous value systems in all aspects of urban life.

As an example of the cultural specificity of Indigenous social economies, both food security and food sovereignty are essential to wellbeing. Many Indigenous people in prairie cities experience food insecurity, particularly in core neighbourhoods where people’s nutritional needs are dependent on food banks, community kitchens, schools, mutual aid networks, Friendship Centres and other community organizations, as well as convenience stores and small grocers (Cidro et al., 2015). Whereas food security is defined by four pillars of “access, availability, utilization, and stability of supply,” Cidro et al. (2015, p. 26) explain that these common attributes “take on unique characteristics in an Indigenous and urban context”. Indigenous peoples’ cultural relationships with food are implicitly political because food is important for connecting to land, ecological knowledge, medicine, spiritual nourishment, ceremony, language, and community, even in urban settings (Settee & Shukla, 2020). Indigenous food sovereignty encompasses much more than food security because it is “intricately interlinked with Indigenous political, social, and cultural resurgence, which centre on Indigenous relationships with land” (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018, p. 11). In this sense, food sovereignty is important for reframing food security as a right and obligation that requires the decolonization of settler property relations and the regeneration of Indigenous territory (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018).

Another example of Indigenous leadership in the advancement of social economy networks, particularly among remote and rural communities, is Idle No More’s *One House Many Nations* initiative, which “raises awareness about housing conditions and pressures governments to live up to their Treaty, moral, and legal responsibilities, in addition to providing homes” (Idle No More, 2017). The initiative mobilizes volunteer and skilled labour to construct small homes that are Indigenous-designed and incorporate energy- and cost-efficient technologies to reduce environmental footprints. The *One House Many Nations* campaign could eventually expand into urban regions with creative strategies to alleviate homelessness and opioid crises that are devastating people’s lives. Edmonton, for example, has seen the proliferation of a mutual aid

shelter encampment in the Rosedale neighbourhood on Treaty 6 territory named Camp Pekiwewin (Ramsay, 2020). As this chapter is being written, the camp has been operating for 90 days in a public park, and it is an exercise in insurgent planning and urbanism to reappropriate public space for mutual aid and protection from violent evictions and further trauma among houseless urban inhabitants.

The social economy is uniquely relevant to many Indigenous people who maintain distinctive cultural value systems anchored to relational reciprocity, are excluded from/opt not to participate in an exploitative labour market, and do not trust public institutions or social service sectors because of past and ongoing injustices, misguided actions, and abuses of authority. (Wuttunee, 2009). This dissertation establishes an Indigenous social economy lens to examine intersections of urbanism and indigeneity, and to explore possibilities for urban Indigenous land (an urban Indigenous ‘commons’) in support of cultural resurgence in prairie cities. It takes direction from Priscilla Settee’s argument that “First Nations and Métis social economy projects can serve as an innovative, organic, and ground-up community development organizing model and reflect Indigenous values. The process is largely about self-determination by Indigenous peoples to ensure economic, social as well as cultural development” (2011, p. 85). From her understanding of Cree principles of Pimatisiwin, “which reflect ancient knowledge for community life, well-being and sharing values,” Settee envisions a social economy grounded in Indigenous values of Miyowichetowin, “which means having good relations with humankind, the animal world and nature,” and principles of Wakotawin, or “laws that emanate from deep respect for all of life” (p. 75).

For many Indigenous people living in Canadian cities, interdependent systems of neoliberal capitalism and settler colonialism are ongoing structures of crisis – for the land and non-human life, for kinship relations, and for mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional nourishment. While many Indigenous people experience crises as a continuous state of being in and under Canada amid the “apocalypse” of ongoing colonial occupation (Violet Lee, 2016), they have also laboured continuously to survive, mitigate, and overcome the violence of oppressive and exploitative systems, boundaries, and daily interactions. Indigenous people live under and alongside dominant settler and state apparatuses, but some also envision and work toward the realization of worlds and futurities beyond the confines and injustices of the Canadian nation state and its rule of law, jurisdiction, property regimes, and the liberal market economy

(Tuck & Yang, 2012). Furthermore, grassroots Indigenous leaders, and especially those with complex and grounded understanding of people's intersectional identities, traumas, and lived knowledge, have profoundly creative and liberatory ideas that can produce shared benefits for both Indigenous and settler society.

In this sense, many Indigenous people's lived spaces in prairie cities are also liminal; imbued with marginality, hybridity, and incommensurability with settler urbanism (Blagg, 2008). As Baker and Verrelli (2017) argue, liminality is not simply the occupation of marginal spaces; it is also a position from which Indigenous people articulate and enact alternative (traditional, adaptive) ways of being and relating to territory, land, kin, and settler society in urban Canadian contexts:

It is crucial to emphasize that the structural ambiguity that defines a position of liminality can enable liminars to claim agency and assert their own identity claims. After all, the very existence of the liminar communicates an irrefutable and embodied signal that an alternative mode of being is not only possible but is actually already extant (p. 48).

Liminality defines both the limitations imposed on urban Indigenous people and communities to actualize self-determination, and the revolutionary potential of Indigenous urbanism to transform cities and broader territories. For this reason, Michelle Daigle (2016) insists that we consider “the diverse ways Indigenous peoples think about and live self-determination outside and/or alongside formal state and intergovernmental structures, while simultaneously complicating the way we think about place, land, and responsibility” (p. 1).

Indigenous resurgence, or culturally rooted practices that seek to reclaim place, land, and relational responsibilities, represent an individual and collective commitment among many Indigenous peoples to refuse, when incommensurable with indigeneity, the many and multi-scalar boundaries of settler colonial capitalism. Resurgence is not simply the rejection of systems of oppression, however; it also the regeneration and reconstitution of Indigenous nationhood, law, kinship, languages, cultural values, and territorial obligations in the lived spaces of daily life. Resurgence carries radically transformative potential to decolonize our shared socio-spatial organization in both cities and rural areas; to elevate indigeneity from spaces of liminality to places of self-determination. This important work is being carried out in prairie cities, and especially in core neighbourhoods like those in Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, and Edmonton.

However, as inner-city neighbourhoods experience mainstream revitalization strategies to bolster the property exchange values and investment potential of central city space, the transformative potential of Indigenous urbanism is further stifled.

### ***2.3.4 The Recolonization of Gentrification***

Since the 1980s, urban centres across North America have experienced surges of inner-city reinvestment, reflecting Harvey's (1985) second circuit of capital flows. In Harvey's framework, crises in the first circuit of capital (for example, devaluation of original inner city real estate due in part to the overproduction of property in suburban areas) instigate new capital investment into the built environment to kick-start accumulation in previously devalued inner-city space.

Because capital invested in landed property is fixed for a relatively long period of time, as Smith (1982) explains, the devaluation of inner-city space coinciding with suburban expansion and valorization causes inner city ground rents to decline until they are "substantially lower than the ground rent that could potentially be capitalized if the land use were changed" (p. 149). When this "rent gap" between existing ground rents and potential profit becomes large enough, devalued inner city space becomes ample territory for capital reinvestment and spatial restructuring, or what Harvey (2005) calls the "creative destruction" of 'wasted' space and 'unproductive' socio-spatial organization for market regeneration (Brenner et al., 2012).

Capital accumulation increasingly requires privatized, fixed, and regulated space in the form of property to develop or expand markets, which is acquired through the fragmentation and appropriation of land and resources from the public domain, or 'the commons'; what Harvey describes as a process of "accumulation by dispossession" (Brenner et al., 2012; Harvey, 2005). Wealth and power are expanded and consolidated by those with private interests seeking to maximize the exchange values of property and other commodities, and the targeted valorization of inner-city space carries significant risk of displacing residents from neighbourhoods they call home. The immense influence of dominant class interests over the production of urban space has resulted in systematic enclosures of the commons, erosions of participatory democracy, and the economic isolation and marginalization of many people (Lewis & Conaty, 2012).

Gentrification typically involves widespread property (re)development, significant capital investment in the built environment, and the displacement of poor and working-class people resulting from the advantaged mobility and pricing power of wealthier people across historically

devalued neighbourhoods (Bain & Mark, 2020; Bridge, 1995; Lees, 2012; Ley, 1996; Smith, 1996). Gentrification provides markets, financial capital, and individuals and conglomerations that have benefitted from economic competition and financial mobility an increasingly exclusive ‘right to the city’ to produce and extract surplus value (Brenner & Theodore, 2003; Harvey, 2008). Processes of urban renewal and gentrification have coincided with the neoliberalization of urban governance and civic efforts to market cities for external investment (Brenner & Theodore, 2003). Urban revitalization projects aim to produce value through capital injection into the built environment, construction contracts and employment, and the ‘highest and best uses’ of urban space are generally enabled through the regulatory compliance and subsidization by civic and higher levels of government. Rachel Weber (2002) argues that civic governments rely increasingly on real estate markets to create and maximize value in urban land to generate property tax revenues, especially in inner city areas that have experienced significant devaluation. Bain and Mark (2020) add that the economic, political, and cultural dynamics of inner-city restructuring in Canadian cities have harmful social implications, particularly for the racialized urban poor, which should be examined through critical geographical analyses.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Canadian municipalities that were coping with declines of production in industrial manufacturing industries, the high costs of maintaining deteriorating infrastructure, and financial constraints stemming from economic crises, have developed entrepreneurial governance agendas that are molded by private interests and market forces (Bain & Mark, 2020). Municipal government policies have increasingly emphasized economic and population growth as well as place-making and branding strategies aimed at attracting tourism, capital investment, and the so-called “creative class” (Florida, 2002) of individuals associated with a mobile, technology-and-communications-intensive, knowledge-based economy. Municipalities are increasingly engaged in public-private place-making projects that produce pseudo-cultural spectacles to attract the consumption and leisure tastes of predominantly young and financially secure individuals and families. The dominant lifestyle and consumption preferences of affluent newcomers who have influenced and benefited from central city restructuring are often catered to in wholesale fashion by planners, developers and policymakers who emphasize “livability” with little regard for critical matters of social stability or spatial justice (Bain & Mark, 2020; Ley, 1996). Widespread condominium conversions and new residential developments, and an intensifying commodification of local culture and urban

space (emphasizing exchange values over use values of land and property), have eroded economically marginalized and racialized people's access to resources and, in many cases, have displaced them from home neighbourhoods (Bain & Mark, 2020).

Processes of gentrification do not consist simply of passive or 'organic' shifts in market values and economic class movement across urban space. Gentrification has occurred in many Canadian cities through aggressive and often violent efforts to re-appropriate urban spaces that are regarded by mainstream society as 'stolen' or under threat by undesirable, often racialized inhabitants. Neil Smith (1996) refers to this "vicious reaction" against the urban poor and marginalized people as the "revanchist city", wherein social behaviours determined as unacceptable or out of place by an upper class of residents – such as homelessness, panhandling, bottle collecting, substance use, sex work, or simply taking up space – are harshly criminalized. Criminalization is a social process that enables incarceration through over-policing, but it is also performed through "microtechnologies of social and spatial control" (Soja, 2010) such as public surveillance. As Razack (2002a, p. 11) argues, surveillance produces "two kinds of bodies...the normal and the abnormal body, the former belonging to a homogenous social body, the latter exiled and spatially separated." Other microtechnologies of social and spatial control, particularly aggressions against those experiencing conditions of precarity or homelessness, include spikes on sidewalks and other public spaces to prevent rough sleeping, overnight closures and bylaws that prevent sleeping or staying in certain public areas, and daily evictions from commercial spaces.

Granzow and Dean (2007) describe a major revitalization project in Edmonton's Downtown East and its actively hidden, racialized gentrification agenda as "a targeted re-appropriation of land and forced displacement of people in the interest of accumulating first cultural but ultimately financial capital" (p. 90). The authors argue that the area's Boyle Street neighbourhood contains a long-situated Indigenous population whose experiences with concentrated economic poverty are rooted in over 150 years of colonization. Though they do not label it as such, Granzow and Dean demonstrate how whiteness – the performative, social domain of institutionalized white supremacy – is employed through discursive mobilizations of "class, culture and creativity" in which urbane identities, lifestyles, and options for consumption are imagined and asserted into and onto spaces deemed empty, fallow, and devoid of 'culture'.



In Granzow and Dean's analysis, the privileged, neocolonial evocation of 'frontier' sentimentality by those directing Edmonton's Downtown East revitalization is constructed upon and reinforced by entrenched representations of the inner city as criminal and violent space, where predominantly Indigenous bodies are marked as dangerous, degenerate, or illegitimate. Boyle Street's 'undeveloped' territory is therefore seen by many upper-class residents – those in positions of political and economic power – as wasteland; stolen territory that needs to be 'taken back' for safe, secure, and economically productive enjoyment by mainstream urban society. Revanchist actions such as housing evictions, of the homeless from public spaces, and arrests for 'moral' crimes such as sex work and public intoxication perpetuate colonial boundaries and violence against people who are already systematically exposed to harm.

Wendy Shaw (2007, p. 20) conceptualizes gentrification as "a process that is culturally encoded by, and part of the process of (re-)shaping the residential city." I contend that contemporary forces and strategies of inner-city renewal in prairie cities result from decades of whitestream disdain for Indigenous 'intrusions' into 'settler' space. In other words, core neighbourhood revitalization movements need to be 'unmapped' (Razack, 2002a) or contextualized as containing and producing property and social relations that are structured by, and indeed have been predicated upon racial hierarchies enforced through oppressive power structures and socio-spatial boundaries. Razack (2002a, p. 5) describes unmapping as the uncovering of lived oppressions and privileges through processes that are spatially constructed:

In unmapping, there is an important relationship between identity and space. What is being imagined or projected on to specific spaces and bodies, and what is being enacted there? Who do white citizens know themselves to be and how much does an identity of dominance rely upon keeping racial Others firmly in place? How are people kept in their place? And, finally, how does place become race?

I depart from Razack in two ways. First, although I acknowledge that privilege permeates those with outwardly Caucasian appearances, I opt to replace the ethnic identifier category of 'white citizens' with racialized exertions of 'whiteness' (Shaw, 2007), and institutionalized privilege and power with 'whitestream' normativity (Denis, 1997). Second, I want to extend the idea that performing whiteness – the act of embracing and espousing settler colonial power in daily life – not only relies on keeping racialized others firmly in place (excluded and marginalized), but that

it also constructs Indigenous people as out of place, or as *liminars* in their home territories (Andersen & Peters, 2013; Baker & Virrelli, 2017; Cresswell, 2006).

In prairie cities, spaces associated with destitution and criminal violence are constructed through popular and sustained discourses targeting and grossly misrepresenting racialized and gendered bodies. In effect,

Urban transformation processes have become vehicles for performances of whiteness, and its reification. Whiteness has triumphed as the dominant social ideal, which has been re-anchored to its colonial origins...In this context, the notion of what constitutes self/us/desirable feeds upon the existence of its opposite: the 'other'/them/the undesirables (Shaw, 2007, pp. 182-183).

Inequitable power relations and systemic barriers that inhibit Indigenous urbanism continue to dominate systems governing urban land use and socio-spatial planning. Whiteness is synonymous with mainstream settler society's proclivity to view liberal, property-owning citizenship as universally beneficial and therefore culturally neutral (Dyson, 1999), and the universal individualism of a 'multicultural' Canadian society has been described in relation to Indigenous subjects as "whitestream" ideology, structure, and process (Denis, 1997). The social power of whiteness, as Cheryl Harris (1993) argues, is historically and spatially enacted, protected, and expanded through rights and privileges of property ownership embedded through lawful jurisdiction.

Whiteness and whitestream culture are embedded in the governmentality of cities despite municipal governments' claims to value neutrality, which continues to impede Indigenous community rights and aspirations from influencing the production of urban space and place on their own terms. Typically, prairie municipalities opt for inclusion policies that aim to enhance Indigenous input and 'buy-in' in planning and decision-making processes. Porter (2013) argues that when Indigenous communities are engaged in consultative mainstream planning processes, standardized and paternalistic 'stakeholder approaches' do nothing to unsettle the cultural and institutional supremacy of whiteness (settler-state-dominated power relations and decision-making authority), which elides Indigenous groups' "substantively different form(s) of property and use rights, knowledge forms, human-environment relationships, and mechanisms of law and governance in relation to space and place" (p. 290).

Municipalities enact local jurisdiction derived from provincial statutes under Canadian federalism; authority that is contested by Indigenous peoples' claims to territorial sovereignty over land upon which Canadian cities have been built (Tomiak, 2016). Practitioners of urban planning perform the jurisdictional authority of the local state through their institutional capacities to conceive new or renewed urban spaces for specific and highly regulated uses. For example, Blomley (2017a, p. 361) suggests that urban planning, which performs provincial jurisdiction through land use and zoning bylaws, "...acts upon uses and spaces, not (apparently) persons. True to its utilitarian roots, planning has no particular interest in the morality of property on its own terms, but rather concerns itself with the results of property, and the degree to which these are beneficial or useful." Such decision-making practices can, even in small and mid-sized cities, function to dispossess, disempower, and displace people (Young, 1990). Municipal governments also carry out contradictory roles when they develop or mobilize urban spaces for property (re)development because they must maximize private investment and therefore the city's property tax base, while also providing public goods, services, and resources to urban inhabitants who are forced into conditions of precarity through the private accumulation of urban space and wealth. Municipal decisions about what, where, and how to valorize spaces within the urban landscape systematically disregard values that Indigenous communities attach to and aspire to enhance in urban spaces and places.

Urban planning is, as Libby Porter (2013) observes, "a cultural practice itself", replete with assumptions about how urban life and city space ought to be lived and organized. Porter assesses that practitioners of urban planning have not taken sufficiently critical stances "to both cities themselves and to city planning to unlock different questions and possibilities for Indigenous planning in urban contexts" (p. 297). Urban planning has also been theorized from critical-race and anti-oppression standpoints, contributing to arguments that planning by and with oppressed communities can transform disempowering socio-spatial systems (Friedmann, 1987; Lane and Hibbard, 2005). While transformative planning is an important concept and certainly influences my conceptual framework, I contend that there is significant and urgent need to operationalize indigeneity much more comprehensively in the context of urban land use planning as a basis for building meaningful, continuously negotiated, and just co-existence edified by Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and resurgence in and through prairie cities.

Indigenous peoples have engaged in their own planning processes since time immemorial (Matunga, 2013; Jojola, 2013). Hirini Matunga (2013) conceptualizes Indigenous Planning traditions within colonial settler states in three historical phases: classic tradition (pre-contact); resistance tradition (post-contact to late 1970s); and resurgence tradition (1980s to the present). The current resurgence tradition “highlights the importance of retaining its own distinct tradition, history, contemporary identity, and practice as Indigenous planning, while at the same time developing the capability and indeed tools to advocate, negotiate, and mediate across the planning divide with ‘mainstream’ Western planning” (Matunga, p. 14). Indigenous planning theory and practice conceptualizes and applies place-making and future-seeking philosophies emanating from Indigenous values and knowledge systems (Jojola, 2008). Indigenous planning is culturally distinctive, due in large part to longstanding traditions, ‘common’ values, and relational commitments that are central to Indigenous territoriality, including in urban geographies. Porter (2013) explains that the “[s]urvival of Indigenous sovereignty in legal and territorial terms is critical here: the particular claims Indigenous people are often making challenge the premise on which Western planning systems assume their spatial legitimacy and authority” (p. 289).

Typically, Indigenous planning in prairie cities is most perceptible in the realm of social services administered through community organizations. But Indigenous planning is also operationalized through First Nations’ urban reserve creation *and* through insurgent citizenship practices (such as protests, blockades, encampments, and community patrols; the ‘uninvited’ reclamation of space); all of which strategize from a continuum of liminality amid the perpetually colonizing landscapes of settler colonial-capitalist geographies. Matunga (2013) writes of the need for Indigenous and Western planning frameworks to function through separate but parallel coordination between Indigenous and state jurisdictions in shared urban regions, with the goal of eventually bridging these traditions. This is an idyllic but necessary proposition, which realistically will require a significant transfer or sharing of decision-making autonomy over the ‘production’ and ‘ownership’ of space. In addition to the co-production of planning and urban governance generally, this dissertation argues that the transformative materialization of Indigenous urbanism will also require significant reappropriations of land and property in support of resurgence among Indigenous inhabitants and communities.

## 2.4 Conclusion – From Liminal Spaces to Urban Indigenous Places

This chapter has provided a conceptual and theoretical framework that re-centres Indigenous space and place in prairie cities and critically examines settler colonialism as an ongoing structure that reproduces and depends on particular modes of spatial production. The ‘production’ of urban space represents the social, economic, political, and cultural forces that shape the materiality of life in cities. The urban scale is not isolated, nor do urban processes exist in local vacuums; they are interlinked with larger historical geographies through mutually constitutive regional, national, and global market economies, political and legal boundaries imbued with state-delegated jurisdictional authorities, and social relations and ecologies that transcend the urban-rural divide. Socio-spatial organization in and of prairie urban regions – that is, the material forces that shape how people interact in relation to the physical or built environment – has occurred predominantly through co-dependent and shapeshifting structures of settler colonialism (requiring legally enforceable control over land and resources) and capitalism (requiring liberal property ownership, resource and wealth extraction, and exploitative labour relations).

Settler colonial geographies, which are productive of and interdependent on liberal property relations, are materialized through tacitly colonizing processes of expansion (of land ownership, markets, exchange values, and extraction) and therefore dispossession (of Indigenous land, space, jurisdiction, and law). Settler colonial geographies are powerfully and often violently enforced, but they are not totalizing. Indigenous peoples both adapt to and actively subvert oppressive socio-spatial orders across the prairies, which was described as a collective commitment to *resurgence*:

While settler society’s capitalist orientation produces spaces of unevenness and exploitation, many Indigenous people not only resist these processes but also continue to enact alternative relations based on dignity, reciprocity, and kinship. Everyday interactions, structured by relationality and reciprocity, continue to produce distinct Indigenous forms of community and urban space (Tomiak et al., 2019, p. 7).

Indigenous urbanism was deployed as a concept that helps contour the dynamic ways that Indigenous people and communities are adapting prairie cities to meet their needs and to enhance their relational connections to, and within, urban places. Indigenous urbanism is performed

through delimited but culturally dense networks of invited to invented spaces. Density refers to the rich diversity of culturally distinctive spatial practices, yet the enhancement of Indigenous urbanism continues to be constrained in (fundamentally unjust) spatial relations with propertied landscapes, state jurisdiction, and sociocultural practices that reify the liberal, accumulative individualism of *whiteness* in spatial production. I therefore contend that Indigenous urbanism is systematically circumscribed to spaces of liminality amid the many enclosures of settler colonial geographies.

To contextualize the liminality (the constricted, uncertain, transitional, and boundary-crossing practices) of Indigenous space in prairie cities, I focused on two relatively recent and significant mediums of urban change in the province of Saskatchewan, both of which affect people's lived spaces and possibilities for transformative Indigenous urbanism: 1) First Nations' new urban reserves and 2) the Indigenous social economy amid core neighbourhood 'revitalization' in Saskatoon. Urban reserves are both invited and invented spaces through which First Nations exercise delegated jurisdiction and Indigenous territory in prairie cities, and they are material products of First Nations' political and legal resistance that affirms treaty rights and responsibilities. The land uses and socio-spatial functions of urban reserves are generally compatible with mainstream urbanism, which is attributable to First Nations' strategic decisions to cooperate with municipalities and participate in local market economies. As Chapter Four demonstrates, such strategies arise from long-term desires to reclaim territory, economic independence, and political autonomy from the coercive power of the state.

Whereas urban reserves 'translate' relatively seamlessly into propertied urban geographies and are somewhat insulated from the fluctuating values of real estate markets, community-produced common spaces do not and are not, which is discussed in Chapter Five. Indigenous organizations contributing to an 'economy of nourishment' in Saskatoon's core west side neighbourhoods are largely relegated to invented spaces, many of which struggle to build and sustain capacity to meet people's needs in socially marginalized and economically distressed urban communities. I have argued that urban revitalization processes, which are conceived and advanced by 'growth machine' actors aligned with property interests and investments, are gentrifying Indigenous space and place in prairie cities. Gentrification is supported through municipal land use and planning regimes to improve infrastructure, design, and to re-appropriate urban spaces to spur property (re)development. Such actions may, in turn, generate municipal

resources that can further support the social economy; however, they are also complicit in the displacement and dispossession of urban Indigenous residents who already experience compounded exclusions, violence, and conditions of precarity.

By emphasizing the transformative potential of resurgent Indigenous urbanism to not only address people's needs through culturally grounded values and practices, but to also develop alternative forms of socio-spatial organization that can enhance lived spaces – including through Indigenous planning as culturally distinctive future-seeking paradigms, protocols, and spatial practices – this dissertation appeals to an Indigenous right to the city. The 'right to the city' is a concept developed by critical geographers and has been adopted as a political motto or organizing banner by many urban movements seeking to reclaim 'the commons' from the grasp of neoliberal spatial production. An Indigenous right to the city differs from that of settler society because the inherence and inheritance of prior occupancy, affirmed in treaties, stands in unique contrast to the mobilization and dispossession of land and space as productive forces of accumulation. The right, and responsibility, of Indigenous communities and nations to exercise sovereign, self-determined, and *relational* territoriality across urban regions requires shared spaces dedicated to the collective stewardship of land, resources, and relationships. Resurgent Indigenous urbanism, enhanced through the emergence of a culturally distinct and politically separate Indigenous 'commons', may provide a transformative pathway to decolonize Indigenous-settler coexistence in prairie cities.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Context and Methods**

This chapter discusses the research context within which this research occurred. It describes my positionality in relation to the research, participants, and the production of knowledge. The chapter explains my methodological approach, limitations, and it outlines my methods of gathering and analyzing predominantly qualitative data.

#### **3.1 Research Context**

Between 2010 and 2014, my M.A. research focused on a large community planning initiative in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, which sought to better understand the current state of city planning with Indigenous residents in my home city. I found that Indigenous participants who were invited to engage in this high-level planning process aspired for greater agency in the decision-making, design, and implementation of community planning, place-making, and spatial production. They reflected that ‘inclusion’ and ‘stakeholder’ strategies of Indigenous community engagement in planning and policymaking neither upheld Indigenous rights to urban governance nor self-determination in community planning. My research culminated in an argument for the co-production of planning and ‘indigenization’ of local governance cultures and processes (Fawcett, 2014). When I began this Ph.D program, I aimed to expand upon these concepts and ideas, focusing again on the intersection of urban planning and indigeneity in Saskatchewan but with greater attention paid to the significance of urban land and material space to embolden Indigenous urbanism.

##### ***3.1.1 Riversdale ‘Revitalization’***

Throughout the years researching and writing my M.A. thesis, the Riversdale neighbourhood of Saskatoon was gaining public attention for incremental but significant changes to the built environment. This recent wave of change was seemingly instigated both symbolically and materially with the demolition of the Barry Hotel and opening of the Two-Twenty building directly across 20<sup>th</sup> street. Local property developers, in partnership with the Riversdale Business



Improvement District, began actively promoting the area's revitalization through promotional advertising in Saskatoon and abroad; public events and guided neighbourhood walking tours; and political advocacy at the municipal level. The City of Saskatoon was also mobilizing its planning apparatus to aid such changes, particularly through its Riversdale Local Area Plan (City of Saskatoon, 2008), which focused largely on improving the 20<sup>th</sup> Street business corridor, and the Junction Improvement Strategy (City of Saskatoon, 2014), the main purposes of which were "recommending public realm improvements, identifying future uses for vacant/contaminated lands, increasing investor confidence, and to develop specific recommendations for improvements within the area" (p. 5).

In 2012, a public teach-in in opposition to the federal Conservative government's omnibus legislative assault on Indigenous rights, was organized in Riversdale at Station 20 West by four women under the slogan "Idle No More". Idle No More amplified and connected an Indigenous resurgence movement from local to global scales and, now a well-established online and material network of supporters and organizers, continues to coordinate mutual aid resources, resurgent programming and knowledge sharing, and political advocacy and resistance across Canada and beyond. It became evident over the next few years that mainstream discourses promoting the revitalization of Riversdale and exigent Indigenous community demands for justice and decolonization were at odds. One public event in particular – called Riversdale Love – was organized in 2015 by a local property developer to begin a future-seeking conversation about what people value and want improved in the neighbourhood. The event drew both participation and ire from Indigenous residents, some of whom argued that property- and consumption-driven revitalization and settler narratives promoting "what's good in the hood" subverted the lived experiences and valued spaces among the neighbourhood's large and diverse Indigenous community. It became apparent that the promoters and financiers of revitalization in Riversdale did not comprehend the complexity of Indigenous presence in the neighbourhood, nor were they interested in supporting platforms, spaces, or resources in support of Indigenous community agency in the regeneration of Saskatoon's west side core.

I spent several months in 2015 doing archival research in the City of Saskatoon's main library branch, focusing on media narratives about Riversdale in newsprint sources from the 1960s. The purpose of this research was an attempt to 'unmap' (Razack, 2002) the socio-spatial trajectory of revitalization: how has mainstream settler society constructed Riversdale

discursively and materially over time, and how have such perceptions, performances, and power influenced neighbourhood revitalization? I found that popular ambitions and strategies for urban renewal in Riversdale are extensions of past, continuous pursuits to rid the neighbourhood of ‘degenerate’ and ‘illegitimate’ spaces and, consequently, Indigenous people who have long been perceived to hinder social order and economic progress. A whitestream narrative describing Riversdale as a neighbourhood plagued by social blight surfaced in the 1960s and again in the 1980s, which set the stage in many instances for police crackdowns on criminal activity – particularly for ‘moral’ crimes such as public intoxication and prostitution. From 1990 onward, neighbourhood ‘activists’, which include various iterations and conglomerations of community associations, business owners, and individual home-owner residents, undertook campaigns to ‘clean up’ Riversdale by ‘taking back’ material, racialized spaces that were perceived to propagate vagrancy and social vices. The streets, sidewalks and alleyways around the former Barry and Albany hotels on 20th Street and Avenue B became deeply symbolic as Indigenous spaces, continually drawing the indignation of property owners because of perceived connections between those spaces, illicit behavior, declines in legitimate consumer activity, and property decline and decay.

Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, street sex work emerged in newsprint discourse as the central issue perceived by the whitestream settler majority to contaminate urban vitality in Riversdale. Some community organizations and vocal property owners envisioned and argued that the eradication of the street sex trade would help to achieve a higher socioeconomic class standard in the area, repeatedly demanding a heightened police presence and incarceration of predominantly Indigenous women in the neighbourhood. Joyce Green (2011, p. 236) identifies such performances of whiteness or settler entitlement as “second-generation colonialism”; a normalized state of social affairs through which “the colonial conditions that created that privilege...and that deny it to the colonized” are actively overlooked in the dominant political culture. Indigenous women who have engaged in street sex work out of necessity for their and their children’s survival – a composite product of patriarchy, colonial violence, and compounded barriers against access to ‘legitimate’ forms of labour – have been popularly viewed as valueless, not worthy of safe spaces, and their presence a collective hinderance to community harmony and urban progress in Riversdale and beyond.

Indigenous residents and especially women involved in the street sex trade have experienced regular surveillance, evictions, and violence in public and private spaces around Riversdale's commercial corridor. As Razack (2002, p. 11) argues, surveillance produces "two kinds of bodies...the normal and the abnormal body, the former belonging to a homogenous social body, the latter exiled and spatially separated." Riversdale's own fearscape production (Shaw, 2007) was performed through "extreme discursive warfare" (Lawrence, 2004, p. 29), a process that Green (2011, p. 237) describes this way:

The media write, speak, and produce for the 'average reader', the normative working-class or middle-class white model, with its set of social assumptions about the world... For the most part, Aboriginal peoples do not exist for the media, except as practitioners of violence or political opposition, as marketing stereotypes, or as bearers of social pathologies.

Surveillance and policing were never intended to protect Indigenous people from the violence that so many have endured. The conflation of Indigenous bodies with spaces of degeneracy and social illegitimacy rendered their multiple oppressions invisible *and expected*.

Indigenous women's bodies have long been represented in settler society as "dangerous, promiscuous, dirty objects of male desires," which explains why "their violation does not receive harsh punishment: often it is their perceived promiscuity and 'risky' lifestyles that are the centre of media attentions, rather than the violent acts themselves" (Canon & Sunseri, 2011, p. 233). It is also through entrenched representations of Indigenous women as hypersexualized and available bodies – of sex workers and even those not involved in the sex trade as implicitly consenting to all forms of violence to which they might endure – that have enabled the endemic national tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Colonization and patriarchal dominance have rendered mainstream settler society unable or unwilling to recognize Indigenous women's systemic exposure to state and sexual violence (Seshia, 2010), nor their labour and aspirations to regenerate communities and nations. As Andrea Smith (2011, p. 254) explains, "the project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable – and by extension, that Native lands are also inherently violable." In short, the recent movement to revitalize Riversdale is predicated on decades of whitestream discourses about the neighbourhood's perceived causes of blight and conceived requirements to eliminate

bearers of poverty, crime, and social corruption, epitomized most acutely in women forced to endure conditions of precarity and violence.

My initial research proposal sought to examine the role that mainstream urban planning plays in neighbourhood ‘revitalization’ and to explore its intersections with indigeneity in Riversdale from the perspectives of both Indigenous residents and local government officials. However, as I engaged with this local and historic discourse analysis, in addition to attending and learning from Indigenous-led teach-ins, rallies, protests, and other public gatherings in Saskatoon’s west side core, I became compelled to emphasize Indigenous residents’ and community organizations’ perceptions of ongoing changes to their neighbourhood(s) and lived spaces. The knowledge, experiences, and aspirations of Indigenous residents are systematically negated in mainstream revitalization discourse and, as I argue in this dissertation, are irreconcilable with fundamentally contradictory urban land use and community planning regimes.

Saskatchewan’s cities are governed by municipalities under provincial jurisdictions, but they also exist within treaty and First Nations’ territories as well as Métis homelands. Indigenous nations never gave up their inherent rights to practice their governance systems, laws, and economies, all of which are intimately connected to land, place, and relationships. Urban planning is structurally and significantly guided by real estate market values, the tax revenue-generating capacities of land and space, and the reproduction of property relations that continue to alienate Indigenous peoples from land, space, resources, and self-determining autonomy in prairie cities. State planning in the public domain represents continuous tension and competition between market rationality and social rationality (Friedmann, 1987). As neoliberal ideology and the financialization of capital expands to all scales of settler governmentality, social rationalities become ever more equated with and subverted under market rationality. Mainstream urban land use and social planning systems are, in turn, structured to facilitate and derive financial benefits from property markets, for property owners, and particularly for elite rentier classes with significant propertied interests and political influence. This dominant mode of production shapes and enforces inequitable social relations and spatial hierarchies in Canadian cities.

So, rather than focus on the practices and perspectives of urban planning/planners to better understand how they might be improved to be more inclusive of indigeneity, which is problematic because of the structural rigidity and colonizing governmentality of state-led

planning, it became more important, and urgent, to critique the political, economic, and socio-spatial structures and processes that state-controlled planning is compelled to reproduce. To do so not only requires a sufficiently critical research methodology, but also a commitment to centering Indigenous ontologies and lived knowledge in such an interrogation: through what strategies have Indigenous inhabitants attempted to practice self-determination in Saskatoon's core west side neighbourhoods? What barriers have they faced? To what degree is inner-city 'revitalization' impacting upon urban Indigenous residents, their community spaces and networks, and their future-seeking aspirations?

### ***3.1.2 Prosperity through Partnerships***

From 2016 to 2017 I also participated in the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations' (FSIN's) "Prosperity through Partnerships" conference series, which consisted of three separate gatherings focused on relationship-building and education around Saskatchewan's Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement (TLEFA); First Nations' land acquisitions; the federal government's Additions to Reserve (ATR) policy; urban reserve creation; legislative, policy, and financial mechanisms for First Nations' economic development; and strategic land use planning in Saskatchewan and its municipalities. Attendees and presenters included First Nations Chiefs and council members, land managers, and TLE trustees; mayors, city councillors, and planning staff from several urban and rural municipalities; staff and delegates from the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan; lawyers; educators; and private sector representatives mainly from financial lending institutions. Two conferences were held in Saskatoon, and one in Regina.

My voluntary role was to sit in on presentations, take notes about the content of discussions and reactions among attendees, and to provide a summary report of my observations to the organizing committee. As a student researcher of geography and planning with interest in the ways that political and economic authority produce space and shape places in relation to urban Indigenous communities, I paid particularly close attention to relational and intergovernmental dynamics of the conference series: how is prosperity defined by different speakers, and whose perspectives are emphasized? How is the transformative potential of partnerships articulated by the presenters? What common themes emerge from attendees'

comments and questions, and how do their ideas relate to contemporary analyses contouring Indigenous rights, resurgence, and decolonized coexistence?

The first conference, *Introduction to Land Claims and Development*, emphasized wealth creation as the ideal cooperative path to prosperity for First Nations in Saskatchewan. Opening remarks from dignitaries varied from visionary statements about the historic nature of the gathering in the era of reconciliation to more prescriptive statements about the responsibilities of both First Nations' leadership and Canadian governments to make up for generations of Indigenous economic exclusion. The subsequent speakers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, postulated that First Nations can now facilitate their own economic inclusion by realizing the development and wealth-creating potential of fee simple land parcels acquired through TLE and specific land claims transfer payments. The key message conveyed by Canadian state representatives from municipal, provincial, and federal governments is that Saskatchewan and its cities are "open for business" or are welcoming of First Nations' investment and economic development partnerships.

Relatedly, a common theme that emerged from the presentations is that TLE and specific claims – and the legislative, policy, and regulatory apparatus through which these land transfers are carried out – offer First Nations novel opportunities to benefit from and contribute to regional economic growth into the future. The conference was predicated on educating about "best practices" in wealth creation through strategic land selection and development, but with little to no critical analysis about the larger historic and geographic contexts within which these processes are situated. This de-politicization of First Nations' land claims was noticed by one Indigenous attendee who questioned why Canadian governments "want us to buy back our own land". Others expressed frustration over the reach of Canada's jurisdictional authority; that it is "not our system", and that the spirit and intent of treaties from which mutual rights and responsibilities flow continue to go unfulfilled by the provincial and federal crown.

I continued to critically assess the next two iterations of the conference, which focused on *Legislative Options* for land, resource, and financial management, and *Urban Reserve Creation – Opportunity and Partnerships*. *Legislative Options* outlined a complex array of state-endorsed pathways for First Nations to access funding channels and to build capacity for land and economic development. Many of the presentations focused on First Nations' options to attain, through specific modes of economic development, what might be described as sectoral self-

government: the piecemeal transfer of jurisdictional authority over sector-specific decision making that has been historically (colonially) administered by Canada through the *Indian Act*.

These options include access to financing for commercial and industrial research and development, investment options for bands to manage their own-source revenue, and First Nations' management of on-reserve land uses and planning. These forms of sectoral self-government, which seemed to be welcomed by land managers and proponents of on-reserve economic development, claim to afford First Nations more autonomy over important internal decisions. Yet some Indigenous authors and activists have equated sectoral self-government with a narrow politics of recognition that serves to municipalize First Nations' authority over reserve land rather than respect their sovereign nationhood, traditional governance over customary land and treaty territories, and their full sense of self-determination (Diabo, 2020; King & Pasternak, 2018; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; McAdam, 2015).

The final conference, *Urban Reserve Creation*, emphasized strategies for First Nations to negotiate, acquire, and plan for land selections in Saskatchewan cities. In many of the presentations, proactive communication and fostering good relationships between First Nations and municipalities, as well as regional planning and economic development institutions, were highlighted. The third conference was unique because a few presenters raised some critically important questions and observations. The director of the Saskatoon Aboriginal Employment Partnership, for example, emphasized that wealth is not necessarily synonymous with value, and that First Nations' wealth has value only if it supports and is facilitated through the application of traditional Indigenous principles of relational wellbeing. He proposed a seven-generation model to guide Indigenous economic development in ways that are socially and ecologically responsible. Similarly, a land manager of a First Nation with several urban reserves expressed that the collective goals of community health and social sustainability should be primary considerations in strategic land uses for generating wealth. And a non-Indigenous member of the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth recognized a need for new approaches to intergovernmental collaboration that embed First Nations' meaningful representation in formal urban and regional planning regimes.

Viewed through an appreciative lens, the conference appeared to achieve its goals and was in many ways useful for those who attended. Government-to-government relationships, mutually advantageous economic partnerships, and reciprocal respect and learning were

emphasized as foundational to reconciliatory prosperity in Saskatchewan. However, it also became apparent over the course of three conferences that the pathways or ‘tools’ prescribed by Canada, Saskatchewan, and municipalities to repair relationships between First Nations and the Canadian state – and between Indigenous and settler society – are anchored to mobilizing the productive capacity of First Nations’ land for the purpose of accumulating wealth through participation in the market economy. Informal conversations with attendees suggested that the legal and policy framework – and dominant ideas about land, jurisdiction, property, and governance that foreground First Nations’ options for economic and social development – continues to be unsettling *and unsettled*.

Urban reserve creation represents contemporary pathways and material spaces for First Nations to exercise Indigenous urbanism and to ‘formally’ (through legally recognized, delegated jurisdiction) materialize Indigenous territory in prairie cities. Exploring the transformative potential *and* contested aspects of urban reserve creation, TLEFA, and Canada’s ATR policy can reveal much about the economic and political structures that contour Indigenous urbanism. For these reasons, I expanded a critical examination of neighbourhood revitalization to include and place in conversation with First Nations’ urban reserves in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan generally: to what extent do urban reserves, and the Saskatchewan TLEFA and federal ATR policy through which they are typically created, impact upon treaty rights and responsibilities to land as framed through Indigenous territory? In what ways do new urban reserves enable or constrain First Nations’ and urban Indigenous residents’ short- and long-term capacities to exercise self-determination in and in relation to what is now Saskatchewan and its cities? What does urban reserve creation reveal about the transformative potential of Indigenous urbanism in prairie cities?

### **3.2 Positionality and Methodological Considerations**

The research context presented in the previous sections weave historic and spatial considerations with existing material conditions as they are interpreted through lived experience, embodied knowledge, and urban spaces. Carrying out and interpreting social research is an inherently subjective endeavour and therefore requires the researcher to be transparent and reflexive about their epistemological positionality; their view of reality (ontology) and what can be ‘known’



about it. It is important, then, for researchers to position themselves within the social context of the places and in relation to the people or groups of focus, engaging constantly in self-reflection and, if necessary, embracing multiple methodologies and “flexible” methods (Robson, 2011); a sort of “critical multi-logicality” as Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) suggest. This section describes the epistemological grounding and tensions of my subjective positionality, it establishes critical materialism and critical place inquiry as methodology, and it underscores Indigenous territory as an analytical underpinning of this project.

In unpacking my own epistemological grounding, it is important to acknowledge that my subjective perception of reality has been shaped through a lifetime of social learning, personal experiences, and internal deliberation. From an early age I was taught how and what to know by my parents, teachers, the media, my social circles, and eventually by authors of books, professors, and other sources of intellectual authority. In this way my reality has been shaped in large part by dominant institutions. Furthermore, the information I have absorbed, analyzed, and understood as knowledge is embedded within the limited confines of the English language and my personal, lived spaces. In this way my epistemological position is relative, subjective, and constructed over time and through experience. What I have come to ‘know’ about ‘reality’ has also been shaped by the privilege with which I was born – that of a white male, raised in a middle-class urban suburb, in a stable home, in a patriarchal and settler colonial society. My personal way of knowing, or what I believe can be ‘known’ about ‘reality’, is not only reflective of the social circumstances that I have experienced throughout my life, but it has also been influenced, or perhaps more accurately – bounded – by institutions and systems with authoritative sway from which I have benefitted and through which I have advanced.

My formal education, for example, has been largely determined by the institutional machinery of western academia. Public schools and universities in Canada systematically control or gatekeep knowledge production and reproduce white settler paradigms over Indigenous and subaltern others. They have historically placed strict parameters on the constitution of knowledge, contributing to systems of power (i.e., racial capitalism and settler colonialism) through support for (and funding from) extractive industries that perpetuate the colonization of Indigenous peoples and land, and through research and pedagogy that reinforce liberal, Eurocentric paradigms. Universities in Canada have historically upheld positivist epistemologies that value observation, measurement, quantifiable (i.e., statistical) analysis, and the objective

deduction of ‘truths’ about ‘the human condition’. For these reasons, Indigenous peoples have long viewed academic research as an instrument of imperialism that appropriates, disempowers, dispossesses, and oppresses (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012), and it has been criticized by Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states as irrelevant, exclusionary, and damaging due to its penchant for misrepresenting and subverting Indigenous peoples, their territorial and relational ontologies and cosmologies, and their ancestral and land centred knowledge (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous epistemologies, articulated by Indigenous scholars and informed by their embodied knowledge and relational connections to place, communities, and stories, have created pedagogical and methodological space for the enhancement of Indigenous ways of knowing in Canadian universities, albeit with significant resistance from administrative and governing bodies (Battiste, 2000; Kovach, 2009; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). My encounters with written and oral articulations of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies (altogether expressing Indigenous knowledge and values) both in and outside of academia have effectually challenged – and changed – many of my inherited and conditioned assumptions about life, reality, the land, justice, governance, sovereignty, and the social, economic, political, and ecological systems with which we coexist differently.

The commonly held belief among Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island – that human reality is inseparable from all of Creation (the relational interconnectedness of all human and non-human beings with land and one another, which contrasts with positivist logics of human separation from such ‘things’) – is fundamentally distinctive from western traditions of thought and is embedded in language, ceremony, and in territorial ontologies of land as both “context and process” (L. Simpson, 2013). Indigenous epistemologies likewise value knowledge as relational, generative, co-creative, and interconnected between human and non-human beings, animated through the land and stories that are highly contextual yet not limited to material spaces or the physical senses (Martin & Booran, 2003; Kovach, 2009).

This dissertation is implicitly limited because I bear only a peripheral understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and relating to the world, and I rely on many western academic concepts and theories to frame my analysis. However, as I have expanded my reading and attention to Indigenous thought and critical analyses of settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and white supremacy, as well as the distinctive ways that these systems are perceived, endured, resisted, and transcended by Indigenous individuals, communities, academics, knowledge-

keepers, land and water defenders, and my friends, colleagues and neighbours, I have formed an epistemological hybridity and research paradigm that attempts to bridge my critical materialist viewpoint with phenomenological or lived knowledge of what Dorries et al. (2019) describe as settler colonial urbanism.

My objectives then, are to interpret, represent, and respect the experiential realities of Indigenous participants, expressed in meaningful, co-created, and generative dialogue about urban experience and lived spaces, as truths. I also acknowledge my limitations as a community outsider, with my own lived experiences, to interpret such truths, and I recognize that academic theory and knowledge cannot sufficiently encompass the density and complexity of Indigenous knowledge and individual experiences. Nevertheless, in this research I attempt to combine my “politics of skepticism” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010) – a critical interrogation of structures and processes of power that produce and violently enforce boundaries across Indigenous territory, spaces, and bodies – with the elevation of commonly shared Indigenous values related to resurgence and urbanism from the perspectives of ‘community knowers’ with diverse subjectivities and lived knowledge of urban contexts (Andrews, 2003).

I position questions of land, value, territory, and self-determination at the centre of participant conversations and my critical analysis of mainstream urbanism anchored to the colonial-capitalist production of urban space. This research is not an exploration of the vast multiplicity of identities, lived spaces, and experiential perspectives that diverse urban Indigenous communities would bring to a transformative future-seeking dialogue about urban space and place; this critical analysis is rather an attempt to open theoretical space and to argue for material transformation in urban land use and community planning praxes through which resurgent Indigenous paradigms should be respected, valued, supported, and operationalized in prairie cities. In this sense, my objective is ‘critical empowerment’ (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010, p. 143), or an “attempt to expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the decisions that crucially affect their lives.”

As was already mentioned, my long engagement with critical geography and political economy literature has instilled a partially materialist view of reality. Critical materialism refers to the analysis of social conditions through concomitant forces of capital and governmentality (and their constituent structures of power) that produce class antagonisms and the ‘uneven development’ of space across time. Critical materialism finds its roots in the historical/dialectical

materialism of Marxism, but since the 1970s theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, David Ley, Neil Brenner, Peter Marcuse, Doreen Massey, Loretta Lees, Neil Smith, and others have contributed to a ‘spatial turn’ in critical social theory. As Edward Soja (1980) explains, social realities

are not reproduced in society as a whole but in space as a whole, a concretized and produced space which has been progressively occupied by advanced capitalism, fragmented into parcels, homogenized into discrete commodities, organized into the locations of control, and extended to the global scale (p. 215).

While a materialist approach to critical geography continues to be an important frame of reference to examine political economies and class dynamics of spatial production, Soja (1980) also argues that critical materialism must consider the influence of human agency in spatial production and social reproduction. Soja suggests that capitalism simultaneously produces and is dependent upon vertical (social, hierarchical) and horizontal (spatial) divisions of labour that are reproduced *and resisted* by people in complex, highly interdependent processes, which he describes as the ‘social-spatial dialectic’. Giddens’ (1982) structuration theory is also instructive here because it recognizes that people’s lived spaces are simultaneously experienced and shaped through mutually constitutive or interdependent power structures *and* human agency in everyday life.

A subsequent ‘cultural turn’ in critical geography, emerging from feminist, poststructuralist, and postmodern attention to the multiplicity of embodied realities, identities, and meanings in everyday life, has expanded spatial theory to consider questions of biopower and biopolitics, identity formation, and the attachment of meanings to place. Tuck and McKenzie (2015, p. 195), quoting Massey (2005), describe the significance of the spatial and cultural turns as a dynamic “project...that presses against prior ways of taking up social science questions, not because space is less challenging than time, but because space presents us with the

challenge of our constitutive interrelatedness—and thus our collective implication in the outcomes of the interrelatedness; the radical contemporaneity of an ongoing multiplicity of others, human and nonhuman; and the ongoing and ever-specific project of the practices through which that sociability is to be configured.”

Given the complexity of our “constitutive interrelatedness”, geographic research that focuses on solely macro or micro ‘scales’ are insufficient in socio-spatial research, and a balanced analysis of the dialectical relationship between structure (macro-national-global) and agency (micro-local-embodied) is important for critical place inquiry.

Leitner and Sheppard (2013) further advocate for ‘unbounding’ the conceptual approaches, philosophical foundations, and the role of participants in critical urban geographic research. While progress has been made developing conceptual approaches that push geographic research to consider human agency and complex subjectivities of people, Leitner and Sheppard acknowledge that debates over geography’s philosophical foundations far outweigh efforts to develop complex and quality research aimed at improving people’s lived realities. The authors argue that critical urban geography must include structurally marginalized people in research as partners, supporting and advancing grassroots endeavours and situated, lived, and embodied knowledge. In this way, “critical theorists can gain new understandings of how power operates and in the process incorporate groups who had previously been excluded by their race, class, gender, sexuality or geographical place” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010, p. 141).

Exclusion, however, is a problematic word to describe Indigenous people’s social realities because it implies an ideal of inclusion, or incorporation, into western geographical imaginaries. As scholars of critical Indigenous studies have argued, a decolonized, just coexistence is incommensurable with inclusion because inclusion is not dedicated to transforming the material conditions, socio-spatial power relations, nor symbolic meanings in and of places. Instead, Indigenous resurgence seeks to regenerate traditionally principled and informed systems of territoriality, identity, and knowledge that influence all aspects of life and land, including in cities. Joanne Barker (2018, p. 20) accordingly asks, “[w]hat does Indigenous territory demand differently of the pedagogy of political movements and the frameworks of critical theory? How does Indigenous territory change understandings of the relationships and responsibilities of knowing?”

Building from these progressions in critical geography, and recognizing that considerations of Indigenous territory are largely absent from western spatial paradigms and geographic research, Tuck and McKenzie (2015, p. 19) argue for a critical place inquiry that:

- Understands places as themselves mobile, shifting over time and space and through interactions with flows of people, other species, and social practices

- Entails, at a more localized level, understanding places as both influencing social practices as well as being performed and (re)shaped through practices and movements of individuals and collectives
- Conceptualizes place as interactive and dynamic due to these timespace characteristics
- Recognizes that disparate realities determine not only how place is experienced but also how it is understood and practiced in turn (e.g., in relation to culture, geography, gender, race, sexuality, age, or other identifications and experiences)
- Addresses spatialized and place-based processes of colonization and settler colonization, and works against their further erasure or neutralization through social science research
- Extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider the land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place
- Aims to further generative and critical politics of places through such conceptualizations/practices and via a relational ethics of accountability to people and place.

This critical place inquiry framework offers an important reference point for socio-spatial research in settler colonial states and their urban contexts.

In this research I attempt to balance a critical interrogation of mainstream urbanism's structural and material production of space with the lived experiences and idiosyncratic perceptions of people subjected and contributing to urban change; to critique socio-spatial structures that are dominated by state, settler, and capital interests while centering Indigenous analyses of these structures – and ideas for transforming them – in specific jurisdictional contexts. The selected research methods, then, are predominantly qualitative. Ponterotto (2005, p. 128) explains that “qualitative methods refer to a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a context-specific setting” and are rooted in the epistemological position that lived knowledge of reality is subjective, relative, and relevant. Good qualitative research is not so much determined by the researcher's epistemological foundations but must, as Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) prescribe, “rely on *persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof* in arguing their position.” The qualitative analysis of this research is approached through a critical-interpretive paradigm in which I attempt to “disrupt and challenge the status quo” (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 129) of mainstream urbanism and the neoliberal production of urban space in prairie cities.

In the next section I describe the qualitative methods and analysis of this research, which is premised here with a summary of the project's methodological and analytical limitations. As was mentioned above, my role as a researcher and interpreter of qualitative data is implicitly

limited because I am a non-Indigenous community outsider with a peripheral understanding of the multitudes of Indigenous experience, knowledge, and ontologies. My positionality and subjectivities are inherent limitations because I interpret qualitative data through a conceptual apparatus that has been influenced by my own lived experience and ways of interpreting reality, as well as western traditions of knowledge production in academia. The individualistic nature of doctoral research, analysis, and writing means that the interpretation and presentation of findings is tinted by my conceptual and theoretical lens.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which are discussed in the next section, are useful research methods to co-create knowledge through dialogue and to facilitate space for participants to articulate their lived experiences and perceptions of reality. However, this research, given the enormous density of indigeneity in Saskatchewan cities, would be more effectively relevant in project-based, community-embedded, participatory action research with many people facilitating and co-learning through collective, material actions in urban contexts. This project, as is, focuses largely on political and economic structures through which Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settler society relate to land, urban space, and the Canadian state. This lens is insufficient to capture the nuanced complexity and intersectionality of individual identities, community dynamics, and lived experiences. Specifically, this project does not centre questions of sex, gender (and patriarchy), or age in the guiding research questions and framework for analysis; a significant limitation given the inextricable relationship between personal identity and lived space. Youth perspectives are also not represented in this research; a particularly salient limitation since several key findings relate directly to young people's urban education, access to land, resources and safe spaces, wellbeing and nourishment, and material qualities of life.

### **3.3 Methods and Analysis**

As discussed in Section 3.1, this research path began with a critical discourse analysis of newsprint media framing the Riversdale neighbourhood over the past four decades, as well as some ethnographic observation but mostly discourse analysis of the Prosperity through Partnerships conference series. Critical discourse analysis, according to Van Dijk (2001, p. 352), is “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse,

dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” I formulated some basic themes that bridged these initial analyses with critical geography theory and Indigenous resurgence literature, both of which seek transformative material and social change. A lens of ‘neighbourhood revitalization’ connected Indigenous urbanism, self-determination, community agency, and transformative resurgence with urban planning, gentrification, and spatial production. Urban reserves were positioned through treaty, land, and entitlement, and how these concepts are represented as values related to territorial regeneration and sovereignty among First Nations.

During this initial stage, I met and had telephone correspondence with several different people (Indigenous professors, community agency directors, First Nation land managers, and community members) to discuss initial ideas and directions, including some individuals who participated in interviews. This process, which also included some email correspondence, was supported by the University of Saskatchewan’s Community Engagement and Outreach Office at Station 20 West, who helped to establish connections and provide meeting and workspace. These conversations helped to inform the themes and questions that contoured qualitative research methods, in the process helping to build rapport and shared ownership with Indigenous organizations and potential research participants. I then asked people to participate in the research, providing information and consent forms that outlined the research purposes, the researcher’s responsibilities, and the rights and expectations of each participant (see Appendix A).

Participants represented and were selected based on purposeful sampling, which “stresses the search for ‘information rich cases’. Such respondents are at ease and talk freely with the researcher such that a great deal can be learned about the research question” (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). An array of methodological strategies may be employed to generate knowledge with research participants, but they should necessarily be conversational, reflexive, and meaningful for those involved (Kovach, 2009). Semi-structured life-world interviews and focus groups were selected as qualitative research methods that would generate meaningful and rich dialogue. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 27) explain that a semi-structured life-world interview “attempts to understand themes of the lived everyday world from the subjects’ own perspectives” and “seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the



meaning of the described phenomena.” Kvale and Brinkmann expand on this, describing a semi-structured interview this way:

It comes close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview it has a purpose and involves a specific approach and technique; it is semi-structured – it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire. It is conducted according to an interview guide that focuses on certain themes and that may include suggested questions. The interview is usually transcribed, and the written text and sound recording together constitute the materials for the subsequent analysis of meaning (2009, p. 27).

In-depth, one-on-one interviews with key informants were implemented with a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix B) to gain a range of informed and experiential perspectives about themes such as treaties, land and territorial sovereignty, self-determination, local place histories, urban life, and community rights, needs, interests, and aspirations.

In addition to individual interviews, focus groups were also implemented using a thematic, semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix C). Focus groups are dialogue-generating interviews conducted between a researcher or facilitator and several individuals about a given topic (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Focus Group interviews are semi-guided, collective conversations that generally consist of the researcher, who acts as a moderator, and six to ten participants, where “the prime concern is to encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topic in focus for the group” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 150). Focus groups are useful for qualitative research because they can trigger emotionally expressive dialogue that is rich in meaning, and they can be implemented in varied ways and can be adapted to many cultural contexts (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups can empower participants “to exercise a fair degree of control over their own interactions” (Morgan, 1996, p. 133). Focus groups complement key informant interviews to generate a larger breadth of information and perspectives about research topics that can then be compared against the in-depth data obtained through interviews (Morgan, 1996).

For one-on-one semi-structured interviews about neighbourhood revitalization, I met with senior staff members from social enterprises and Indigenous community organizations, including the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, and Camponi Housing. I also interviewed two former interns who contributed to the Askîy Project, which is administered by CHEP Saskatoon and is an urban Indigenous food sovereignty project and social enterprise program. They were both financially

compensated for their contributions. Additionally, I held three focus group interviews: one with nine staff members of Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), one with two community members and an Elder at Station 20 West, and one with six community members at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

The focus group at CUMFI was organized by its director and held with staff members over a weekday lunch hour. A meal was generously provided by CUMFI prior to the interview. The Station 20 West focus group was organized in coordination with a local Métis artist and core neighbourhood community leader who was financially compensated for recruiting participants and refining the research questions in early stages of the project. An Elder was offered tobacco and financial compensation for blessing the gathering, establishing protocol, and participating in the conversation, and a community organizer was also compensated for their participation. A meal was also provided before our conversation. The focus group at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre was organized by a local acquaintance and included fellow users of the centre. Each participant was financially compensated for their contributions.

The participants of focus groups and interviews about neighbourhood revitalization included 13 women and 10 men. The conversational themes included guiding questions about identity and home in the city, the value(s) of specific urban spaces, community organizations, and their relational qualities, attachments to territories, nations, places, and rural communities, and perceptions of neighbourhood change in relation to community self-determination and transformative urbanism. Participants contributed a rich diversity of knowledge, lived experiences, and perceptions of urban qualities of life, space, and place, which were then placed in conversation with the theoretical and conceptual framework outlined in Chapter Two. The findings from this group of interviews and focused groups were organized into the following themes: 1) significance of core west side neighbourhoods for Indigenous urbanism in Saskatoon; 2) roles of Indigenous organizations and social enterprises in Indigenous residents' lives; 3) perceptions of neighbourhood revitalization; and 4) ideal land uses, urban governance, and planning for Indigenous urbanism.

For questions related to urban reserve creation, I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with an array of First Nation individuals with diverse but direct experience with urban reserve creation and TLE negotiations and management. These people included four land managers of First Nations with urban reserves and land holdings, a former Chief who negotiated

TLE, a senior staff member from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, a senior research and policy analyst from the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, a TLE trustee, and a senior staff member of the Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network. Participants identified as members of Red Pheasant Cree Nation, Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation, Yellow Quill First Nation, Zagime Anishinabek (Sakimay First Nations), Little Pine First Nation, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Muskoday First Nation, and One Arrow First Nation. All these participants were men, which is a significant limitation of the data collected but also represents the male-dominated gender dynamics of these sorts of positions.

The conversational themes included guiding questions about treaty rights and responsibilities, territorial nationhood and the significance of land, the meaning of prosperity and partnerships with settler governments, connections between urban and rural self-determination, and future-seeking priorities related to TLE and urban reserves. The findings from this group of interviews were organized into the following themes after coding: 1) historic dispossession and economic coercion; 2) TLE and specific claims procedures; 3) legislative framework options for sectoral self-governance; 4) motivations for urban reserve creation and fee simple land acquisitions in Saskatchewan cities; and 5) First Nations' short- and long-term strategic priorities related to sovereignty and self-determination.

Before each interview and focus group, the research questions and project goals were described, and the content of the participant consent form was outlined. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, though some opted to be identified by their organizational, professional, or band positions. It was explained that there are no foreseen risks to participation beyond those they may associate with speaking openly from their professional vantage points, and I asked participants how they would prefer to be identified following each conversation so they could make more informed decisions about their identification. Interview transcripts were also sent to one-on-one interview participants to review our dialogue and their contributions prior to analysis. All participants were told that their participation is voluntary, that they may refuse to answer any question asked, and that they may withdraw from the interview at any time for any reason. Interviews and focus groups were conducted between December 2016 and November 2017. They were recorded with consent from participants, ranged from 38:09 minutes to 1:51:19 hours, and they were transcribed and coded using NVivo qualitative research software.

The research objectives and questions described in Chapter One and reiterated in this chapter are designed to examine two case studies in the sense that urban reserve creation and neighbourhood revitalization processes are specific events and sites of social significance in particular settler jurisdictions. However, these contemporary examples of urban change are not bounded by jurisdiction, and they are indeed interconnected in larger structures that permeate the lived spaces and experiences of Indigenous people and communities. So, while the semi-structured themes and questions that guided interviews and focus groups were developed to place critical geographic theory in conversation with Indigenous thought and people's lived experiences related to these cases, the approach taken to analyzing and conveying meaning through interviews and focus groups *about* these cases used a grounded theory method (Glaser, 1992; Robson, 2011). Grounded theory is not so much a theoretical basis for inquiry, but rather a process or procedure for generating meaning from the data itself (Robson, 2011).

A grounded theory approach to interviewing allows for “exchanges in which interviewees can talk back, clarify, and explain their points” that help to “explain what is happening in the terms of those involved in a situation” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 4). Analyses of data that are grounded in the knowledge generated during semi-structured interviews and focus groups were done so through three sets of inductive coding and thematic organization arising from the discourse (Robson, 2011). Robson, summarizing Corbin and Strauss (2008), describes these levels as open coding (categories of information), axial coding (organizing categories of information into related phenomenon, causal conditions, strategies, context and conditions, and consequences), and selective coding (conditional propositions about the data) (2011, p. 149). Throughout this process, codes and themes were continuously and reflexively checked against one another, contradictions were identified for further investigation, transcripts were placed in conversation among different participants to identify common trends, and final themes were then interpreted in relation to the literature discussed in Chapter Two to address the research questions.

In the presentation of the data in Chapters Four and Five, interview narratives were kept in detailed quotations to allow participants' dialogue to be accurately represented and judiciously contextualized in relation to the full conversation. Participants' perspectives and recounting of lived experience are centred to guide the 'story' of the data, thereby balancing a critical-interpretative paradigm as researcher with concepts, ideas, and analyses generated by

participants. Triangulation of data was implemented to bolster the validity of results. Triangulation refers to convergence, or “when multiple sources provide similar findings” to strengthen credibility (Baxter & Eyles, 1996, p. 514). “Source triangulation” in the research means that multiple participants held converging perspectives that would be considered a substantial finding, and quotations from multiple respondents are presented in the findings (Baxter & Eyles, 1996). Lastly, the findings of this research are specific to geographic and jurisdictional contexts of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and the treaty and traditional territories that overlap these jurisdictions; however, there is also a degree of transferability of the findings to other prairie urban contexts due to the structural similarities that empower and reproduce the colonial-capitalist production of space. Prairie cities have some of the largest urban Indigenous communities in Canada that are connected through political movements, mutual aid networks, common values, and similar experiences with the settler state and whitestream society. Urban land use and planning systems are similarly structured across provincial and municipal jurisdictions, and the perspectives offered by participants can help to inform strategies that transform urbanism elsewhere. The next two chapters present the findings of interviews and focus groups in relation to the conceptual and theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two.

## Chapter Four

# Findings – Emergent Spaces and Structural Limitations of First Nations' Urban Reserves in Saskatchewan

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the spatiality of the Canadian state's political, economic, and legal-jurisdictional apparatus in relation to First Nations' strategic courses of action within an increasingly neoliberal context of recognition through compensation. To do so, I centre experiential perspectives from individuals involved with First Nations' land claims, treaty land entitlement (TLE) negotiation, and urban reserve creation in varied capacities. I argue that the Canadian state's impetus to negotiate land claim settlement agreements and additions to reserves (ATRs) with prairie First Nations is principally to avoid costly and potentially disempowering litigation that could unsettle its authority to regulate jurisdictional boundaries, property relations, and therefore social and economic order within its territorial boundaries. Economically, the Canadian state's structural imperative to facilitate the expansion of land and market productivity compels governments at all scales to create stable, predictable, and secure regulatory geographies for capital investment and therefore economic growth (Pasternak & Dafnos, 2017; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015).

In Saskatchewan, a province that is heavily dependent on resource extraction and the productive capacities of land – and its cities on real estate exchange values and efficiency of market and commodity flows – the potential for Indigenous land claims and treaty rights to disrupt the province's political economy poses significant challenges, and alternatives, to the colonial-capitalist settler status quo (Pasternak & Dafnos, 2017). Urban reserves and the regulatory framework through which they are created might therefore be viewed as part and parcel of a broader state strategy to pacify Indigenous resistance through a liberal 'recognition' agenda (Coulthard, 2007; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; A. Simpson, 2014; L. Simpson, 2008; 2013; Tomiak, 2017). Despite the appearance of improved Indigenous-state relations facilitated via urban reserve creation – particularly between First Nations and urban municipalities – this chapter demonstrates tensions and contradictions between the motivating logics of First Nations

and the Canadian state – and among First Nations themselves – to negotiate land claims settlements and to facilitate political-economic cooperation with settler society (Tomiak, 2017).

A more nuanced analysis of individuals' experiential perspectives reveals urban reserves' many entanglements with colonial-capitalism, which are rendered visible through an attention to settler boundaries of property and jurisdiction (Dorsett & McVeigh, 2012; Pasternak, 2017). Such entanglements are evident in First Nations' seemingly contradictory reasoning for utilizing Canada's regulatory machinery and spatial ordering of jurisdiction and property as part of a long-term project to regain control over land and to diminish dependency on the state. Part of this reasoning stems from a belief that Canada and Saskatchewan will never willingly relinquish state-determining authority over Indigenous lives and land, so First Nations must use available tools to enhance their capacities for self-determination from within systems dominated by state-regulated jurisdiction and circuits of capital. Interviews suggest a seldom-acknowledged temporal dimension of urban reserves as expedient but provisional pathways to access urban space and markets for longer-term strategies to expand First Nations' legally recognized land base, economic self-sufficiency, governing capacities, and sociocultural revitalization. I therefore position urban reserves as liminal spaces that embody tensions and contradictions between struggles of, and for, freedom from settler colonial power (Tully, 2000).

The development and expansion of new urban reserves has become an important locus of First Nations-state relations since 1982, when Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, with the approval of Canada despite protests from the City of Prince Albert and Province of Saskatchewan, created the first new urban reserve. The parcel of land is the former site of the Prince Albert Indian Residential School, which was crown property purchased by the band from the federal government. Since that time, due in part to the precedent established through the first negotiated municipal services agreement (MSA) between the City of Saskatoon and Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in 1988, urban reserves are becoming commonplace in Saskatchewan cities. Whereas the process of creating an urban reserve was initially beleaguered by settler fears, prejudices, and unwillingness to negotiate, urban reserve creation is now considered 'business as usual' in Saskatchewan (Barron & Garcea, 1999).

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two establishes new urban reserves as geographical microcosms of broader, complex, Indigenous-state relations that can reveal much about the spatial dynamics of 'contact zones' (Porter & Barry, 2015) through which indigeneity

encounters settler colonial power at urban and rural scales. Urban reserves symbolically and materially impact upon urban inhabitants in the daily pulse of civic life and might therefore be understood as spaces that are also transforming social-spatial relations in cities. They are being harnessed by First Nations to build better relations with settler governments and communities, to generate financial independence, to create economic opportunities for band members, to attain a larger (legally recognized) land base, and to reclaim political agency over on-reserve decision making,

Yet, although urban reserves are unique spaces due to their motivations, their emergent forms and functions, and their symbolic and material presence, they do not necessarily challenge nor significantly transform the colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order of prairie cities, nor Indigenous territory, in the prairie west (Tomiak, 2017). Urban reserves are in many ways products of historic assemblages of settler colonial power performed through bureaucratic territory and legal jurisdiction enmeshing Canada's 150-year nation-state project across Indigenous territory, and they are woven into a frayed fabric of settler property threaded with legacies of colonial violence, dispossession, and Indigenous resistance. To appropriately and critically situate First Nations' land claims and urban reserve creation requires, as argued in Chapter Two, an understanding of: 1) Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination against Canada's settler colonial logic and its strategic containment of First Nations' resistance through a state-sponsored liberal politics of recognition; and 2) the ongoing territorialization of settler jurisdiction, regulated and delegated by the Canadian state through liberal property regimes and relations, and anchored to an ongoing structure of capital accumulation by Indigenous dispossession.

The focus of this chapter is urban reserve creation in Saskatchewan cities, but the development and uses of urban reserves take place within a much broader and complex apparatus of Canadian state legislation, policies, and regulations, as well as First Nations' strategic maneuvering in relation to this framework over time. First Nations reserves are complex geographical spaces that evade simple definitions or generalizability. Under the *Indian Act*, reserves are lands held in trust for "the use and benefit of the respective Bands for which they were set apart" by the crown (*Indian Act* 18[1]), which means they cannot be bought or sold unless they are first lawfully surrendered to the crown by a band council resolution. Due to their collective characteristics as lands held in trust, reserves harbour distinctive property rights that



functionally differ from fee simple land ownership under the common law tradition. However, it has long been the federal government's position that the special land status of reserves and their distinctive forms of property be converted, either wholesale through modern treaty negotiations or piecemeal through contemporary legislative options and specific land claims settlements, to property forms and land uses consistent with the legal fixity and economic certainty that individual fee simple ownership enforces (Blomley, 2015; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; Pasternak, 2015; Tomiak, 2017). Urban reserve creation takes place amid broader political and economic geographies that severely constrain their uses, binding First Nations' self-determination to corporate participation in the market economy through municipalized forms of self-government regulated by and answerable to crown authority via state jurisdiction, with the seemingly contradictory but commonly held long-term goal among First Nations of transforming or transcending these systems. This chapter contours the nuanced liminality of First Nations urban reserves as delegated, delimited, expedient, hybrid, transitional, *and* transformative spaces.

## **4.2 The Legislative, Policy, and Regulatory Apparatus of First Nations' Additions to Reserves**

All new or expanded First Nations reserves are created through the federal government's ATR policy, which was initially drafted in 1972 and has since been updated in 2001 and 2016. The ATR policy was initially implemented because the *Indian Act* did not possess any mechanism to expand the acreage of First Nations' reserve territories nor to create new reserves. Prior to 1951 there was no need for Canada to create a reserve expansion provision because it was illegal for First Nations to hire a lawyer to pursue land claims in court. In 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada's Calder decision (*Calder et al. v. Attorney-General of British Columbia*) set a legal precedent for the existence of Aboriginal title within the common law. The case sent a clear judicial signal to the federal government that First Nations have a stronger basis for land claims over traditional territories than had previously been assumed, which triggered the unilateral creation of a federal policy for comprehensive land claims typically involving large swaths of territory and delegated self-government arrangements in regions without prior treaties such as British Columbia, Quebec, and the northern Territories. Specific claims were also launched after

Calder, which are individual cases of First Nations' litigation against Canada that stem from land or fiduciary debts owed by the crown due to its breach of treaties, its unlawful expropriation of a band's reserve land, and Indian Affairs' many cases of fraud and mismanagement of band resources (Peters, 2007). The ATR policy is a direct result of specific claims and Canada's need for an internal mechanism to expand or create First Nations' reserves.

Specific claims are relevant to urban reserve creation, but they will not be examined at length in this section. Rather, the primary focus will be on TLE because it is through the settlement monies and regulatory structure of Saskatchewan's TLEFA that most First Nations have purchased and transferred urban parcels to reserves in that province. Saskatchewan's TLEFA is a negotiated agreement between the governments of Saskatchewan, Canada, and 25 First Nations, formalized in 1992, with an additional eight bands signing on later. The TLEFA resulted from First Nations' litigation against Canada, and reserve creation and expansion under this framework represents a legal obligation of the crown. In what is now Saskatchewan, the numbered treaties (4, 6, 8, and 10), except for Treaty 5, guaranteed each band one square mile of reserve land per family of five, or 128 acres per person, and Treaties 2 and 5 guarantee 32 acres per person (Martin-McGuire 1999) to inhabit. As Martin-McGuire (1999) describes from a combination of written and oral accounts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many First Nations did not obtain their promised acreage due to a variety of inadequate and inconsistent surveying methods. Many individuals and families were not present at surveys conducted by the federal government during the first treaty annuity payments, which reflected a rapidly changing political economy, food shortage crisis, and the subsequent displacement of Indigenous families from their home territories due to the catastrophic destruction of the bison population by settlers and the RCMP (Martin-McGuire 1999).

In 1976, over a century after the first numbered treaties were signed, a TLE "Saskatchewan Formula" was negotiated between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada. While Canada has a legal obligation to ensure that entitlement bands receive the acreage of land that was promised by way of treaty, the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Agreement legally compels Saskatchewan to facilitate the transfer of unoccupied crown lands under provincial jurisdiction to Canada for the purpose of transferring that land to reserve status (*Saskatchewan Natural Resources Transfer Agreement [Treaty Land Entitlement] Act*, 1993). This of course says nothing of the contested

nature of Indigenous claims to inherent treaty rights and agreed upon responsibilities, including the use and occupation of traditional territories.

Reserve land is what it is, but that perception, especially with the provincial crown, is the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement, which is...1930 legislation, transfers the administration and control of lands and resources to the provincial crowns. At the time of treaty, the thought was, especially if I speak with respect to the hunting, fishing, and trapping as an issue, the First Nations, the way they understood it, was those resources would remain the responsibility of First Nations to access because a lot of their living was based on harvesting, and there is documented undertakings by the Treaty Commissioner who said that they will remain with you as part of treaty. But the NRTA just hollowed that out, right? And there was no discussion with the First Nations on any of that.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

Nevertheless, the 1930 NRTA informs Canada's constitutional basis for each government's participation in TLE negotiations. The Saskatchewan Formula would have transferred 946,532 acres of crown land to 15 bands, but its implementation was flawed, and the location and quality of 'available' unoccupied crown land was insufficient for First Nations' needs and aspirations (INAC, n.d.). Further litigation ensued until an Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) was established in 1989 to facilitate renewed TLE negotiations. A senior staff member of the OTC described the creation of TLEFA this way:

Bands from down south, from the Treaty 4 area...had come together to file a lawsuit against the federal government on this outstanding question. [It] really accelerated government to want to resolve the issue without going to court, and so out of that scenario...we had the federal government and the FSIN agreeing that a Treaty Commissioner might be the vehicle by which they could negotiate or stickhandle their way through the difficult areas that they were experiencing in setting up a process of resolving the outstanding land question... So, initially then, with the first Treaty Commissioner Cliff Wright, his job was strictly treaty land entitlement... so for about probably four years they did extensive research, and they trained the First Nations how to do their own research to establish what the numbers were exactly in terms of people who were not part of the enumeration when the first treaty payments were being made after the first survey of their land...

[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

The 1992 TLEFA addresses these longstanding land debts through an equity formula for First Nations to acquire their promised "shortfall acres" and additional "equity quantum" acres or

monetary “equity payment” compensation to account for individual bands’ population growth since their signing of treaty.

Once a First Nation’s shortfall acres are determined based on membership numbers at the time of treaty, the equity formula does not simply transfer an amount of money or land equivalent to the band’s growth in membership over time; rather, it multiplies the percentage of each band’s shortfall by its current population numbers. For example:

Band “A” had a reserve surveyed for it in 1890. The survey allotted 10,000 acres. However, the population of the Band at the time was 100, therefore the treaty land entitlement should have been 12,800 acres (100 people x 128 acres).

The per capita reserve allotment was, therefore, only 100 acres (10,000 acres divided by 100 people) instead of the 128 acres per capita as required by the provisions of treaty (“Shortfall Acres”). The percentage of shortfall in relation to the total amount of land received by Band A would likewise be approximately 22%.

The population in Band A on March 31, 1991 is 500. To calculate the treaty land entitlement due now, the following formula would apply: 500 people x 128 acres = 64,000 acres x 22% (percentage of shortfall expressed on either an individual or Band basis) 14,080 acres (“Equity Quantum”).

The quantum of entitlement would, therefore, be 14,080 acres in 1992 (Wright, 1990, as quoted in Innes, 2014, p. 174).

Under the TLEFA, First Nations do not simply obtain unoccupied crown land as the “Saskatchewan Formula” proposed; they must purchase land on a “willing buyer from willing seller” basis with entitlement monies calculated through the equity formula. This has important implications for how the crown frames treaty relationships, essentially requiring that a “Band must transform itself into a realtor to achieve land restoration” (Pasternak et al., 2013, p. 74).

Entitlement monies consist of two pools of compensation: first, an equity payment, which is derived by multiplying each band’s equity quantum acres by the 1989 average price of unimproved farmland in Saskatchewan (\$262.19 per acre); and second, a minerals payment, which equals each band’s shortfall acres by the 1989 average price of minerals in Saskatchewan (\$45.00 per acre). One participant explained that the stagnation of these prices reflects the state’s view of the 1992 TLEFA as a final fulfillment of its treaty obligations rather than an initial step in a long process of land and territorial reconciliation.

The intent back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, within the capacity of the governing bodies, I think that we came...really close to the spirit and intent of the treaties. There was...a window of opportunity that occurred at that time that allowed this agreement to become real...but what I've seen since then is that there's been some backsliding... The federal government...continues to think they found the answer and [that the TLEFA] doesn't need to be reviewed or kept up to date. There are formulas inside of that agreement that are based on numbers that were relevant in 1990 but are certainly not relevant in 2016 or 17. Some of the numbers are way out, and it makes the application of the agreement almost impossible... Some of the values on land, they're 1990 numbers. I don't know if you were around in 1990 but...land was cheap. That's not true today. Land values have gone up significantly since then.  
[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

While the TLEFA is a negotiated settlement between First Nations, Canada, and Saskatchewan that is widely considered ground-breaking in terms of Indigenous-state cooperation, it has not embodied an equality of power sharing among governing parties.

Furthermore, although Saskatchewan's TLEFA provides a standardized apparatus for the negotiated settlement of longstanding treaty claims to shortfalls of reserve land, this appears more so to reflect Canada's desire for an efficient, cost-effective, and timely remedy that is favourable to the state's objectives compared to the alternative, which would involve individual cases of litigation or extralegal resistance.

The only reason we have treaty land entitlement was because some First Nations were suing and getting huge settlements... The Government of Canada wanted to limit their exposure and their liability, so they came up with this treaty land entitlement formula that they negotiated [from the standpoint of] we won't fight you [in the courts], but you got to agree that you will take it... They didn't want...every Band suing for huge amounts of money. Don't forget, before that we couldn't sue. First Nations couldn't sue for land through the government... They eventually made it illegal for any lawyer to take any money to fight an Indian land claim... So, no, I don't think it was the intent of the government to fulfill the...honour of the treaties. It was just to limit their exposure and they've done it... The government doesn't give us anything they don't have to give us. We've got to fight and claw for everything from our side of the treaty, and even then, they try to claw it back.  
[Land Manager, Muskoday First Nation]

By streamlining a negotiated settlement that accounts for all individual TLE claims, the framework lacks acknowledgement of and mechanisms to respond appropriately to the historic and geographical specificity of each First Nation's experience with colonization and the legacy of institutional and socialized racism that on-reserve communities continue to face.

In her research into the history of Witchehan Lake First Nation's TLE settlement, McLeod (2001) finds that the band's relationship with neighbouring settler communities has been one of ongoing conflict due to disparate land use and occupancy priorities that reflect each community's vastly different values and claims to jurisdiction. Conflicting land practices represent distinctive modes of socio-spatial organization that continue to strain, rather than reconcile, Indigenous-settler relations in the area. McLeod argues that the TLEFA glosses over First Nations' oral treaty histories, while treating their experiences with localized racism and manifestations of settler colonial power as homogenous. As McLeod (2001, pp. 179-180) suggests, "the limitations of the agreement, the conditions under which settlement was reached and the time constraints of the research to determine the shortfall and equity acres of each entitlement Band all contribute to an atmosphere of unresolved conflicts." This point is crucial to understand the extent to which, despite the presence of collaboration, Canada's and First Nations' interests and goals diverge in the negotiation and implementation of the TLEFA, which will be expanded upon throughout this section with attention paid to contradictions surrounding treaties, sovereignty, and jurisdiction.

The enlargement of First Nations' reserve territories resulting from both specific claims and the TLEFA is carried out through the federal government's ATR policy, which addresses a wide range of jurisdictional and procedural items. The ATR policy dictates the steps that First Nations must follow to convert land to reserve status. Under the 2016 ATR policy, First Nations can apply to expand their reserve territories under three policy categories: 1) Legal Obligations and Agreements, which encompasses provincial TLE frameworks and specific claims settlement agreements, and modern treaties (self-government and land exchange agreements); 2) Community Additions, which are typically contiguous or nearby extensions of principal reserves to accommodate contemporary social needs of on-reserve populations, such as expanded housing and recreational space, protection of culturally significant sites, and economic development for which a band must demonstrate justifiable reasons for reserve conversion over other forms of land tenure, such as fee simple ownership; and 3) Tribunal Decisions, which is a path taken by First Nations whose outstanding specific claims against the crown's breach of treaty obligations, or its illegal dispossession of reserve land, has not resulted in a settlement agreement (INAC, 2016, Directive 9.0). The independent Specific Claims Tribunal was established in 2008 amid an

intensifying political landscape of Indigenous dissent to resolve the massive backlog of claims initiated by First Nations against Canada (Pasternak et al., 2013).

When a First Nation chooses to convert a land parcel to reserve under the ATR, they must develop and submit a Reserve Creation Proposal to Indian Affairs – what is now CIRNAC – which must be formally initiated through a band council resolution requiring a simple majority membership vote (INAC, 2016, Directive 14.0). Whereas the ATR was initially intended to convert only unoccupied crown land to reserve, as of 2016 it may be employed to convert First Nations' fee simple property holdings as well. An ATR proposal must meet the minimum requirements of one of the three policy categories, and because privately owned land is now eligible for conversion, First Nations must demonstrate that they have consulted in good faith with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments whose jurisdictional authority over bylaws and taxation do not apply to reserve land, as well as any third parties that may hold legal interests in the property.

The applicant First Nation must investigate and attempt to resolve all existing encumbrances or third-party rights and interests in the land, such as leases, licenses, permits, easements, rights of way, liens, and so on. This includes other Indigenous communities that may have traditional uses, occupancy claims, or rights of access over the land in question. CIRNAC and provincial governments have a constitutional duty to consult with Indigenous groups to ensure that their legally recognized Aboriginal and treaty rights are upheld in land selections and conversions to reserve, and they therefore follow the federal Duty to Consult policy, Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework, as well as Justice Canada's title search process to clear the crown's legal obligations.

The land's physical condition is a significant consideration under the ATR policy and must undergo an environmental assessment to determine if it meets Canada's and the province's Applicable Environmental Standard for its intended uses or development project(s), which, along with third party interests, can significantly impede First Nations from selecting certain properties due to the time constraints of consultation and review, and the high potential costs related to environmental cleanup or structural repair.

In order to convert to reserve you need to have free and clear title, so there's got to be no liens, no encumbrances...and it has to be environmentally clean. So, anything...like asbestos pipes would have to be gutted out, and that is an expensive proposition there

for some bands to do. So...sometimes what I do is when there's new staff of a First Nation in TLE that ask me questions about how to do this and that, I say you've got to look at [it from a position of] not just [that] you like this land and what it can do for you; you've got to look at it and say, can I convert it to reserve status? And you've got to look at everything...You've got to inspect the property...and if you find that it's too costly – too time consuming – it's probably just not worth it to even acquire that property.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

As already mentioned, a First Nation must also consult with affected local governments to address a range of issues that arise from the change in jurisdiction to federal reserve status. The ATR policy recommends that First Nations and municipalities develop memorandums of understanding or protocol agreements to negotiate arrangements for municipal services, decision making and dispute resolution mechanisms, land use and bylaw compatibility, and compensation for the municipality's net tax loss since reserve land is not taxable under provincial and municipal jurisdictions. Municipal-First Nation negotiations are of central importance to urban reserve creation, which will be expanded upon later in this section.

Once a First Nation develops its proposal in full, CIRNAC's Regional Director General reviews the proposal and advises the Deputy Minister through a letter of support to grant an Approval in Principle for reserve conversion (INAC, 2016, Directive 15.6). Among the many considerations that the Regional Director General and Deputy Minister weigh prior to issuing a letter of support to the Minister, the wealth creation potential of the property for the First Nation and surrounding communities is paramount.

In providing advice to the Minister of INAC or the Governor in Council on the merits of the Reserve Creation Proposal, INAC will comment on the social and economic prosperity of the First Nation and describe any other impacts or benefits flowing from the Reserve Creation (INAC, 2016, Directive 12.0).

Participants expressed disdain for the asymmetrical power that the federal government performs not only in evaluating and approving new reserve proposals and designations, but also in its interpretation of treaty; a major finding that will be expanded upon toward the end of this section.

What I was hearing from...the head TLE guy from Indian Affairs was...we're kind enough to give you this land...for you to make a living. We expect you to...do good



with it economically... Out of our largess, we're giving you this land and we have certain expectations. From my point of view, this is something we negotiated in the treaty. This is not something you're giving us. Our people asked at the treaty, how did you come to understand that you own all this land and you're going to give us some back?

[Land Manager, Muskoday First Nation]

If the potential economic and social benefits of reserve designation are determined by the regional CIRNAC office to outweigh the costs of the land transaction according to its unilaterally determined standards, and if the First Nation's proposal has covered all mandatory steps according to the ATR policy, the Reserve Creation Proposal is then submitted with a letter of support as an Approval in Principle to the Minister of CIRNAC, who considers reserve designation through submission to the Governor in (Privy) Council or designates the parcel themselves through a Ministerial Order.

Due to the complexity of First Nations' immense obligations to fulfill CIRNAC's ATR application standards, new reserves can be plagued by delays at any step of the proposal creation process, and participants connected these inadequacies to the institutionalized constraints and dysfunction of the *Indian Act*.

I think that right now the major barrier is the federal government. The federal government...even though they have attempted to modify and amend and change...the processes that they feel they need to put us through to acquire these lands and to convert them to reserves...it's still a long, laborious, time-wasting, money-wasting process, and a lot of it is totally unnecessary... Number one, the *Indian Act* has to go. None of this should be happening under the umbrella of the *Indian Act*. It pushes the question of the legitimacy of the process, which then challenges the federal government to find alternate means of determining their participation in the process... they're so indoctrinated with their own *Indian Act*... many of the bureaucrats can't think and see beyond the narrow boundaries of the *Indian Act*.

[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

In 2011, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) passed a resolution calling on the federal government to review and improve its ATR policy. The AFN argued that the existing policy created too many impediments to the cost-effective and timely conversion of land to reserve, which hampered the short-term economic and social development ambitions of First Nations. According to the Chiefs-in-Assembly, "enabling First Nation economic development is a key

element of exercising our rights, jurisdictions and assuming our responsibilities as First Nation governments” (Assembly of First Nations, 2011).

The updated 2016 ATR policy was perceived as a welcomed change to clarify procedural responsibilities with the aim of speeding up the process, and to expand the applicable pathways and land uses of new reserves.

It was just this July that Canada agreed to a new ATR policy, where...land can be acquired and converted to reserve; not just based on the land settlement agreement, but for other purposes like economic development...or social purpose, like a cultural or heritage site, or just to provide living space for their members. If a First Nation has the means they could buy fee simple land and then have it go through the ATR. So, it kind of gives life to the original treaty where it was promised that [for] every family of five there would be one square mile provided. So, there was no expiry date on that provision, so as our populations grow it was imagined that our reserve land base would also grow. This new ATR policy is the mechanism that would provide that, which is the way I see it.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations].

While some participants expressed discontent about the federal government’s interpretation of treaties, others thought favourably about the TLEFA and ATR policy’s mechanisms to expand First Nations’ strategic land holdings, reserve territory, and economic development potential, due in part to the availability of peripheral legislative and financial tools to also gain more autonomy over land use planning, taxation, and management of own-source revenue.

### **4.3 Sectoral Self-Government and the Politics of Recognition**

In recent years, TLEFA and the ATR policy have been coupled with various mechanisms attributable to what may be considered “sectoral self-government,” which enable First Nations to have more control over policy decisions pertaining to reserve land. The *First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA)* and the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA)* are, among others, pieces of federal legislation to which First Nations may apply to opt in. An in-depth examination of each of these Acts and their provisions is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is important to grasp the shifting jurisdictional context through which reserves, both urban and rural, are planned for and used today. The *Indian Act* continues to legislate the many ways that Canada has defined “registered Indians” as wards of the state, and their reserves as lands

held in trust under sovereign crown title, while First Nations have always resisted the *Indian Act*'s paternalistic reach.

Yet, the *Indian Act* also outlines Canada's fiduciary obligations to First Nations as interpreted under s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, and has therefore been fortified by First Nations band councils and political organizations who, since the 1969 White Paper policy proposal sought to remove the *Indian Act* and all existing treaties, have refuted its wholesale removal until a more just relationship with the state that supports Indigenous nationhood and self-determination is assured. Sectoral self-government legislation may be considered a means through which First Nations can regain some control over their reserve land and members' lives by replacing certain sections of the *Indian Act* without compromising their distinct status and legally recognized rights. Some have argued, however, that these relatively new laws also align with the crown's long-term ambition to extinguish Indigenous title and absorb Indigenous jurisdictions by transforming Indigenous peoples, land, and governance into productive subjects, spaces, and federal municipalities (Diabo, 2020; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; Pasternak & Dafnos, 2017; Tomiak, 2017).

The 1999 *FNLMA* is legislation that provides First Nations with an option to replace sections of the *Indian Act* pertaining to land use and planning with a community land code that clearly defines on-reserve property rights, land use planning and management processes, and environmental regulations. The *FNLMA* was perceived as valuable in part because after a century and a half of oppressive control, anything that resembles increased autonomy is better than *Indian Act* land management.

the First Nations Land Management Act...took away 25 per cent of the *Indian Act*...pertaining to land... Before the legislation even passed...three bands had already signed. Muskoday I think was one of them, I think there was one in B.C., and there's one in Ontario... One Arrow was the seventh band to sign that. Today there's 214 bands that have followed. So, there's got to be merit when you start eliminating the *Indian Act*... right now INAC doesn't give enough money to sustain who we are as 1900 people... They only give enough money for 697 that live on reserve...  
[Land Manager, One Arrow First Nation]

This quote also suggests that a First Nation's ability to determine its own land uses and property rights, and therefore its own strategies to generate revenue, is necessary to make up for the federal government's underfunding of First Nations' material and sociocultural needs. The long-

term objective of alleviating First Nations' dependency on bureaucratic management and funding through financial autonomy is a significant finding that will be touched on several times in this chapter.

Historically, the *Indian Act* has legislated the forms of property ownership, land tenure and uses, and community planning that First Nations could pursue. Under the *Indian Act*, the types of individual property rights that people living on reserves can access are certificates of possession and leases for purposes of building homes, constructing businesses, or developing resources (Alcantara, 2007). Band councils may also grant customary land rights to members, but they can also retract such rights at any time for any reason, which has been argued by some non-Indigenous commentators to hamper on-reserve economic productivity because customary property rights are not clearly defined and are therefore unenforceable in Canadian courts (Alcantara, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2010). Their argument follows that customary 'property' lacks clearly defined use rights and security of tenure which can dissuade investment, entrepreneurship, and productive 'improvements' to reserve land.

The *FNLMA* requires that First Nations develop their own land codes to address issues around customary use rights and other forms of tenure to clearly, in documented writing, regulate land use and occupancy (licenses, leases, and allotments), land transfers, revenue management of moneys generated from on-reserve development, and mechanisms for dispute resolution, among other requirements, which must be enacted through a band council resolution (Alcantara, 2007; *FNLMA*, 1999, c. 24 ss. 6 & 12). CIRNAC only approves First Nations under the *FNLMA* who are already economically and administratively advanced according to Canada's 'readiness' standards, and only if Canada has money available to fund the land code creation (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2013). Once a land code is passed under the *FNLMA*, on-reserve property rights, including customary forms of tenure, become enforceable in Canadian courts.

Alcantara (2007) and Flanagan et al. (2010) see the primary benefits of the *FNLMA* not only in the reduction of land transaction timeframes and costs by eliminating federal government involvement, but also in First Nation members' ability to attract third party investment if land codes strengthen individual property rights by mirroring the legal enforceability, or the 'fixity', 'security', and 'certainty' (Blomley, 2015) of fee simple ownership. Alcantara and Flanagan et al.'s arguments are rooted in assumptions that liberal property regimes are natural and good

because they are the most productive and evolutionarily advanced form of socio-spatial organization in a neoliberal and globalizing market economy, but they obfuscate the history of Canada's land theft (and land debt) to secure its sovereign title and legal jurisdiction over Indigenous territory (Blomley, 2015; Pasternak, 2015). Alcantara and Flanagan's arguments also do little to dissect the ongoing imposition of colonial authority over life on reserves through the *Indian Act*, which has choked Indigenous economies not merely through unenforceable land tenure, but through policies dedicated to ensuring dependency on the state, causing First Nations to increasingly view the marketization and commodification of their reserve lands as the only available route to regain a degree of self-determination. The *FNLMA* appears attractive to First Nations in part because it translates reserve land into legal property categories that render reserves more marketable and investable; a necessity in the eyes of some band councils to generate economic independence from the state.

*The First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA)* complements the *FNLMA* by transferring control from CIRNAC to First Nations over band finances and property taxation, as well as providing financing for infrastructure and economic development projects. The *FNFMA* established three institutions that oversee the administration of the Act – the First Nations Tax Commission, the First Nations Financial Management Board, and the First Nations Finance Authority – all of which are 'shared governance' institutions whose commissioners are selected and approved by the Governor in Council at the recommendation of the Minister of CIRNAC. The ability to tax third party land uses on reserve is significant to First Nations who attach this power to their governing authority over economic development.

One interesting thing out there that's still being ruminated on is...the First Nations Tax Commission. What they do is they establish tax bylaws...And the ideal thing about that whole process is you can apply those tax rules only to your urban properties and not to your home reserve. So, it's a different regime...you're not taxing your own people.  
[Senior staff member, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

[My First Nation] needed to be creative in terms of placing itself in the driver's seat of any development of its land for whatever uses it might have in mind... it all started several years ago when we worked with the First Nation Tax Commission and developed [our] property assessment law and [our] property taxation law. Ultimately that allowed [us] to occupy the field of taxation as it relates to property, and ultimately it creates additional revenues that can be pooled back into the coffers of the nation to fund things that are maybe not funded by government or underfunded by government.  
[Land Manager, Yellow Quill First Nation]

As the First Nations Tax Commission website states, its directive under the *FNFMA* is “to fill the institutional vacuum that has prevented First Nations from participating in the market economy and creating a national regulatory framework for First Nation tax systems that meets or exceeds the standards of provincial governments. Through the development of a competitive First Nation investment climate, economic growth can be a catalyst for First Nation self-reliance” (First Nations Tax Commission, 2020).

Some participants suggested that sectoral self-government legislation can be strategically utilized in combination with TLE settlement money to acquire and mobilize reserve land toward the maximization of own-source revenue and therefore self-governing capacity.

I think the TLE is one of many steps and one of many parts to honouring treaties and treaty rights in Canada, and I think TLE land converted to reserve allows the nation maybe to exercise its laws and lawmaking power over lands within its jurisdictional authority. And I think when that First Nation brings its various tools at its disposal, be it First Nation Tax Commission and revenue laws that are created, or the nation working with the *First Nations Land Management Act*, creating its own land management law, or even going so far as working with the First Nation Financial Management Board and First Nation Finance Authority, I think having those tools, those different laws...it really allows the nation to transition to unlocking the true economic value of TLE...I think that's part of becoming a self-sustaining government through its own source revenues and ultimately pursuing wealth creation initiatives while still holding Canada accountable to its fiduciary obligations to the nation.

[Land Manager, Yellow Quill First Nation]

Others, however, argued that only some First Nations are well-positioned financially and geographically, including those with urban reserves, to benefit from sectoral self-governance legislation.

Out there on the Sutherland reserve, for example, if you go up there and gas up your car, you're going to pay the regular price that you would pay off-reserve. But the GST and all that tax goes to the government, whereas if you have the First Nations GST, that tax will go to the band. And it makes a lot of sense, and it recognizes the jurisdiction of the band council...it just takes a lot of work; you have to have a good financial setup in your own band, you have a lot of hoops to jump through, and then...you have to commit to paying the GST as a band. A lot of bands won't do it because they don't have guaranteed revenues.

[Chair of the Trust, Little Pine First Nation]

From the more radically transformative standpoint of Indigenous resurgence and reclamation of Indigenous nationhood through territorial governance and jurisdiction, negotiated land claims settlements and sectoral self-government legislative mechanisms function largely to pacify Indigenous resistance through delegated, municipalized versions of First Nations' authority over reserve land, which includes the transfer of some control along with the federal government's fiduciary liability over land and financial transactions to band councils.

Whereas the outright elimination of Indigenous society once steered settler colonial policy, Canada now aims to subvert, through sectoral self-governance, Indigenous peoples' inherent and treaty rights to nationhood akin to sovereign governance over territorial jurisdiction. This overarching motive, as was expanded upon in the previous section, guides Canada's politics of recognition. Instead of negotiating the renewal of treaties and restoration of the territorial jurisdictions of First Nations, Canada favours monetary settlements for land claims that pacify Indigenous resistance in ways that clarify, with finality, the federal government's legal fulfillment of Indigenous rights, which are translated by the courts and absorbed into the Canadian political economy (Pasternak et al., 2013). In effect, pacification "means imposing the transactional relation of property ownership onto Indigenous peoples through the policy of financial compensation", which is "specifically designed to constrain Bands whose visions of land restoration are twinned with aspirations of political and jurisdictional authority" (Pasternak et al., 2013, pp. 70-71).

Through the TLEFA, ATR policy, and sectoral self-government mechanisms, pacification enables the commodification of First Nations reserves as they are absorbed into liberal property relations. Yet, this framework has also enabled First Nations to purchase and convert hundreds of land parcels to reserve status, an outcome described by several participants as a key component to their exercise of decision-making authority over land management and economic development toward longer-term objectives of expanding financial self-sufficiency and governing capacity. Although 'economic development' through the legal translation of reserves to marketable forms of Indigenous property appear to be contradictory, if not incompatible with the transformative objectives of resurgence, interviews reveal that many tensions and strategic nuances exist in the realm of land procurement, new reserve creation, and wealth generation. As Belanger (2008, p. 407) reminds us, "from an Aboriginal perspective, fostering economic self-sufficiency is paramount to community wellbeing and is considered a

means of stimulating and maintaining localized economic development thereby leading to economic and political independence.”

#### **4.4 Strategic Land Selection for Economic, Sociocultural, and Political Transformation**

First Nations operating through the TLEFA, the federal ATR policy, and sectoral self-government mechanisms make strategic decisions about which land parcels to purchase, which to keep in fee simple ownership, and which to convert to reserve, how to develop or conserve them, and for what purposes. As was previously discussed, the economic development potential of land purchases and conversions under the ATR policy is a key consideration of the federal government and of First Nations aiming to expand their own-source revenues; a trend that Tomiak (2017) attributes to the neoliberalization of settler colonialism. But for First Nations, unlike corporate shareholder enterprises or private land developers, creating wealth by investing in land and property is not an end in itself; it is a means to support many other longer-term collective objectives that enhance the band’s land base as well as band members’ material quality of life. The importance of balancing economic, cultural, and social objectives in strategic land selection was stressed.

TLE...hit in a few directions. First of all, we had a great deal of money in the bank because the first trustees had spent about five years and not bought very much land at all, so we had quite a bit of interest. At that time interest rates were fairly high, so we were able to take the interest from the cash we had in the bank and build a new band hall for the reserve... The second thing...we had a series of meetings with the Elders and we asked them what they wanted in terms of land, and they said they wanted...agricultural...both grazing and cultivated, and then they also wanted urban land. They wanted to see that the urban people had a place to live as an economic opportunity. And then they also wanted land with cultural significance...a place where we could practice our culture.

[Chair of the Trust, Little Pine First Nation]

This quote highlights the strategic balance that some First Nations are attempting to forge between meeting the immediate needs of band members, generating short-term revenues by leasing out reserve land, building long-term economic capacity, and maintaining land and place-based cultural knowledge and practices.



The TLEFA injected First Nations with monetary resources to purchase land parcels on a willing buyer from willing seller basis for a variety of purposes. Since TLE moneys constitute a one-time negotiated settlement from Canada's legal perspective, the objective of generating financial returns on investments through strategic selections, improvements, and uses of land (urban parcels, in particular) has compelled First Nations to focus primarily on the relatively short-term economic development potential of the TLEFA to generate own-source revenue. However, as a band's financial capacity grows, its reserve land may eventually be restructured and repurposed in pursuit of other goals.

That's the interesting thing about treaty land entitlement: once land goes to reserve status, it is no longer real estate; it is Indian land, and it will be Indian land until the end of time...that reserve land is in perpetuity. So, when we get a piece of land, right now it's used for one thing, but over the years it may evolve and be used for something else, and it's just a matter of it growing. So, the long-term plan for our people is basically to get as much land and as many cities and as many areas as we can get... it's all agricultural lease right now. We sit on it and then we'll expand it as we need to. And it's interesting...people want to live on the land, that's one thing, (but) urban land is quite valuable and we see that as industrial and businesses or a combination of the two.  
[Chair of the Trust, Little Pine First Nation]

Most urban reserves are designated for commercial or industrial uses because city land is highly valued in many of Canada's urban property markets.

The comparably high exchange values of urban property reflect dense and inflated real estate markets embedded with civic infrastructure, services, and numerous productive spatial linkages across urban regions providing First Nations with sustained access to large consumer markets.

When you develop land in a city, you're actually trying to access that greater population, that greater market. For Sakimay specifically, they have 700 residents on four different reserves spread out across seven RMs. So, if you're spread all over seven RMs, 700 people, how do you develop the economy for the 700 people? Do people come into your community to shop when they have other options? But in the city, there's a greater population that you can draw from. Even in Yorkton in comparison, 70,000 people, that's 100 times the size of your reserve. So, there's opportunity there to distribute the income.  
[Land Manager, Sakimay First Nations]

First Nations who are successfully operating in or near urban centres do so in ways that strategically integrate their business development endeavours into local and regional market economies.

The urban settings...allow us to create maybe a more diversified business centre. So, in English River they rent office space, but they also have Tron Power, and Creative Fire, and the gas station and other things all within an urban setting, so they're creating that [business] hierarchy as well. So, they have the business that's maybe the least sophisticated, but necessary...it's a convenience for the community as far as a gas station, all the way to companies that, like Tron or J & E, that [are]...competing and contributing to the mainstream economy and sector and services. So that's a good thing; fully integrating our businesses into the local, regional, and provincial economies.  
[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

Participants also suggested that First Nations must operate like real estate speculators in their strategic selection of land both within and outside of cities to maximize their returns on investment in support of long-term social, cultural, and political endeavours.

See, getting ahead in Indian country is all about location; it's like real estate...one of the very important things about economic development is location. Our land in Cypress Hills is beautiful but it's not going to make us any money... you get the economic land to support that cultural land... they're a means to an end...and you've got to keep your head in [the mindset of] what do you really want? So, you've got to have your industrial land and then you grow your own reserve land base, make a good place for your people to live. That's the whole end product... getting the next generation and all that sort of stuff.  
[Chair of the Trust, Little Pine Cree Nation]

For First Nations in Saskatchewan, it is not simply access to urban markets that drives urban reserve creation; their urban strategic deliberations are far more complex and nuanced than existing literature suggests. Many band councils, TLE trustees, and land managers are responding to material conditions of entrenched poverty on reserves, as well as multiple generations of urbanization among band members and fragmentation of kinship relations.

Some band councils therefore conceive of urban reserves as spaces that support urban Indigenous populations to reconnect with or enhance their senses of identity through spaces that are symbolically and 'officially' Indigenous land. Participants suggested that First Nations are building capacity to support urban Indigenous residents to reconnect with kin and on-reserve communities.

What bands are trying to do is figure out how do they engage these people who are living in the city. You don't have the capacity on the home reserve. They don't have the land base, nor do you have the infrastructure to house them, to bring them home. So how do you help these people to live where they're forced to live, right?  
[Land Manager, Sakimay First Nations]

However, it might be more appropriate to say that band councils are responding to members' needs and demands for urban support by building capacity to bring home to them.

So, the urban centres issue is kind of a reflection of that fact that our reserve lands are kind of bursting at the seams for living space, and...I'd say a majority of each First Nation's population do live in the urban centres. So, there's a thought there to provide living space in the cities, but I think at the moment, if you look at these land selections here, these communities are looking at these properties for more of a commercial economic activity. And that would provide employment and revenue for their communities, for housing and other matters like that. So right now, the gravitation that is happening toward selecting land in urban centres is...to access the market, to have a foothold in...the economy of the country and the province...  
[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

First Nations are purchasing and developing urban land selections and participating in local and regional market economies to generate collective wealth that can be harnessed for community purposes; particularly social needs that are not met through *Indian Act* funding and administration. In this way, band councils take on the dual role of governance and corporate development for collective long-term benefits.

What do you do with the benefits of all that (economic) activity? It's really the social needs, housing needs, the health needs of our community, because the delivery of health services is a real issue in our communities. Even school, schooling, and...often what is provided by the federal government is insufficient to meet those needs, so First Nations need to go above and beyond, which is where that comes in. So, participating in the economy, when you say is meant for generating wealth, what you do with that wealth is not for...growing...personal wealth. It's trying to improve the social and economic wellbeing of the community. So, it kind of has a socialist bent to it I guess you'd say. And that's fine, I have no problem with that. There are entrepreneurs out there that do return benefits to the community, but as a band government operating out there in the economic world, that's its purpose. I think that's what's unique about First Nations, because federal and provincial governments do not compete in the economy unless you count the crown [corporations]. But...First Nations have to do that; the leadership has to do that...

[Senior staff member, Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network]

We're going to change our society. We're going to give...our people jobs...and when they have jobs for their lifetime and pay into a pension and can save money and have steady work, their families live better. And their families live better and get better educated, the kids get better educated, and the grandchildren get better educated. So, it's a long-term vision to create inter-generational wealth.  
[Land Manager, Muskoday First Nation]

In addition to improving the material conditions of First Nation communities and band members' quality of life through mainstream economic participation and market integration, entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, and taxation incentives for "registered Indian" employees and consumers, participants suggested that urban reserves also provide symbolic spaces of pride and familiarity for urban residents, contributing also to First Nations' and urban Indigenous communities' social capital in historically exclusionary settler cities permeated by institutional and socialized racism.

Several participants believe that urban reserves are spaces that can be harnessed to combat settler colonial mentalities by instigating amicable relations with settler society on multiple social, economic, and political platforms.

...people in the city of Saskatoon...now see a picture where there are successful Indigenous businesses, and these businesses are functioning effectively inside the economy of the city. So, on our reserve we deal with real estate and we have businesses that are not Indigenous renting from us and conducting business quite effectively from 35 acres of reserve land... And so that...message is getting out there, that...these businesses are successful. So, some of the old, old stereotypes are just being put to rest. Yeah, Indians...can be successful businesspeople, and there's a lot more professionals operating out there in the communities and all the different organizations that are Indigenous.  
[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

Is it the mature relationship that's been defined after decades? No, but it's pretty darn good for where we've come from, I think. And...we've had those positive experiences to continue to build on. There's hiccups of course, but they're open to discussion, and I'm engaging in that process as an entrepreneur as well... There's lots of people learning...a lot of good people and players in this city of ours from all sectors that, you know, I think we're all kind of pushing and advocating in the same direction.  
[Senior staff member, Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network]

A participant who was interviewed for their insights into the gentrification of Saskatoon's Riversdale neighbourhood, when prompted to discuss significant spaces for Indigenous residents

in that city, also emphasized urban reserves' potential to connect Indigenous inhabitants with their distinctive identities and knowledge rooted in land and territory.

I think by having [urban reserves] in the city kind of gave people in the community a safe space, whether it's a smoke shop or a gas station or whatever. They take ownership, they feel pride, they feel like they're healing. Regardless of whether they recognize it or not, there's healing in place, in every person who says "yeah, that's native land", you know? They're regaining the knowledge of the land, whether they know it or not. So, I think it should continue. It should continue, because a lot of our people are still colonized. Colonization plays a huge role, and to First Nations people, land is who we are, where we come from, and we're protectors of the land. We're keepers of the land. So, I'm excited for the future, because a lot of First Nations people, Métis people, Indigenous people are going to re-learn all of those teachings.  
[former Askîy intern, male]

This narrative excerpt alludes to a major finding in Chapter Five, which emphasizes values in urban land that Indigenous communities aspire to actualize; values that that might deepen people's senses of identity, belonging, and place in prairie cities; values that reach well beyond urban land's productive capacity, wealth generating potential, or even its public uses that are currently approved by city halls.

While this section has demonstrated that urban land is economically valuable to First Nations who are strategically motivated by their members' socioeconomic needs and band councils' political advancement goals, many participants asserted that settler governments and institutions should recognize cities as places constructed upon their traditional territories. Attached to the continuity of Indigenous territory are inherent and treaty rights, responsibilities, and aspirations to rejuvenate territorial governance through place-specific applications of Indigenous jurisdiction. Indeed, this foundational source of jurisdictional conflict between the settler state and Indigenous nations, between Indigenous self-determination and state-determining authority, continues to define Indigenous resistance to Canada's settler colonial project (Borrows, 2017; Maaka & Fleras, 2008).

Urban reserve creation under the Saskatchewan TLEFA is a process that promotes cooperative relations between First Nations and municipal governments through the negotiation of economic and jurisdictional compatibility in Saskatchewan cities. But, despite the presence of cooperation and negotiated compatibility, there continues to exist a foundational conflict arising from vastly divergent interpretations of treaty and territory between First Nations and the

Canadian state. Indigenous peoples' and First Nations' willingness to accept or adopt certain accommodations should not be conflated with consent to settler-state authority nor colonial-capitalist socio-spatial organization; rather, "accommodations of various kinds have provided the basis for Aboriginal survival...The fundamental mistake non-Aboriginal society consistently makes is to mistake accommodation for assimilation" (Blagg, 2008, p. 56).

Urban reserves are one pathway through which First Nations are bolstering their capacity for decision-making autonomy, and they provide a spatial foundation upon which to support both urban and rural Indigenous communities by expanding First Nations' urban presence, land base, and revenue. Urban reserves, however, do not represent nor embody the rights, responsibilities, and mutually respected sovereignties envisioned in treaties. The fundamental contradictions and incommensurability between the state-regulated, colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order and Indigenous territorial law, jurisdiction, and governance remain.

#### **4.5 Treaty Territory, First Nation Jurisdiction, and the Liminality of New Urban Reserves**

Urban reserves and the TLEFA have provided a template for First Nations and municipal governments to build relationships and to advance some of their mutual interests, but to also share ideas, knowledge, and future seeking aspirations. Saskatoon is regarded for its best practices because city hall has prioritized early and ongoing communication with First Nations who have prospective interests and existing land holdings or urban reserves in and around the city. If a First Nation wants to convert an urban land holding to reserve, it is required under the TLEFA to negotiate a municipal services agreement with the urban municipality to establish provisions for policing, utility infrastructure, waste collection, and other municipal services. Since reserves are not taxable land under municipal and provincial jurisdiction, an MSA will also establish a grant in lieu of taxes that a First Nation must pay the city and schoolboards for their loss of potential revenues if the parcel had remained in fee simple ownership. Grants in lieu are typically determined according to the market value and designated land use of the parcel in question.

Developments on urban reserves are designated by CIRNAC according to their intended uses, and are subsequently expected to comply with municipal bylaws, zoning, and existing land

use plans regulated by Saskatchewan's *Planning and Development Act, 2007*. Although urban reserves are a unique form of federally delegated Indigenous jurisdiction within cities, they tend to mesh seamlessly with surrounding properties and the overall spatial layout neighbourhoods, which is in many ways predetermined by urban and regional planning departments at the behest of city councils. Urban reserves' spatial compatibility is due in part to active communication between First Nations and municipal governments over potential parcel locations and land uses that would not only suit First Nations' development ambitions but would also mitigate any potential disruptions to the city's property fabric, efficiency of land uses, services and commodity flows, and real estate exchange values.

Some participants suggested that the regulations established by the TLEFA have so far been acceptable because they have enabled the relatively smooth integration of reserve territory into urban settings alongside municipal and provincial jurisdictions.

The reality is, if we're talking about harmony...then you begin to compromise: where is the right place here for this jurisdiction to work with this jurisdiction? And that's the path we dealt with back when we were setting up our reserve in Packham Avenue, because...we could have tried to be totally autonomous from the City of Saskatoon. But...that's not very smart because you can't function effectively pretending that you're totally separate from your environment. So, the better way to approach this is to look at your piece of land and say: how can we become merged to a certain extent with our neighbouring communities so that the energy, the economic energy here, is moving in it back and forth safely, effectively, and making money, which is what it's intended to do... And so, our agreement...was [that] we'll apply your bylaws on our land... As long as they understand this is still [our nation's] territory and there are protocols of respect that need to be adhered to...to make it work. So...I think most of the First Nations – I sense that's the approach that they've taken.  
[Senior staff member, Office of the Treaty Commissioner]

This perspective represents the liminality of urban reserves within a larger context of settler property and local state jurisdiction in Saskatchewan cities. First Nations choose to adapt their distinctive spaces to mesh with urban settler geographies because they can be harnessed to foster good relations. At the same time, they are emergent spaces through which First Nations can embed distinctive forms of territoriality in prairie cities.

Urban reserves and First Nations' 'official' presence in Saskatchewan cities have led to a wide array of partnership projects that facilitate political and economic cooperation between First Nations, municipal governments, local businesses, and non-governmental institutions.

More nations in Saskatchewan are having a presence within the cities of Saskatoon and Regina...[and] more nations are opening urban offices and providing programs and services to their membership which often include post-secondary education, life skills training, to employment opportunities when the nation partners up with local post secondary institutions and employers.

[Land Manager, Yellow Quill First Nation]

Some participants described the relationships that are being developed through communicative cooperation around urban reserve creation as promising for the realization of mutual prosperity.

...that's why we say prosperity through partnerships, because when people talk, good things happen. And we've found that in some instances there was no talking...and I think we were able to help the City of Saskatoon in that because now they're communicating very well with these First Nations. And the First Nations, from the reaction I've had, there was a frustration before this. Now they're pleasantly engaged...and pleased with the outcomes and the openness and forthcoming of the city administrations, especially Saskatoon, and then Regina as well... we just want to...keep the doors open, keep people talking, and things sort themselves out. That's how we get agreements like TLE in place, because of that willingness to engage. And that I think is the ultimate purpose...to participate in the economy.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

Due in part to the mutual motivation of economic prosperity through partnerships, or the convergence of interests (Belanger & Walker, 2009) between First Nations, municipalities, and private enterprises, the fundamental contradictions of state jurisdiction and Indigenous territory have not yet been significantly tested in Saskatchewan cities.

Other participants held less optimistic views, conversely arguing that coerced compliance with the regulatory systems of municipal and provincial governments and their planning institutions represents an affront to First Nations' jurisdiction, and perhaps also entails manipulation on the part of whitestream institutions to further extract wealth from First Nations' land.

I got a call to come to a SREDA (Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority) meeting at one of these conferences... First thing they ask is what are you guys going to do with [your urban] land?... I told him I wasn't going to answer him. Basically, I told him...we're going to be good neighbours...but there's no trust yet. There's no...trust on either side. The expectation in the TLE agreement is that our laws that we make will be compatible with the neighbours; our plans will be compatible with the neighbors, their standards. What about our standards? ...I've learned from my elders



to...hold your cards close to your chest when we're dealing with the dominant society, you know, because they're going to come and try to take from us as much as they can. That's what we've come to learn. We've got no trust yet.  
[Land Manager, Muskoday First Nation]

Despite being managed under First Nations' federally delegated jurisdiction, the uses of urban reserves are currently limited in part because they are expected to comply with existing zoning bylaws and land use plans, which continue to reproduce western forms of spatial organization structured around private, fee simple property. Urban reserve land uses are also constrained because bands are forced to purchase property through the open real estate market, and they must demonstrate their potential for wealth accumulation and peripheral (settler) community benefits prior to reserve designation (Tomiak, 2017). Because land is a highly valued commodity in cities, it is currently impractical for First Nations to develop urban reserves in ways that do not generate a significant financial return on investment.

Despite First Nations' and municipalities' convergence of economic and land development interests as they respond to increasingly competitive and globalizing conditions of late capitalism, several participants suggested that urban reserves and their operational/regulatory framework do not embody the treaty relationship envisioned and negotiated by their ancestors.

...the treaties haven't been fulfilled yet. We could do all our farming...when we signed the treaty, [and the crown's representatives] said okay, we'll give you the tools to farm your land. But they haven't given us those tools. Right now, we could run all our land ourselves if the treaties were updated.  
[Former Chief, One Arrow First Nation]

We never gave them mineral rights. We never gave them animals... we just gave seven inches for farming, or lent, or agreed to share, agreed to give up our stewardship over the top seven inches. We didn't recognize that we own the land. It wasn't European type of ownership.  
[Land Manager, Muskoday First Nation]

This fundamental incommensurability of treaty interpretations between the Canadian state and First Nations is not reconciled through urban reserves (Tomiak, 2017); far from it. TLEFA is but one response by federal and provincial governments to a specific legal obligation of the crown, beset by the threat of litigation and extrajudicial resistance, to fulfill a basic treaty promise of reserve land acreage. However, treaty relationships also implicate property regimes, jurisdiction,

resource ‘ownership’, law, and governance across Indigenous territories, which includes all land in cities and rural areas.

Canada’s politics of recognition are revealed in federal and provincial governments’ political and legal preference for monetary settlements and economic integration into existing circuits of capital, as well as their resistance to treaty relationships that respect shared sovereignty, territory, and renew mutual responsibilities according to modern circumstances. A few participants described a sense of incommensurability between First Nations’ and the state’s treaty interpretations and willingness to negotiate more just relationships.

After [TLEFA] was completed, the FSIN was undertaking what they called treaty governance processes...to examine...a self government arrangement that would be based on treaty... a broad spectrum of issues like justice, health, education, child welfare. So, I was involved with that, I think it was about eight years, and during that time the FSIN compiled a lot of information, especially from the Elders. The oral history... on hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering; what the provisions of the treaty means with respect to that. And there’s other work that has been done about what does the medicine chest mean? And then the school... governance and so forth. So, a lot of good work came of it, but...we couldn’t divert from the understanding that was provided to us from the Elders. And really...the limited mandate of...the federal crown was to do certain things, and they diverted. The diversion was just too far apart, and they couldn’t connect.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

I conceptualize urban reserves as liminal spaces precisely because they are produced within a state and economic structure of accumulation that has dispossessed Indigenous peoples of their land, jurisdiction, and sovereignty over the past century and a half, and yet they are harnessed by First Nations as politically expedient investments that are believed to contribute in the longer-term to self-determination through increased economic and governing autonomy in relations with all levels of the Canadian government.

I’d like to see...First Nations become an economic power, and that in and of itself would be a strong influence on the directions that city administrations will take or consider, to make us a serious part of the consideration. I think until that happens, you know, rather than just having a brown face on a police board or the chamber of commerce, I’d like to see First Nations carry a big stick, to swing that economic weight around, to influence the politics of the administration, of the long-term trajectory of the city. And I think that way the First Nations’ needs would be more properly addressed, because then the influence of the First Nation leadership would be much stronger than just being on a board... So, we want to occupy our own space and have a strong

influence, but again, it's not just being territorial, but being a presence, participating in that manner.

[Senior research and policy analyst, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]

Ultimately...I think we would like to have sovereignty. We say we're self governing, we say we're sovereign, but we're not in many ways. We're in many respects program and service providers for INAC, or whatever federal or provincial funding ministry or department would say here's X amount of dollars to provide child welfare, or economic development, or social assistance, or maintenance. So, without the financial sovereignty we can't be sovereign. So, in order to get to that end goal, we have to create those financial processes, instruments, and tools to make our own money, to have our own source revenue, and then to be able to deal with the priorities and issues and needs and challenges of our own community without having to go and engage, and advocate, and educate...or all too often beg to get the things in place that we need for our communities' health and wellbeing...and we don't need to work with four levels of government to do it when we have the money, the will, and the way forward.

[Senior staff member, Saskatchewan First Nations Economic Development Network]

Whereas municipalities tend to view urban reserves as beneficial to the economic fabric of cities and the social development of Indigenous communities, the federal and provincial crown regard urban reserves, the TLEFA, the ATR policy, and sectoral self-government legislation as the legal fulfillment of treaty obligations and a pathway to 'reconciliation' via a liberal politics of recognition. Most participants, in contrast to all three levels of the state, view these modern mechanisms as tools that can help First Nations generate social, financial, and political capital that will support their efforts to reclaim land, jurisdiction, and governing capacity over a long time-horizon.

Urban reserves are unique spaces of overlapping municipal, provincial, and federally delegated First Nation jurisdiction whose contradictions are mitigated, for now, by First Nations' willingness to cooperate with governance and regulatory frameworks asymmetrically structured under crown sovereignty and state authority. The decisions that First Nations are making in this generation – many of which are focused on economic and material benefits, reserve land base expansion, and enhancement of governing capacity within the current policy and legislative apparatus of the state – are believed to enable future generations to have more durability or capacity to improve their conditions and relations in and with Canada and settler society. In this way, contemporary decisions about strategic land acquisitions, designations, and development – including but not limited to the production of urban reserves – are perceived as transitional

choices that reflect current circumstances but also bolster First Nations' decision-making autonomy toward a very uncertain future.

The liminality of urban reserves – as hybrid and transitional spaces in Saskatchewan cities that embody both contradictions and cooperation – is also reflected in their potential to influence political, economic, and social relations in specific urban contexts. Despite being created through a “bounded recognition” of Indigenous and treaty rights (Porter & Barry, 2015), urban reserves are also “porous edge zones” (Howitt, 2001) from which First Nations may further embed distinctive cultural values in prairie cities by influencing social relations and the production of space. But do urban reserves carry potential for transformative socio-spatial change that nurtures resurgent forms of Indigenous urbanism? That is, are the diverse needs and distinctive aspirations of urban Indigenous residents, particularly those most economically and politically marginalized, advanced in and through urban reserves? Chapter Five addresses these questions and presents urban Indigenous residents' perspectives about spatial change in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

## Chapter Five

# Findings – Indigenous Urbanism, Community Resurgence, and the Recolonization of Indigenous Space in Saskatoon

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter Two introduced Indigenous urbanism as a concept that helps contour some of the political, economic, cultural, and altogether spatial dimensions through which Indigenous people are shaping social life and material environments in prairie cities (Heritz, 2018; Nejad et al., 2019; Newhouse, 2011; Porter & Barry, 2016; Tomiak, 2016; Walker, 2013; Walker et al., 2017). I critiqued this concept with attention to Indigenous resurgence – an individual and collective commitment among Indigenous peoples to refuse, when incommensurable with indigeneity, the many and multi-scaled boundaries of settler colonial capitalism. Resurgence, however, is not simply the rejection of systems of oppression; it is expressed through personal and organized practices that regenerate and embed Indigenous nationhood, law, kinship, languages, cultural values, and ways of relating to the world and one another in daily life (Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Corntassel, 2008; 2012; Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Coulthard, 2008; 2014; A. Simpson, 2014; L. Simpson, 2008; 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012). A growing resurgence movement carries transformative potential to decolonize exclusionary and dispossessive forms of socio-spatial organization that exalt private property rights and privileges – and normalize the vast inequalities and exclusions that they produce – in both cities and rural areas. This chapter uses a resurgence lens to examine urban change in a specific prairie context, and to establish an argument for transformative Indigenous urbanisms that may elevate indigeneity from spaces of liminality to self-determined places in and through prairie cities.

While urban reserves represent advancements in political and economic relations between First Nation band councils and Canadian governments through urban spatial production, they are not transformative in the sense of decolonization, which is the overarching objective of resurgence practices. Urban reserves are liminal spaces of delegated First Nation jurisdiction that, for the time being, coalesce with existing property fabrics of prairie cities (including pre-zoned land uses and participation in market economies). As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue,

“decolonization is not a metaphor”; it is a transformative project to dismantle structures of white supremacy, colonization, racial capitalism, and to unsettle reconciliatory narratives that perpetuate “settler moves to innocence” and deny “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life”. Because prairie cities are part of traditional and treaty territories, this repatriation of Indigenous land and life should include rights and responsibilities to ‘produce’ or regenerate urban space – not to simply adapt to it – among diverse, multinational Indigenous inhabitants, many of whom bear no affiliation with urban landholding First Nations and have minimal economic and political power to enhance their qualities of life *on their own terms*.

Urban Indigenous inhabitants’ perceptions of spatial change and their future-seeking aspirations are systematically obfuscated in dominant modes of spatial production and place-making, and their connections to place should not be restricted to ‘invited’ spaces. Urban Indigenous individuals and communities have struggled for decades to invent spaces that support shared endeavours to embed indigeneity and enrich urban life in prairie cities (Andersen & Denis, 2003; Belanger & Lindstrom, 2016; Dorries et al., 2019; Newhouse & Peters, 2003; Peters & Lafond, 2013). Service agencies, community organizations, and mutual aid networks have emerged in urban prairie regions that perform essential work: mitigating the destructive impacts of racial, neoliberal capitalism and settler colonial violence on the lives and bodies of Indigenous people; advocating politically on their behalf; and nourishing urban communities, albeit with limited access to essential resources such as financial support and permanent, quality spaces.

Chapter Two also established Canadian cities as geographies in and through which settler colonial capitalism produces dense formations of socio-spatial organization that reify and violently enforce property boundaries and exclusions (Blomley, 2017b; Granzow & Dean, 2007; Tomiak, 2017). Property is a fundamental mechanism through which Indigenous peoples in prairie cities are continually dispossessed (of land, space, resources, and self-determination). Recently, several core central neighbourhoods in large prairie cities – racialized and devalued over decades of Indigenous rural-to-urban migration, the incremental exodus of capital, and ‘white flight’ to suburban neighbourhoods – have become sites of property ‘renewal’, socio-spatial ‘revitalization’, and ultimately, racialized gentrification.

This chapter narrows the scope of liminality while shifting focus from First Nations’ relations with Canadian governments to the lived experiences and aspirations of urban

Indigenous inhabitants in a large prairie city: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Saskatoon contains the most urban reserves of all prairie cities, and it is also home to a large and diverse Indigenous population. Saskatoon's west side core neighbourhoods contain the largest proportions of Indigenous residents in the city and are also areas in which poverty, precarity, and colonial violence are rampant. For urban Indigenous people and communities already experiencing volatile conditions within socio-spatial structures of settler colonial capitalism, liminality defines their delimited access to space, land, resources, and self-determination in cities that are part of traditional and treaty territories; cities that are home. Ancestral territory follows Indigenous people into cities wherein they aspire to enhance urban life through distinctive cultural values rooted in place and daily lived spaces; to exercise resurgence through distinctive Indigenous urbanisms (Barker, 2015; Porter, 2013; Tomiak, 2017; Tomiak et al., 2019; Wilson & Peters, 2005; Walker & Belanger, 2013).

This chapter focuses on a contemporary urban 'revitalization' movement that, at least for the past decade, has been transforming Saskatoon's Riversdale neighbourhood. It begins with a brief discussion of the trajectory of core neighbourhood social and power relations, arguing that the racialization and concomitant devaluation of Riversdale has constructed Indigenous people, particularly those who continue to experience trauma, violence, and conditions of poverty and precarity, as inimical to urban progress. I contend that the recent movement to 'revitalize' Riversdale has relied on decades of fearscape production (Granzow & Dean, 2007) and a frontier ethos (Edmonds, 2010; Shaw, 2007) dedicated to 'taking back' the neighbourhood from those who are seen as 'out of place' (Andersen & Peters, 2013; Cresswell, 2006), as 'waste', or as a threat to the orderly functioning of whitestream society; in other words, those who might be described as *liminars* in urban space (Baker & Verelli, 2017). I argue that private property- and profit-driven revitalization strategies have initiated material processes of gentrification that reproduce settler colonial dispossession of Indigenous space and place in Saskatoon, and I conclude with Indigenous perspectives about ideal forms of 'revitalization' that would support community wellbeing, economic self-determination (including the proliferation of urban Indigenous governance through 'social economies'), and common spaces to practice reciprocity and land-based ontologies embedding a distinctive, self-determined, and resurgent cultural grounding in the reorganization of urban life.

## 5.2 The Racialized Devaluation and Gentrification of Riversdale

Riversdale is one of three original villages that incorporated to form the city of Saskatoon in 1906. Located southwest of downtown in what is now the inner-city core, the area has experienced significant social and economic transformation throughout its existence. It experienced periodic economic booms through to the 1930s and contained some high-end commercial spaces as the luxury Barry Hotel and Adilman's department store. Riversdale was primarily a neighbourhood, however, where industrial commodity production supported the growth of Saskatoon's population and economy. It has long been home to working-class and poor residents. From WWII onward, the neighbourhood experienced influxes of English, Ukrainian, Chinese, German, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Serbo-Croatian immigration (City of Saskatoon, 2008). As Saskatoon grew with suburban neighbourhoods and peripheral industrial parks, inner-city properties depreciated in value leading to owner and landlord neglect, slumlord rental practices, widespread vacancies, and outright abandonment of houses and businesses.

Over time, as initial investments in neighbourhood properties depreciated to the point where they ceased to realize ground rent exchange values, Riversdale became socially and economically stigmatized by a wealthier and less diverse settler population external to the neighbourhood. Métis families have also lived in Riversdale and the Saskatoon area since well before the city's inception, but large numbers of First Nations and Métis people increasingly moved from reserves and other rural areas into the city from the 1960s. Jim Silver (2008, p. 5) situates this movement alongside social and economic changes in Saskatoon's inner-city:

In the post-war period, those who could afford to do so left for the larger homes and larger lots of the suburbs. Those left behind were disproportionately those least financially able to move. In the wake of the exodus, housing prices declined, and many were bought up by absentee landlords who rented them out as revenue properties and allowed their condition to further deteriorate. The ratio of renters to homeowners grew. When the 1960s brought growing numbers of Aboriginal people from northern communities...they disproportionately located in the West End where cheap rental accommodations were to be had. Gradually, the West End became home to a concentrated population of those who were poor, and were disproportionately Aboriginal. The stigmatization long attached to the West End deepened; the opportunities available to those who lived there diminished.



A major influx of rural to urban movement occurred from the 1980s onward, and by 2016 well over ten per cent of Saskatoon's population identified as 'Aboriginal' (roughly half First Nations and half Métis) in Canada's census (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

Although Indigenous people in Saskatoon reside in all areas of the city, many of whom might identify with a small but growing Aboriginal middle or professional class, a large number continue to locate in central west side neighbourhoods. In 2006 over 43 per cent of Riversdale's population identified as Aboriginal; the second highest proportion of all city neighbourhoods after Pleasant Hill, which borders Riversdale to the west (City of Saskatoon, 2008). In that year, Pleasant Hill and Riversdale also had the lowest average family income levels and property values in Saskatoon (City of Saskatoon, 2008). The long-established and disproportionately large Indigenous community in Riversdale, a neighbourhood wherein economic poverty became entrenched, has struggled against compounded oppressions and dispossessions wrought by the settler colonial-capitalist matrix at an urban scale.

Riversdale is a place in which indigeneity has been perceived as both a deficit and a problem to be rectified by whitestream institutions and settler property owners. Racist antagonisms separating 'moral' from 'degenerate' activities, 'civilized' from 'sullied' bodies, and 'authentic' citizenship from the 'illegitimate' intrusion of Indigenous residents became normalized in media and public discourse, constructing myriad material and symbolic boundaries around Indigenous spaces and bodies through public surveillance, discriminatory economic practices, political obsolescence, and police violence. Considering this history in the context of contemporary neighbourhood 'revitalization' offers important insights into processes of racialization and devaluation that have enabled gentrification to be accepted by the City of Saskatoon and non-Indigenous settler property owners not simply as welcomed, but as necessary.

Pervasive settler colonial ideologies and performances of privilege and entitlement (that is, 'whiteness') have significant implications for mainstream society's capacity to support Indigenous urbanism, let alone recognize the value of indigeneity in our shared social, economic, political, cultural, and spatial urban fabric. In Saskatoon generally, many Indigenous people have experienced social relations that produce and reproduce their urban identities, cultures, and presence as unwelcomed, while also serving to reinforce settler society's perceived entitlement to Indigenous land, space, and bodies (Peters & Lafond, 2013). Many Indigenous urbanites face constant reminders of their social and propertied exclusions when they are harassed by police,

when their identities are associated with acts of theft or not having financial means to purchase goods and services in commercial spaces, and through discriminatory socio-spatial practices impeding access to life-nourishing resources such as healthy food and stable, quality housing (Peters & Lafond, 2013). Yet, Indigenous residents in Saskatoon have also resisted such oppressions in and across a multiplicity of inner-city spaces, with women leading the hard work of community development and resurgence in core west side neighbourhoods and beyond (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007).

The Riversdale neighbourhood has experienced a significant revitalization movement in recent years to redevelop and rebrand the area as a vibrant hub for property investment and productive market activity. Private and public promotional material paints Riversdale as a renewed, up-and-coming, safe, attractive, diverse, creative, and entrepreneurial district that is putting Saskatoon ‘on the map’. Over the past decade Riversdale has gained a new farmer’s market, redeveloped public space in River Landing, cosmetic improvements to streetscapes and sidewalks, and a wave of new restaurants, cafés, boutique shops, and creative and shared workspace. A 134-unit condominium development was completed in 2016 containing ground level commercial spaces, some of which have sat vacant for over five years. In adjacent south downtown, a predominantly publicly funded \$80 million gallery of modern art opened in 2017, followed by a large private development project that includes a high-rise hotel, condominium tower, and office tower complex, the developers of which were offered a \$5.8 million property tax abatement from the City of Saskatoon to instigate construction (Tank, 2016).

Some opposition to revitalization has surfaced evoking concerns about gentrification; the possibility that long-established, low-income, or working-class residents will be pushed out of the neighbourhood due to rising real estate values and a proliferating unaffordability of rents (Hamilton, 2016). One local real estate website indicates that between 2010 and 2013 the average home sale price in Riversdale jumped from \$159,085 to \$224,807 (Saskatoon Realty, n.d.), and in 2017 residential property values in Riversdale rose by 26 per cent; the largest increase out of any neighbourhood in Saskatoon (CBC News, 2017). Between 2013 and 2017, retail property values along 20th street “increased by 135 per cent on a median basis...” (Tank, 2017). Alongside rising property values, there is also evidence of increasingly unaffordable rents, renovictions, and property condemnations displacing Riversdale’s low-income residents, many of whom identify as First Nation or Métis. Although the Aboriginal proportion of

Riversdale's residential population rose from 38 per cent to 43.5 per cent between 1996 and 2001, between 2001 and 2015 the Aboriginal population dropped to 33 per cent of the neighbourhood's total population (Statistics Canada, 2017b)<sup>6</sup>. In other words, the gentrification of Riversdale is ongoing but has already exhibited material consequences of displacement and dispossession of the neighbourhood's Indigenous population.

Proponents of Riversdale's 'renaissance' now actively portray the neighbourhood as a safe, lively, prosperous, and entertaining place. The area's Indigenous presence is even promoted as a facet of Riversdale's rich multicultural heritage, yet the movement toward revitalization has been constructed upon past efforts to expel 'illegitimate' (i.e., racialized, gendered, and impoverished) bodies and spaces from this inner-city neighbourhood. Indigenous inhabitants, especially those who cannot or choose not to participate in the neighbourhood's new, more upscale modes of production and consumption, have little agency over the remaking of their lived spaces. Riversdale is a significant place for many Indigenous residents in Saskatoon who, despite their systematic marginalization and coerced liminality in propertied landscapes, have created and nurtured important community networks and spaces with distinctive values that are threatened by the rolling tide of reinvestment and redevelopment.

### **5.3 Indigenous Space and Place amid Neighbourhood 'Revitalization'**

Over the past decade Riversdale has experienced significant changes to its socioeconomic composition and spatial materiality. This section examines these changes and asks how they are impacting upon the Indigenous community whose relationships with and throughout this urban place are deeply sown. To begin to understand how processes of neighbourhood revitalization intersect with Indigenous inhabitants' lived experiences in and across this urban landscape, one must first gain a sense of social dynamics through which Indigenous residents attach meaning and value to Saskatoon's west side core. As Settee (2013) explains, foundational to Indigenous community development and well-being is access to and control over safe and sufficient spaces for contemporary adaptations and creative implementations of Indigenous cultural values and

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<sup>6</sup> Dissemination areas 47110067, 47110068, 47110069, 47110070, 47110545, and 47110546 together include all of Riversdale but also six additional city blocks to the west and south of the official civic neighbourhood boundary. The data was generated by compiling and comparing population demographics in these dissemination areas from the 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 Canada censuses.

mutual support systems. This section centres Indigenous residents' and community organizations' perceptions of 'place' in core neighbourhoods, highlighting commonly held use-values and spaces associated with belonging, connectivity, and nourishment. By contrast, inner city 'revitalization' is perceived by participants as a process of significant upheaval that offers few benefits for low-income community members at best, and at worse is commensurate with the recolonization of an 'urban frontier' through exclusion, infringement, displacement, and dispossession.

### ***5.3.1 Social Proximity and the Cultural Familiarity of Mutual Support, Reciprocity, and Trust***

Several participants affirmed the value of their social proximity to other Indigenous people when describing core west side neighbourhoods, as well as those areas' rich density (Andersen, 2013) of community organizations and culturally centred programs and services. When describing why people moving from reserves, rural areas, or other cities might favour to reside in such neighbourhoods, participants compared the Indigenous community in Saskatoon's inner city to networks of kinship and mutual support indicative of life in First Nations reserves.

If you've ever been to a reserve, it's very community [oriented]. You really rely on one another. The whole term, "it takes a community to raise a child," that's how it is in First Nations families. You don't just have the parents; you've got a lot of disciplinary people, right? You've got a lot of supportive people. So, the same thing, when I look at the inner city in Saskatoon particularly, that's what I see. I see people that have come here...for school, they've come here for work, they've fled from domestic violence, they've fled from addictions, whatever. They've come somewhere that's an unknown territory for them, but they have to make it their home, and the easiest and most convenient way is the inner city. You've got the support of all the different community agencies that are usually placed in that area, right? ...When people move here, they already understand this sense of community.

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

Another participant emphasized a sense of spiritual connectivity and sociocultural familiarity as valuable attributes found and nurtured among Indigenous residents in Saskatoon's west side core.

I still migrate towards the population of Indigenous people because there's just like a spiritual connect[ion], I guess. Just culturally there's a sense of humour... people that I

attract myself to socially are always that of Indigenous people, which has always just been that way. So, the smaller concentration of Indigenous people, we're not in the same community anymore physically, but if you go to...functions or anything like that, it brings people together. It's just a transportation issue, really. It's a housing and it's a transportation issue. Growing up in the community here, I always had a concentration of people. It didn't matter where I went in the community of Saskatoon, I always found myself in an environment I was most comfortable in because of a high population of Indigenous people.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

Although this participant no longer resides in the west side core, they continue to work in, identify with, and attach significant meaning to the area. Yet, it is not simply social proximity or familiarity that people value in core neighbourhoods, but also, and perhaps more importantly, the connections and relationships that are generated through active kinship practices, frequent community gatherings, economic reciprocity, and mutual security and support.

Indigenous individuals and families who have struggled in the face of economic poverty, colonial violence, government disregard, and unwanted intrusions into their lives have turned largely to one another – forming and nurturing urban kinship networks.

I think throughout the century, the time Saskatoon has been alive, it was always known that this is where Indigenous people live, because it felt safe. And I think because families lived here, other families moved in, people coming for the first time off First Nations, they went to the place where Indigenous people were, in most cases. And that's why you have this huge lump of Indigenous people in these neighbourhoods, even to the point where it was a lot more apartments were being built at that time, so then you get crowded with people. If you think of Meadowgreen, the apartments down 22<sup>nd</sup> [street] that weren't there before, but they were built because there were so many people coming to this side of town...sadly with that came...a lot of poverty, a lot of income disparity... But...the one thing that I always liked about this area...with the people itself, was that they nurtured themselves a lot, because the families stuck together. Indigenous people stayed together... You went to everybody's house, you visited everybody.

[Station 20 West focus group, P1, male]

The combination of cultural familiarity and mutual support generated over time by the Indigenous community in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods has, according to one participant, cultivated a sense of home that extends beyond personal dwellings to a larger urban scale. In this sense, participants' connections to the city and core neighbourhoods as part of their territorial home are inseparable from their relations nurtured and embedded in this place.

If you're a firm traditional person and somebody asked you if you have a home, if you've been on the street for a while you may still respond "well I always have a home" because you always have family you can turn to who will help you when you are in the most need. And because of the strength of...that within the Aboriginal community, and because of the dynamics and understanding and values and social norms and many other things, are different from the broad community or the community at large.  
[Director, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre]

This viewpoint – that people who have spent time 'on the street' (in precarious and often violent circumstances) may continue to perceive a neighbourhood as 'home' despite lacking stable housing – is significant, and echoes Belanger and Lidstrom's (2015) findings in southern Alberta cities among the Niitsitapi houseless population.

Participants' perceptions of their cities and urban neighbourhoods as 'home' is attached to familiarity and kinship infused with cultural values and social norms that connect otherwise marginalized individuals through a common sense of identity and belonging. Such relationships, when put into practice, are also associated with people's senses of mutual respect, trust, and safety. Several participants expressed that their senses of safety and security, despite living or working in neighbourhoods long castigated by whitestream society for their perceived criminality, are stronger in these neighbourhoods than elsewhere in Saskatoon. A participant recounted that their lived space improved when they moved from the east side of Saskatoon (Sutherland) to the west side core (Pleasant Hill). Not only did this person observe an alleviation of suspicion and surveillance by residents in Pleasant Hill from those in Sutherland, but they also felt that their new neighbours offered a refreshing sense of acceptance and safety.

We moved on this side in 2006, and we walked around...looking at the facilities, the hospital. Okay, so this is going to be our home, this is going to be our area, and...my son, who was 6 or 7 at the time...said "everybody looks like us," because we moved from Sutherland to this side. And I had a sigh of relief because living in Sutherland, a lot of expectations are put on your shoulders, and your life is looked at through a microscope. That was fine because we were good citizens, but when we moved on this side I felt like my kids, my boys, had been under this microscope. We'd been under this microscope for so long. Now they can just be boys, and I can just be a mom, right? So, as the years went by, about 11 years now we've lived on this side... Now I can walk anywhere in this area and people say, "don't bother her, she's just that lady that does this or that," like they know you. And they even tell their kids, or grandma and grandpa tell their kids "oh, she's okay," you know? People start recognizing people. And, funny, it feels like community...

My son...said to me... “I don’t want to move to the east side. I’m going to stay and look for a place in this area because it’s safer here.” It might be dangerous, but there’s respect. We’re all watching out for one another in this community. There’s love in this community.

[Station 20 West focus group, P2, female]

The lived spaces of participants represent cumulative social relations through which individual and collective senses of familiarity, kinship, and support have been nurtured over time. Anchoring these relations are values of community and care, as well as sociocultural norms that have fostered common senses of identity, belonging, and home in neighbourhoods that for decades have been ostracized by the predominantly suburban and disproportionately white settler majority. While the ‘neighbourhood’ (or, in this case, several neighbourhoods in proximity) is an important scale through which urban inhabitants attach meaning and identity to place in the city, some specific common spaces – and the people and organizations operating therein – are recognizably important for strengthening the health and safety, the connectivity and belonging, and the cultural grounding of Indigenous residents in Saskatoon.

### ***5.3.2 Cultural Resurgence through Indigenous led Community Spaces***

Social relations are practiced and experienced in everyday interactions between and among people, and these interactions occur in and across material spaces that become inscribed over time with localized functions, meanings, and users’ senses of identity in place. Some urban spaces such as a single house on a privately-owned lot might represent a considerably narrow range of meanings and connections because very few people interact or identify with that space, yet the surrounding neighbourhood may encompass parks, streets, sidewalks, and buildings functioning as ‘common’ spaces that significantly influence social relations over time. Certain common spaces (buildings and organizations) that host Indigenous programming, services, and community gatherings are highly valued by Indigenous residents of core west side neighbourhoods because they serve to mitigate harm and support individual and community wellbeing and connectivity. The functions of common spaces with which participants most notably connected, and in which they placed the most value, are schools and education programs (safe, nourishing, culturally significant spaces for youth); services that help people survive the

spatially concentrated impacts of settler colonial capitalism; and spaces that nourish kinship and cultural resurgence.

### ***5.3.2.1 Schools and education programs***

Core neighbourhood schools were identified by some participants as spaces wherein early and ongoing work has been done to connect residents – particularly children – with cultural knowledge that is otherwise difficult to attain in prairie cities. For example, a participant expressed appreciation for Indigenous teachers in core community schools who have not only developed cultural programming, but who also serve as role models and mentors for Indigenous youth.

...as I got older, and this was before the word reconciliation ever happened, or even TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission), is that you noticed a lot of these schools in this area: Pleasant Hill, King George, even Bedford Road, E.D. Feehan, and St. Mary's were doing a lot of First Nations and Métis and Indigenous culture events. And so, it was happening before we even knew, and I don't think we give enough credit to people who started those programs, because I think everybody thinks there was no such thing as First Nations teachings, or Métis teachings in these schools when I was growing up, but there was... the nurturing has been there. And I think what really helped is there were teachers that were Indigenous that would come into these areas, too. That really helped, but it's always been there, it's just...never been really acknowledged.

[Station 20 West focus group, P3, male]

The Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) is a core neighbourhood organization that emphasizes youth education to promote cultural learning and community values. It partners with the public and Catholic schoolboards to develop and deliver Métis curriculum and programming in two core neighbourhood schools. Its partnership with Westmount School has generated a K-8 immersive Métis Cultural Program whose principal objective “is to enrich student education with authentic learning experiences within a Métis world view” (CUMFI, 2018b). Another participant emphasized the value added to core neighbourhoods by Indigenous teacher training programs such as the Saskatchewan Urban Native Education Program (SUNTEP).

SUNTEP...I think it was 1992 when it first started, or maybe even further back than that, where they had First Nation Indigenous teachers that, once they graduated from that program, they became teachers themselves. I think a lot of First Nations teachers came back into the core neighbourhood because a lot of people want to always give



back to their community. So, I think SUNTEP, the program, has a big place adding to the importance of the community.

[Station 20 West focus group, P3, male]

Schools are significant spaces where indigeneity has been implanted in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods by Indigenous teachers as well as administrators, children, and their families through the development of, and participation in, culturally significant pedagogy, programs, and events. The importance that participants placed on culturally grounded education, programs, and common spaces was a recurring theme in the interviews; a finding that, when considered alongside aspirations of Indigenous resurgence, has important implications for property relations and land uses, which will be further expounded in subsequent sections.

Residents of Saskatoon's core west side neighbourhoods have also created community organizations that offer alternative education programs more aptly suited for some youth than those offered in most public schools. For example, the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) is a social enterprise that combines secondary education with an array of unique skills-development options, life resources and supports, meal preparation, and opportunities to sell products made by students such as cutting boards from the woodworking shop. Roughly 85 youth per year attend CNYC where they learn "values of community, cooperation, sustainability, environmentalism, gratitude, accountability and leadership in an empowering and respectful atmosphere" (CNYC.ca). CNYC also offers significant opportunities for youth to experience and learn about local Indigenous cultural practices, arts, and ceremony.

So, the goal [of CNYC's culture camp] was to practice...doing cultural crafts; they make drums, they learn songs, those kinds of things. So, they were learning really important pieces of involving yourself in culture, but at the same time building up a relationship with the facilitator of the culture camp... they were learning all of these skills and then went to the culture camp and practiced them as a lifestyle for a few days over an open fire, telling stories, doing that kind of stuff. So, the kids already had that comfortable relationship before they went out to camp, so they were authentically able to realize what they were being taught and participate in a positive role in those teachings.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

Down the road from CNYC, the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL) is a large community recreation centre managed by the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and was established in a renovated former grocery store close to other essential services.

White Buffalo Youth Lodge, I pretty much go there every day to play basketball or work out, because its free for the youth. Across the street is the Friendship Inn if you run out of groceries or can't afford to buy groceries. The food bank too is not far from the area. It's within walking distance.

[Friendship Centre focus group, P1, male]

Neither CNYC nor WBYL receives consistent core funding, which severely challenges their abilities to provide much needed (and desired) programs and services.

We're not funded. We don't have any core funding, so...we have to be very innovative to ensure that we're providing all of the essential programs and services that are meeting the goals of the medicine wheel, right?

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

Of course, I'd love to have Elders here every single day. Funding doesn't dictate that for us right now... But yeah, we want to be able to authentically engage in cultural programming that speaks to not only the taste and touch and smell of Indigenous culture, but also to get to the roots and the foundations of... what spirituality means as well as...our ethics and value systems.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

And yet, both organizations provide safe and nourishing spaces for youth that offer myriad community and cultural services and activities supporting individual agency, wellbeing, and community connectivity flowing from Indigenous value systems.

So, I try to provide programming that's going to teach them about, for instance, the tipi pole teachings, which talks about respect and love and kinship and sharing and giving back to the community. We've introduced the theories and ideas behind the circle of courage that I spoke to you about a little while ago, those pillars of the circle of courage being independence, mastery, generosity, and belonging. So those are very Indigenous foundations of our value system, and those are practiced here on a daily basis as our culture, and that's how we do cultural programming is living and existing in the value system that we're taught is very Indigenous... And I try to ensure that we have programming that's going to speak to and help our youth be successful but is also very balanced so that they're able to practice Indigenous culture in their everyday lives... We try to provide opportunity for engagement with Elders and introduce them to ceremony opportunity, and...we do bead work and Indigenous crafting, we have smudge available here. I mentioned we grow our own tobacco, and it's a real more authentic idea of what is Indigenous community. And so, it should feel like a rez in the city, right?

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

A trend worth pointing out is that urban Indigenous residents see value in ‘rez’ or ‘reserve’ qualities of cultural education, common spaces, and community in core neighbourhoods – that is, characteristics that remind people of relationships and mutual support akin to many rural reserve communities – and they identify those qualities in their cultural services, programming, and common gathering spaces more so than new urban reserves. This finding will be discussed later in this chapter. Nevertheless, community organizations like WBYL and CNYC, in addition to schools with culturally significant programming, offer spaces where Indigenous youth may learn knowledge and skills that are both relevant to who they are and where they live, and are catered to help them live nourished urban lives.

Youth access to safe and nourishing spaces, however, is limited to a handful of organizations operating in core neighbourhoods during daytime hours. In 2016, 39 per cent of Indigenous children in Saskatoon were living in poverty (Macdonald & Wilson, 2016) and thousands continue to experience precarious and harmful conditions in everyday life such as inadequate, unstable, or unsafe housing. Indigenous young people’s reprehensibly limited access to safe and secure spaces during nighttime hours, particularly in the winter when temperatures plummet, is a serious concern for service providers who operate with minimal financial resources themselves.

Housing is a foundation of our economic community’s security, and the implementation of programming...a lot of it relies on the fact that we’ve provided a safe place for youth to exist on a daily basis, and we attempt to eliminate life stressors like hunger and belonging and all those other things. But the basics of needs; having a roof over your head, participating in education, and outside stressors of not having a home to go to after the youth leave the facility is the very reason why we can’t deliver education programming in the afternoon. Because although our kids can be here first thing in the morning and feel good that they’re going to have a warm lunch [so] they can concentrate on their schooling from 9:30 to 11:00, once you reach that threshold of noon and the kids are worried about where they’re going to sleep that night, the hours between 1:00 and 5:00 when the kids have to leave here at the end of the day are filled with stress and anxiety for our kids. If you took the housing element into consideration, being able to provide these kids with a safe place to go at the end of the day and know that they’re going to have a safe place to rest, maybe we can focus on educating them a little bit more in our afternoons when they’re not stressing about where they’re going to go, or what party they’re going to have to contribute to in order to have a safe place to sleep at night.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

Hunter and Sanchez (2018) establish direct linkages between the governing Saskatchewan Party's lack of economic redistribution policies and child poverty in that province. The provincial government's unwillingness to redirect increased natural resource revenues to Indigenous communities when Saskatchewan's extraction economy was booming between 2007 and 2017, combined with its measures of austerity during oil and potash price slumps from 2017 onward, have continued to hold Indigenous youth in poverty with disproportionately limited access to the necessities of life and social determinants of health (Hunter & Sanchez, 2018).

### ***5.3.2.2 Community organizations, Indigenous services, and safe gathering spaces***

Some community spaces and organizations offer services and supports that help mitigate spatially concentrated harms, traumas, violence, and exclusions of settler colonial capitalism in Saskatoon. CUMFI is “a community based Métis owned and operated non-profit, charitable organization” and a “local and national leader in the area of urban Aboriginal issues and challenges” (CUMFI, 2018c). In addition to youth education partnerships, CUMFI also owns and operates several apartment buildings in which Indigenous residents gain access to programs and services to address their comprehensive needs. Four of these homes operate through CUMFI's Coming Home Program, which is directed to helping “parents who require intensive support in order to have their children returned to their care or to maintain their children in their care” (CUMFI, 2018a). The organization also provides affordable, substance-free rental units, safe homes for apprehended children and those at risk of being placed in care, emergency housing placements, and supported housing “for individuals with cognitive disabilities”, as well as homes for men in addictions recovery, for Indigenous families living with HIV/AIDS, and visiting suites for families whose children have been placed in foster care.

CUMFI provides specialized supports and spaces that empower individuals' and families' agency in their struggles to overcome the most devastating impacts of colonial violence and dispossession.

And now having Aboriginal people that are in control of agencies and they're front running in programming like CUMFI, it gives Métis people a voice in communities like that, that have maybe lived there all their life but hadn't had a voice, but now an agency

like CUMFI can come in there and say “hey, listen, we’re here. We’re a resource for your support.”

[CUMFI focus group, P1, male]

Alongside CUMFI, other organizations in core neighbourhoods are important places for Indigenous residents to access specialized health services.

Other important places for people who are trying to reach out of unhealthy atmospheres have been...AIDS Saskatoon, their outreach program. They’ve always, as far as I remember them, exist[ed] on 23rd street. Westside Clinic...has been an amalgamation not to practice culture, but to access resources to find yourself in a healthy place, to take that step into learning a healthy Indigenous lifestyle.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

The Westside Clinic is a co-operative organization and branch of the Saskatoon Community Clinic that offers specialized health services for core neighbourhood residents. One of their strategic mandates is a commitment to a “community driven” model delivering “comprehensive primary health services” for “vulnerable populations” whose social determinants of health are most harmfully impacted. According to their website, the Saskatoon Community Clinic (2020) is

Saskatoon’s only primary health care co-operative. A co-operative, by definition, is an organization with a willingness and ability to work with others. It is owned by and operated for the benefit of those using its services. The co-operative structure involves member input in policy and direction setting. Co-operatives follow seven principles:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Co-operation among co-operatives
- Concern for community

The Westside Clinic also offers community programming such as the Student Wellness Initiative Toward Community Health (SWITCH), wellness and financial literacy workshops, children’s activities, and community meals. AIDS Saskatoon (now Prairie Harm Reduction) provides drop-in support and consultation, outreach and advocacy, and family support. In 2020, Prairie Harm Reduction opened the province’s first safe consumption site in the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood – a drastic but evidence-based strategy to mitigate harm among core neighbourhood substance

users amid Saskatoon's devastating opioid crisis – despite being denied funding by the Government of Saskatchewan in its 2020 budget (Dove, 2020). Both organizations are committed to improving urban residents' determinants of health, focusing their programming on immediate to long-term wellness needs of community members.

A Métis housing provider emphasized their holistic and sustained “wrap around” support system that provides tenants with leniency, life resources, and creative solutions to both housing and non-housing struggles that residents face while working to create stability in their lives.

A lot of times [potential residents] don't have the references, you know? A lot of times our clientele have struggled in the past with different things, and they don't have a good history of renting; they don't have a credit reference. If they've ran into trouble, they don't have any resources to bail them out or help them out. A lot of times our tenants, if they fall behind in rent or something, they don't have a family member or anything that they can ask to borrow \$100 from ... So I think that's one of the barriers... they don't have any of those resources. For them to get into a housing program... a lot of landlords want two years of references. We ask for that, too, but we'll make exceptions. If they don't have two years, we'll take a look at the big picture, and if they were in jail or something... we'll take that into account, and then we'll bring them into our program and get the supports in place.

[Senior staff member, Camponi Housing]

This narrative excerpt highlights the compounded barriers that many Indigenous people face in Saskatoon and other prairie cities. Housing is indeed a significant determinant of health, but acquiring a safe, adequate, and stable residence often depends on the fulfillment of several other interconnected socioeconomic and culturally centred (emotional, physical, mental, spiritual) needs.

While social service institutions that operate under provincial government policy and programming siloes tend to methodically ignore this reality, Indigenous service providers do their best to respond in personalized and creative ways to individuals' immediate, often precarious circumstances. They are mindful of the complex legacy and ongoing harms of colonization, such as intergenerational trauma resulting from Indian residential schools, the ongoing crisis of Indigenous incarceration, and the theft of Indigenous children by Saskatchewan's Child and Family Services, and they are cognizant of the benefits that community connectivity and a cultural sense of place and belonging can produce for Indigenous people struggling to survive harsh urban conditions.

We try to avoid the idea of clinical [practice], or you come in and ask for one thing and we'll provide the one thing and send you off on your way; we want to be holistic. We want to try to provide wrap around supports, and that comes through building trust, building relationships, and being able to work with people in a way where we're trying to look out for their best interests in whatever area or way that is...wanting to meet them where they're at, not telling them where they should be... Those are important pillars in how we meet people when they come in the doors, and how we connect them with the community...within a model that puts kinship as a very high priority in how we do business; how we work with the community.

[Director, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre]

All participants who work with Indigenous community organizations emphasized the value and importance of building stability in community members' lives through holistic supports delivered effectively through culturally grounded and consistent trust relationships.

Holistic supports do not refer only to wrap-around services that address outcomes of systemic racism, colonial violence, and socio-spatial exclusions, but they also infuse cultural protocols, ceremony, and teachings of life balance in programming and daily practice.

Within Indigenous cultures across Canada you will find [that] for medicine wheel teachings, for talking about circle of life, when talking about many dynamics of those outcomes of types of teachings and protocols, that there needs to be a balance. There needs to be holistic in a manner where there's physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and all the different dynamics of being are valued and respected and a part of the way of doing things. And when we are able to work within those various areas instead of just focused on one very tight focus, that allows us to be far more effective in what we're doing.

[Director, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre]

All of our programming is holistically based on the Medicine Wheel approach, so the teachings of the medicine wheel, and basically the view of that is all encompassing, right? So, the circle includes everybody, balancing, you know, starting with the little one, their life, to the larger perspective, which is the community, right? So, all of our programming is based on that approach and within that, the four quadrants. You've got your physical, you have your mental, you have your spiritual, and your emotional.

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

Indigenous-operated community organizations and programs in Saskatoon's core west side neighbourhoods provide safe gathering spaces and specialized services that connect clients to community supports. They are effective because they emphasize trust relationships in their daily practice which, through consistent and compassionate social interactions, empower people to

exercise agency over their lives. In the next section I situate core neighbourhood values of kinship, trust, community, and self-agency alongside the ‘revitalization’ of Riversdale. Participants’ perceptions of ‘revitalization’ are explored to reveal how material and symbolic changes are affecting people’s lived spaces and their abilities to live good lives.

### ***5.3.3 Indigenous Perceptions of Neighbourhood Change***

The spaces (and organizations) highlighted in the previous section – and the sociocultural values with which urban residents create meaning, identity, and belonging in their home neighbourhoods – are structurally bounded in propertied urban landscapes. Yet they are ‘liminal’ spaces co-created through collective organizing that seek a better quality of life in Saskatoon. Indigenous spaces are now perceived by participants to be threatened amid ‘revitalization’ processes that seek to maximize exchange values through material and social transformation. Indigenous residents of Saskatoon and Riversdale have contributed labour and added much use value to their communities – to the urban social-spatial fabric in and across Indigenous territory. However, the revitalization of Riversdale is perceived by participants to reproduce economic exclusion, material disruptions, upheaval, and social antagonisms (and performances of whiteness) that further marginalize and criminalize Indigenous residents in their home neighbourhood.

#### ***5.3.3.1 Exclusive economic development***

Dominant representations of Riversdale’s revitalization in newspapers, magazines, and promotional materials from RBID and the City of Saskatoon have tended to emphasize the neighbourhood’s economic growth and material and social improvements to the vibrancy of the neighbourhood. Riversdale’s property market is growing in exchange value, spurred by a wave of sales, demolitions, rebuilds, conversions and renovations. The 20<sup>th</sup> street commercial district has experienced widespread changes to its consumption options and material aesthetic. Such changes have long been advocated by property and business owners in Riversdale, but who is benefitting from these changes? Who is excluded? And is anyone harmed in the process? Some participants observed that material revitalization is a pathway to gentrification when mechanisms do not exist to mitigate harmful social outcomes of market fluctuations.



There's winners and losers when there is a revitalization of a neighbourhood. Not everybody benefits from that transaction, and so we have to think, at a macro level, how can we adjust policies and practice in that way to ensure that there's not just gentrification, so to speak, of these neighbourhoods? Because what's going to happen, by the free market, is the food bank eventually will be pushed out of that neighbourhood. The Salvation Army...people won't even be able to get there, so they're going to find that their base is up in Pleasant Hill, and it'll be complete, just like in other cities.

[former Askîy intern, male]

Other participants noted that while many new businesses may be successful in Riversdale, most Indigenous residents do not benefit from economic growth, nor do they have capacity to access increasingly expensive goods and services in their neighbourhood.

Economic development is happening, but for who? It's not happening for the people who are from the community. It's not happening for First Nations people. None of those businesses are invested into the community. They are investing into their business...great places and stuff, but do any of our people go there? I doubt it. They can't afford it, you know? It's good for tourists when they come. I mean 20<sup>th</sup> used to be hood right to Idylwyld, and now it's not; you have to come up further before you really get a feel for the hood.

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

So, community and belonging, I don't see a lot of that [with revitalization]. And economic opportunity? I don't see any economic opportunity for any of our clients.

[CUMFI focus group, P2, female]

You go to all those cafes on 20<sup>th</sup>, you don't see an Aboriginal person in there.

[CUMFI focus group, P3, female]

These participants together allude to some of the defining characteristics of neighbourhood gentrification; the disruption, exclusion, and displacement of residents who have little economic power, stability, and security (Bain & Mark, 2020; Lees, 2012; Smith, 1989).

The 'revitalization' of material space and the expansion of real estate values have certainly benefited property owners in Riversdale, some of whom are predatory landlords who have taken advantage of Indigenous tenants systematically excluded in discriminatory rental markets. Participants not only perceived that property ownership has been an instrumental force influencing 'revitalization' in terms of real estate renewal and speculation, but also that individuals with the power to determine spatial functions through property ownership have

contributed little to the wellbeing of Indigenous residents in the neighbourhood, many of whom are renters, affordable housing tenants, or are experiencing precarious conditions such as food insecurity, housing transience, or homelessness.

From the perspective of property owners in Riversdale, then, ‘revitalization’ may be viewed as a welcomed change that diversifies and expands certain use values (aesthetic/functional improvements and consumption options) and exchange values (commodity prices, opportunities for wealth extraction and accumulation).

For those who own their homes, the housing values have gone up, which then increases their quality of life or ability for quality of life in their journey forwards. There is greater opportunity for number of restaurants to go to, number of businesses...and greater opportunities for employment, especially if you don’t have access to transportation. So, there are many positives, but there’s also some drawbacks that come where there can be the feelings of exclusion or...not feeling as welcome within those areas as they once had been.

[Director, Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre]

While new homeowners and visiting outsiders enjoy the proliferation of more expensive and trendy consumption options and an improved material aesthetic in Riversdale, many working-class poor and Indigenous residents are socially and economically excluded from these spaces, and their senses of security and belonging are diminished. Participants noted that Riversdale business owners want to help improve the safety of the neighbourhood, but largely for their own self-interests.

I used to work with the needle exchange, and when we’d go to pick up needles, we got invited to... I think it was Riversdale [Business Improvement District]. It was all very well-off people in suits, and we walk in, and we’re supposed be a part of the community, but right off the hop we didn’t fit in at all. We didn’t fit in, and the most concern they had was we don’t want all of these dirty needles in front of our businesses. That’s all they were concerned about. They weren’t concerned about having a partnership with any organizations, especially First Nations or Métis, to try and resolve the situation.

[CUMFI focus group, P4, female]

I think they’re not listening and hearing and talking to people; I think they all make these decisions of care, but it’s not front line.

[CUMFI focus group, P2, female]

Another participant equated an ideal outcome of neighbourhood revitalization to the shared benefits of economic development in many First Nation reserve communities.

I mean if you're creating jobs, each one of those places has to employ, you know, an X amount of community members, or...how a reserve does it; when you have your administration building, typically you have people from that reserve as much as...can be educated and in there working. Like that's a goal. It's not a bunch of people from all over Canada that go there to run that, right? Same idea, if that's what you're going towards, why isn't it the people from the community doing it? It's not, so...it doesn't do anything for anyone that's here.

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

When material improvements and new enterprises are created on reserve, typically the community will benefit in some way, perhaps through direct employment, new programs and service provisions, or through increased access to community gathering spaces. Neighbourhood revitalization strategies that are driven largely by the 'creative destruction', renewal, and marketing of private property – both of housing stock and of commercial spaces – are perceived by Indigenous residents and community organizations to not only exclude inhabitants who already experience significant socioeconomic barriers, but to also reinforce the ordering power of *whiteness* over spatial production and the emplacement of socioeconomic boundaries over urban land.

### ***5.3.3.2 Social antagonisms and spatial contradictions***

The residential and commercial revitalization of Riversdale has been galvanized through local state investment and the planned restructuring of public space. Yet, the transition from renewed market speculation to public and private reinvestment and then to property renewal is not a smooth nor harmless process. It can be destructive, disruptive, and dispossessive, and it can heighten social conflict through racial, gendered, and class antagonisms that arise from socio-spatial contradictions. Urban space is being destroyed and created anew in a property-by-property cascade of reinvestment and uneven development. Indigenous participants highlighted several antagonisms and contradictions of property market-driven revitalization in Riversdale that demonstrate the uneven development and recolonization of Indigenous space.

Perhaps the most obvious contradiction is that new public and private infrastructure stimulus and improvements meant to enhance economic activity have produced a rising cost of

living for existing residents. A couple of participants associated this contradiction with escalating rental housing prices and the displacement of poor families from their homes.

I know when it comes to Riversdale itself, revitalization is a nice word for people to say. I just call it simple gentrification because there's a lot of flipping houses. People bought tons of houses when the market was low and sold them. A lot of people got kicked out and moved to Pleasant Hill and King George; a lot of people moved to 33rd [Street] and Confed[eration Park]... I knew a family who had eight or nine people living in a two bedroom...because that's all they could afford at that time; because our governments were too scared to put a rental cap. But the revitalization always made me laugh, because it didn't happen until people started buying the first two or three [blocks] into Riversdale.

[Station 20 West focus group, P1, male]

So, with the wave of economic influence and changes that have come up kind of from the river over, and the new farmer's market, and new home base, and kind of higher end living property development and business development, that's kind of had a positive and a negative effect. The positive effect is it's stimulating economic movement in the Riversdale community, so it's drawing people in to spend dollars here. So, it's feeding into our economy, which is a good thing. The negative effects, however, is that it's driving up the cost of living in the core community, which is sort of driving out lots of people that can't afford to live in the higher end... the housing development has kind of taken a spike, so it's reducing the amount of homes that are available in the low income...sector. So, it's taking our community's low income needs base and it's spreading it out and saturating into the west side of the city...

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

While people who are financially vulnerable are being pushed out of the neighbourhood due to an increasingly competitive and overvalued rental market, economically marginalized Indigenous inhabitants who remain in or near Riversdale experience social antagonisms in their daily lived spaces.

Indigenous folks who enter or wait outside higher-end commercial spaces are often perceived as loiterers or suspected as potential criminals (Monkman, 2016). They are watched closely as they browse products or, as one participant experienced, asked to pay before services are rendered. Experiences of social conflict and exclusionary violence are heightened amid the uneven redevelopment of Riversdale, as essential service and community organizations continue to operate alongside revitalized commercial properties.

...in most cities in North American where gentrification happened, it is cut and dry. There's an East Hastings and West Hastings. But I think what we have in Saskatoon,

it's happening. We're in transition. There's a gradient. You can go to a place in our city where on one side of the street there's a place where you can get a farm fresh to the table meal with locally grown food there for maybe 15 or 20 dollars a plate, where right across the street you would have people lining up for the soup kitchen and maybe a night to sleep. Across the street you have a bank, you can go and have the services if you have an ID, and on the other side you have a pseudo bank, which is a pawn shop... [former Askîy intern, male]

This same participant suggested that they embody this contradiction because they are financially able to access new consumption options and simultaneously “take up space” as an identifiable Indigenous person.

Indigenous people still have to access resources in this neighbourhood. Like the food bank is right next to a coffee shop, so I feel personally that I like to see myself taking up space in this neighbourhood. I want to be a bridge, because visibly I am an Indigenous person, and I want to see it from both perspectives... I want to understand it from an economically driven...mentality they have. If they're doing good...how is that driven not just by your ideology, but could we help you understand how you could actually benefit Indigenous autonomy in this new economy that is proliferating in this neighbourhood? [former Askîy intern, male]

This participant can freely navigate new commercial spaces in Riversdale because they have the financial means and appearance to cross socioeconomic boundaries, but they also recognized that many do not. Since the Indigenous population in core neighbourhoods continues to struggle for stability, wellbeing, and self-determining autonomy against harmful conditions of oppression and precarity, racialized socioeconomic conflict reproduces violent exclusions of Indigenous residents in and from urban spaces in their home neighbourhood.

Antagonisms and contradictions are spatialized throughout Riversdale's changing built environment. Neglected and overcrowded houses are strewn across a rising tide of new or renovated modern, private abodes. People who are struggling to meet their needs through mutual support systems and kinship networks tend to live vastly different day-to-day lives than those with greater access to stability, security, and resources, and sociocultural ideologies that value private individualism. The animosities that arise between neighbours experiencing vastly different material circumstances can lead to surveillance and police harassment: Indigenous youth are regularly stop-checked and carded for possible criminal connections (Monkman, 2016); multi-unit crime free housing has been implemented to increase police surveillance and

authority to enter and monitor home spaces (Saskatoon Police Service, 2021); and new residents are encouraged to report potential “crime houses” to police, empowered by Saskatchewan’s *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, 2004, according to a list of indicators such as shaded windows, uncleanliness of the property, number and frequency of visitors, and “unfriendly people who appear to be secretive about their activities” (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). While there are serious concerns about gang activity and public safety in core west side neighbourhoods – a product of settler colonial violence, dispossession, and competitive capitalism – public surveillance and police reporting can empower property owners and managers to facilitate the criminalization and eviction of Indigenous people, other minorities who are subjected to discriminatory property relations such as new immigrants, and the working-class poor from their home spaces.

As the revitalization of the 20th Street commercial strip expands incrementally westward, people who continue to access essential services in Riversdale increasingly encounter new residents and outside visitors in their daily lived space. Although proponents of neighbourhood revitalization might argue that the dense proximity of people from varied economic and social positions adds to the diversity of the neighbourhood, unequal power relations enacted in daily life have also served to reinforce the exclusion and criminalization of people perceived as undesirable.

The area and how it’s been developed is really nice...and there’s a lot more activity like around the farmer’s market and down 20th street. But where did those people go? They did go somewhere. It kind of reminds me of that Gastown area in Vancouver. It’s right beside Hastings, so as you’re doing a little bit of high-end shopping in Gastown, there’s people picking bottles to take back to the bottle depot on East Hastings. It’s kind of unsettling, so it’s nice, but the people that are walking in those areas, they can’t afford to shop in those stores that are there. They can’t afford to eat at the restaurants there... [Senior staff member, Camponi Housing]

Furthermore, the revitalization of Riversdale has not translated into more resources for community service organizations, nor has it enriched the quality of life of their clients.

I: Okay, so...you’re talking about accepting that people want to continue living here because...they’ve built up their relationships...and the services are here, so why not support them even more?

Exactly, and yeah, with positive, healthy programming, right? If it's here, they attend. If it's inaccessible, they can't; there's too many barriers. We've got to reduce those barriers... Make it convenient for them, don't just have an influx of improvement of building faces, of shops that they can't go in, or are going to be judged when they go in there, you know, and followed around like they're going to steal. Instead, give something to them that they're going to utilize and be comfortable and appreciated for wanting to live in the community, and for taking ownership of having a community, right?

[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

Property owners and influential proponents of revitalization (those who have economic and political power to conceive or to re-imagine, re-design, and materialize urban space) seek to fundamentally change the socio-spatial character of Riversdale, while Indigenous residents and community organizers aspire to enhance their neighbourhood's social connectivity, services, common spaces, and the best qualities of local indigeneity while remaining in place.

When we're living here in the community, the media and society tells us "oh, you need to move your family up out of the hood. You need to move your family up out of the ghetto... that thought is planted in our heads, right? Then we think...we can't be successful here in our community without getting up out of here. But it shouldn't be like that, you know? We need to feel comfortable living here. The times where people thought for us, did things for us without our knowledge, those times are gone... So, now we need to take responsibility for what's happening here...

[Station 20 West focus group, P2, female]

For several participants, the material improvement of property in Riversdale is merely a façade that obscures the continued struggles and exclusions of urban Indigenous residents for and from resources, land and space, and decision-making agency. The neighbourhood's longstanding Indigenous presence – as well as its historic ethnocultural variety in general – is promoted as an asset to potential investors and visitors to Riversdale as a microcosm of Canada's multicultural ideal, and yet the criminalization, displacement, and dispossession of Indigenous people experiencing poverty and precarity is reproduced through property and neighbourhood 'revitalization'.

The city says revitalization in Riversdale and Pleasant Hill areas, and it's not revitalization. I guess it's revitalization in the sense that they're...getting rid of all the Aboriginal people, but they're moving that issue from one area to the next area. Now they're all congregating on 33rd street. So really, are you cleaning it up? The issues, the problems are still there, right? They haven't changed anything; they haven't cleaned

anything...they've just moved the problem from one area to the next. So really, yes, they're revitalizing Riversdale; there's no longer a bunch of Indians hanging out in that area. They're cleaning it up with a nice wall and paintings and little restaurants, quaint little restaurants coming up and that sort of thing. But hey, what about our people? I feel like we're being taken out of here and moved over here. Next thing they'll want 33rd street revitalized. Where are they going to move us?  
[CUMFI focus group, P5, female]

The 'frontier' mentality that regards Indigenous land and territory as available for settler replacement or occupation is present in core neighbourhood revitalization processes that treat Indigenous spaces and bodies as dispensable, unproductive, or a threat to settler order.

Property is a fundamental mechanism enabling settler appropriation of Indigenous land and space as well as the disruption and dislocation of Indigenous relations and residents (Blomley, 2016; 2017b; Harris, 1993; 2002; 2004). A couple of participants highlighted the mainstream push to improve the aesthetic quality of 20th Street and Avenue H – both busy corridors – to improve outside perceptions of Riversdale, and another emphasized the “devastating” impact of renewed displacement and dispossession: an outcome and example of racially skewed property relations.

So even with Riversdale, like gentrification, this isn't a natural process. It's something that the city buys into. I can't remember how long ago it was, but there was an urban façade project in this area where people could fix up the front of their house and get a grant back from the municipality, and it was cut off at Avenue H. So these are decisions, these are decisions that we are going to make this (here) a desirable neighbourhood, and this (over there) is not going to be a desirable neighbourhood. It's just this neighbourhood, and it's “all good in the hood”. Yeah, those are really dangerous words when you think about actually trying to progress our society to be, like you said, Indigenous people occupied these spaces long before there was a hipster 20th, you know? This is home for a lot of people, you know, who are being pushed out again. Not just from reserves, but also here. You've developed this cultural identity of place and schema, and again you're being pushed out. It's devastating.  
[former Askîy intern, male]

The residential and commercial revitalization of Riversdale has been spurred through local state investment and the planned restructuring of public space. The City of Saskatoon first developed local area plans through a stakeholder approach that included some community organizations, but it did not establish mechanisms for Indigenous control or shared authority over the process. The municipality has rezoned much of Riversdale for commercial use and implemented a direct



control district over River Landing. Saskatoon also established a Municipal Enterprise Zone, which created multiple incentives to renovate real estate across core west side neighbourhoods. This included a façade enhancement grant, a vacant lot and adaptive reuse strategy, and federal government-supported renovation grants for homeowners.

I liked what you said about the window dressing on Ave H. It took me back to travelling north to Meadow Lake, and I was travelling with my nephew. You'd see these beautiful forest stands of trees, and he said you could walk back in there about 150 yards past this bush line along this road, and...you'd see nothing but a moonscape from all the logging; clear cut. So yeah, clean up Ave H, but you know that the interior around Ave H is run down.

[Station 20 West focus group, P3, male]

Municipal decisions to valorize core neighbourhood spaces through the injection of capital are necessary to replace older spaces with more economically vibrant ones; a form of state-supported economic coercion to increase rents, commodity prices, and to remove or limit essential amenities for poor residents such as community centres and service organizations, pawn shops, cheaper restaurants, bars and hotels, and grocery stores. Indigenous community aspirations to collectively produce urban land and space are severely limited, while participation in planning for public space is relegated to a stakeholder role among all other ethnocultural minorities. Land use, zoning, and community planning are all anchored to state interests through the Saskatchewan *Planning and Development Act*. As Pasternak (2014) explains, while municipalities “may not hang their power on the mantle of sovereignty”, they are nevertheless “micro-governing authorities” that “mark and codify relationships on the ground.”

### ***5.3.4 Surviving to Thriving: ‘Economies of Nourishment’ and the Urban Indigenous Commons***

Indigenous residents in Saskatoon and other prairie cities are structurally excluded as self-determining agents and communities in urban land use regimes and socio-spatial planning. Power and jurisdictional authority to conceive and materialize (that is, to produce) urban space is largely under the purview of City Hall and provincial legislation, and is influenced predominantly by land and property owners, property developers, construction and real estate industries, and the financial sector. While the City of Saskatoon has made efforts to obtain

Indigenous input and buy-in through corporate partnerships and strategic planning consultations, these efforts have been largely perceived as token inclusion (Fawcett et al., 2015). Certain priorities are pre-established by the municipality under provincial regulations, forgoing Indigenous community aspirations and treaty rights to practice decision-making authority and coexisting autonomy.

Saskatoon's Indigenous community, particularly those who are socioeconomically marginalized and disproportionately exposed to poverty, violence, and precarity under settler colonial capitalism, have urban ambitions that do not align with the strategic planning priorities of municipalities nor the dominant interests of property owners and private enterprises. These priorities and interests are advanced by those with economic and political power as necessities to maximize efficiency and growth through the 'highest and best uses' of urban land; the material basis upon which property is valued as a locational commodity. But how is value defined by those with marginal access to urban space and economic resources? In this section I ask participants to describe how a revitalized neighbourhood and community might look, feel, and function if Indigenous residents could operationalize their self-determining autonomy through the production of urban space. To transform Indigenous urbanism from conditions of liminality to practices of resurgent self-determination – from bounded, 'invited' spaces to grounded, 'invented' places – participants outlined a holistic conception of community rooted in territory that nurtures autonomous agency and self-actualization, belonging and connectivity, relational reciprocity and responsibility, and access to land, space and resources to collectively and cooperatively strive toward a nourishing quality of urban life.

For Indigenous people living in Saskatoon, local economies would ideally support communities' and individuals' abilities to live nourished, connected lives.

I want to be in a community, I want to live in a community, and I want to participate in an economy that allows me to nourish my children with more than just food. I want to be able to take the foundations of ethics and value systems that I find so important to teach the youth here, I want to be able to do that at home with my own children as well, and my partner's child. I want to be able to teach them about who they are, where they come from, and where they're going, and if I have kids here who can't concentrate in school because they're so stressed out about not having food to eat or a bed to sleep in, they're not educating themselves to their full potential and their full capacity.  
[Director, White Buffalo Youth Lodge]

In terms of urban space, resources, and relational connections, an economy of nourishment would bolster the operational capacities of community agencies that work in core neighbourhoods and are valued for their shared dedication to wellbeing through culturally centred programs and services – particularly for those most marginalized under structures of settler colonial capitalism.

So you've got a couple gyms, you've got the Westside clinic, or STC health clinic...you've got housing programs working with the homeless, you've got medical personnel, you've got the justice workers working with the youth, you've got employment training services for inner city, you know, for First Nations and Métis people, you've got the school programs that are working with the children that are struggling with school academics, attendance, so be it. You've got mental health services, you've got addiction services all in one spot with a nice building, with brand new stuff that isn't an old, refurbished grocery store with our plumbing being backed up, you know? Like that's what a revitalization for the community would look like that people are still going to come to...

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

An important aspect of strengthening the capacities among community organizations includes the expansion of operational hours to create a network of safe, community-owned, 24-hour gathering and support spaces, particularly for youth.

As an individual organization, I mean if I had no restrictions or finances or anything that I was concerned about, CNYC would first and foremost be 24 hours... We would have showers in here, we would have a gym in here, we would have the ability to open our doors and housing them is not as urgent. But then it becomes an issue of who do we serve? ...Some of our kids, when they leave here, they're getting involved in gangs so that they have a place to live and...have food in their stomach. So, I think that having those 24-hour services meeting the basic needs more often and more fluidly without interruption, I think that that would reduce crime rates and gang activity in our core, for sure. Some of those things would be non-existent. I think if we were able to do that, we would have...more of those co-op style...communities. If we had...neighbourhoods that functioned as a co-op as opposed to a money-making venture so that resources were spent in the areas that are important, like leisure, sports participation, and education, and allowing our youth to grow up in a stress-free environment, those things would be in place.

[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

These perspectives might be summarized as a shared desire to expand and enhance an Indigenous 'commons' in the city; a network of cooperative, collectively owned and operated,

accessible organizations and spaces whose principle objective is to add physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional nourishment to people's lives, enriching social relations through mutual reciprocity, trust, and responsibility among community members; a right to the city that embraces, with radical creativity, the transformative potential of Indigenous resurgence.

Just as the re-appropriation of urban space is essential for the expansion of an Indigenous commons in Saskatoon and other prairie cities, the re-appropriation of land by Indigenous communities and nations is foundational to transformative movements of resurgence and decolonization, both in cities and rural areas. Some participants expressed that dominant spatial functions and property exclusions in Saskatoon severely curtail people's abilities to connect with and learn from the land. Participants envisioned a future in which land-based ontologies are centred in public education, and land is transferred to Indigenous communities as a demonstration of settler society's commitment to reconciliation.

If I could concentrate all of my energy into one thing that could change the whole of society, is I would start at an education level. It's mandated [that] you have to be in school, right? So, one thing I thought about is how can schools actually, in their land, have that reconciliation response that's not "we're going to have an Elder or a speaker"; we're actually going to...deconstruct the capitalist notion that we own this land, and we're actually going to take some land out of our area, and we're actually going to designate that as true...treaty land, and we're going to give that back... It's not going to be the City, it's not going to be the school, it's going to be for this nation; Treaty 6. And imagine that, maybe in this school division, and maybe across the country...there are these safe places in the diaspora...and if we can know each other through the land, let's relate through the land. As much difference as we have, there's this common understanding, you know, this neutral place where we can come and actually be at peace.

[former Askîy intern, male]

In participants' future-seeking visions, land is valued for its ability to nourish people's lives through education, culture and identity formation, social and spiritual connectivity, collective 'ownership' of resources, and healthy sustenance. Such a transformation would require that property, as a private commodity that constrains the commons through legal rights to exclude (certain uses, people, and social behaviours), be decentred in urban land use and community planning. At minimum, land is required to creatively experiment with resurgent ideas and actions supporting transformative Indigenous urbanisms that will add nourishment to people's lives.

Interestingly, several participants viewed new urban reserves as a source of pride and potential to reclaim urban space and place.

The presence of First Nation urban reserves is one of the ways that we see the erroneous distinction promulgated through generations of Canadians that Indigenous places are outside the city (for example, on reserves or other rural areas). Instead, urban reserves remind us that the urban scale is just as much a part of Indigenous territories as rural and remote reserve parcels, which themselves, incidentally, were often arbitrarily designated by the federal government for First Nations. Indigenous territory follows Indigenous peoples and communities who are connected to place through their relations on and with the land in both urban and rural settings.

I think by having [urban reserves] in the city kind of gave people in the community a safe space, whether it's a smoke shop or a gas station or whatever. They take ownership, they feel pride, they feel like they're healing. Regardless of whether they recognize it or not, there's healing in place, in every person who says "yeah, that's native land", you know? They're regaining the knowledge of the land, whether they know it or not. So, I think it should continue. It should continue because a lot of our people are still colonized. Colonization plays a huge role, and to First Nations people, land is who we are, where we come from. And we're protectors of the land, we're keepers of the land. So, I'm excited for the future, because a lot of First Nations people, Métis people, Indigenous people are going to re-learn all of those teachings.

[Station 20 West focus group, P2, female]

Some participants suggested that urban reserves may be harnessed to provide urban Indigenous residents with opportunities to 'own' land and 'property' for the purpose of housing in the city, but through distinctive forms of tenure and occupancy that are planned by and designed to accommodate the unique needs and creative aspirations of the local Indigenous community.

In the city of Saskatoon, we have urban reserves, we have treaty entitlement on areas within the city of Saskatoon that give the ability of First Nations to function within their tax rights and their treaty access to tobacco and tax exemptions...but it's so minimalized. In those areas, they're functioning usually [as] a gas bar, a confectionary, but not real estate... Home ownership on reserve would give an economic foundation of thriving to an individual First Nation, but it's a community approach of resource sharing, and it's to get past that idea of what am I entitled to as a treaty status person belonging to this nation? as opposed to how can we support individual First Nations [people] to become thriving individuals and participating in economy from the basics of owning homes, and the basics of earning an income at a substantially higher level of just minimum wage or earning jobs? ...I was inquiring about English River, where they're situated...Grasswood Esso, and because they had a larger area of business development,

they procured that area for specifically business development. And I was like, “why are you not building apartments there and feeding into affordable housing?” When you’re thinking about the collective ownership, your spending should be in a collective benefit. And housing is one of the number one issues that Indigenous people are facing in the city of Saskatoon. It’s affordable housing, quality housing, efficient housing, over population; the same things that we’re seeing on reserve.  
[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

All these urban reserves get bought, [and] the opportunity is based in an industry that’s destroying our land and our water, which is oil and gas. So, you have these urban reserves, which yeah, it’s awesome, but they’re either a bank, a government institution, or an oil and gas outfit; ...something that I don’t think is necessarily going to benefit the First Nations people in the long run, or generally our society in the long run. ...I’m not saying that’s horrible or whatever, I’m just saying that in terms of an actual beneficial use, you could use TLE or that urban land...[as a] designated...urban block for housing...to help you foster your innovative solutions to these problems.  
[former Askîy intern, male]

These perspectives not only emphasize that urban reserves present a novel opportunity and cooperative template to experiment with Indigenous housing and other socioeconomic solutions to lift people out of poverty and precarity, but they also highlight the contradictory tensions of urban reserves; spaces of delegated First Nations jurisdiction that must generate significant returns on investments in urban land due in part to federal regulations and Canada’s neocolonial politics of recognition.

In addition to aspirations for Indigenous housing, urban reserves would ideally be extended to include public space as well, with no obligation nor incentive to commoditize land uses.

Victoria school, they have a tipi in the back, right? And it was painted by the kids at Victoria too, I believe. But it just shows you we’ve come a far way, but it would be nice to push the boundaries to go, “let’s make the public space. Let’s make the playground a whole urban reserve just to show people.” ...give it back to the people that it was apart of. It’s strange going “you guys need to buy this land back that we originally took from you”, right?  
[Station 20 West focus group, P1, male]

Increased access to and stewardship over land to practice cultural values was a common theme in interviews, and many participants related this desire to the proliferation of a social economy that allows community members to participate directly in fulfilling their needs.

Food security and food sovereignty were emphasized as fundamental aspirations of Indigenous people living in Saskatoon. Indigenous food systems are inseparable from land-based ontologies and are important for physical and spiritual nourishment (Cidro et al., 2015; Settee & Shukla, 2020). Some existing programs, particularly those hosted by CHEP Good Food Inc. out of the Station 20 West community agency building, are valuable to Indigenous community members who desire increased and more affordable access to nutritious food.

CHEP is a good resource. One thing about CHEP that I like is the child hunger education program. They actually listen to the community, but they've been going around and doing it for almost 30 years, and they've been doing it the right way. They get community together, they get people together, they listen. They have their ear to the ground, they don't sit at the top going "I know what you all want", right? I remember in the 90s I used to go by there, and at the time the farmers used to sell the meat packs with CHEP, and the vegetable packs, and CHEP would do it. I used to go to the church off of Bedford Road to pick them up every day, and you could pick what kinds of meat you want, you could pick what kinds of vegetables you want, and go pay 5 or 10 bucks for this basket of stuff, or 25 dollars I believe for the meat pack. But CHEP has listened to people, and I think people could learn a lot from CHEP and what they've been doing. [Station 20 West focus group, P1, male]

A particularly creative program operated by CHEP is the Askîy project, which is "an urban agriculture internship that engages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth to learn together about growing, harvesting, and selling food through an innovative model. Its five key focus areas are: growing food and food skills, enhancing cultural connections, promoting environmental sustainability, creating social enterprise, and engaging youth" (CHEP, 2020).

Askîy means "earth" in Cree, and the project "demonstrates how growing food can be possible anywhere in city limits with a little creative thinking and innovation" (CHEP, 2020). The garden was built using recycled plastic containers raised above contaminated brownfield land along the busy corridor of 20<sup>th</sup> street West, and it has expanded to include a large plot near the Riversdale and King George community gardens. It is a project that demonstrates possibilities of how urban land may be re-appropriated for the direct use and benefit of residents in core neighbourhoods. A participant's involvement in Askîy was valuable because it helped them to connect more deeply with the land, which was described as nourishing and 'decolonizing' in personal ways.

Our funder, who's an Indigenous funder, wanted to boost Indigenous participation in the local food economy... 5 of 6 interns were self-declared Indigenous people, so myself as the coordinator would make 6 of us. Then there was a coordinator that wasn't Indigenous, and one of our staff. And it was amazing, [and] it brought a whole other perspective. Even naming the garden, we had a fluent Cree speaker who said "we should call it kiscikânis," which means [garden], and she gave us the teachings for that. We had an Elder come in and actually bless the site; late Elder Baldhead...he came and blessed the site. It was really cool because it was all of this stuff that I was learning at school, and this decolonization was happening in my heart and in my spirit, but then all of a sudden it was this practice of connecting to the land that I felt disconnected from my whole life. And through that perspective of Indigenous ways of knowing, understanding what this land actually means. We're not just, like, the market focus. It was really just this grounding place in our hearts of connecting and traditional knowledge being kept alive through that space.  
[former Askîy intern, male]

Participating in the Askîy project enriched this person's urban experience through collective and cooperative labour, hands-on land, food, and language education, and ceremony in urban space. Opportunities for Indigenous residents to (re)connect with land in Saskatoon and other prairie cities are vital to nourishing individuals and communities through social, cultural, physical, and spiritual grounding and wellbeing.

Indigenous people living in poverty are often food insecure, which means they have limited access to affordable, nutritious food. Riversdale has only one nearby grocery store; a Giant Tiger in Pleasant Hill that offers a limited selection of fresh produce. The Station 20 West community enterprise centre housed a co-operative grocery store called the Good Food Junction for a short while, but it closed due to low profit margins and high overhead costs. Children rely on food programs in their schools for much of their nutritional needs, and many adults and families rely on the Friendship Inn, the Saskatoon Food Bank, and meals at other community agencies, as well as friends and family for sustenance. A social economy through which food security is prioritized will require a proliferation of service and organizational capacity, as well as creative, local, and collaborative options for food production and consumption. While food security is essential for people's health and wellbeing, food sovereignty emphasizes cultural nourishment, land stewardship, the regeneration of traditional foods and subsistence practices, and political-ecological leadership and authority as communities and nations (Cidro et al., 2015; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Settee & Shukla, 2020).



Planting, growing, nurturing, cultivating, consuming, trading, and selling or gifting food, which are all dependent on the nourishment of local ecological systems – are significant resurgent practices that add much value to people’s lives. Many people’s primary food sources are packaged, processed products, many of which are produced through large-scale industrial agriculture on colonized land and sold by large corporations for profit. Culturally centred and cooperative options for producing food, then, may enable Indigenous people to reclaim important connections with land, with traditional food sources, and with one another. In prairie cities like Saskatoon, Indigenous people experience many barriers to achieving food security, and their aspirations for food sovereignty are also vastly constrained due to economic coercion (into wage labour and generating income to purchase goods) and exclusions of property.

In a local economy defined largely by capitalist social and property relations, wage labour is valued for its productive capacity to produce surplus value (profit). Forms of unpaid labour that do not contribute to surplus value, such as those in the community service sector, are considered unproductive and are therefore valued less than occupations that contribute much, such as those in the financial sector, despite being ‘unproductive’ in terms of adding use value to people’s lived spaces. Furthermore, well-paid wage labour is unavailable to a large portion of the population, which includes many Indigenous people, yet all urban residents must participate in the wage labour system and sometimes work multiple jobs to afford food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and other necessities of life.

Some participants suggested that values of, and opportunities to practice collective reciprocity, mutual responsibility, and alternative forms of sweat equity are important for community nourishment. They also described their desire for cooperative housing options that allow residents to share responsibilities and costs through collective ownership and compassion for individuals’ complex realities.

I like what Quint was doing when I lived at Quint. In order to live there you have to get a job and make money, and every paycheque they would take half of your money. Then at the end when you move out and go on your own, they give half of that money back. It was like a boost. Programs like that would be pretty beneficial to a lot of people.  
[Friendship Centre focus group, P1, male]

Programs like that help people with a boost, and in the future if they want to buy a house... There aren’t programs available that teach people how to buy a house. There’s no cooperative that exist that says you could rent this place for so long and then, maybe

work collectively, and then maybe Tyrell wants to buy a house, or he wants to start a business. Well, we're going to help him this time, and next time Bob wants to do it. There's no collective organization that does that, and I think...that needs to exist. But once again you have to build up that financial base.  
[Friendship Centre focus group, P2, male]

These perspectives, when considered alongside the concept of a self-determined and self-governed urban Indigenous commons, aspire for the re-organization of local economies through strategies that value, more than anything else, social (relational) wellbeing.

Social economies consist of alternative models of socio-spatial organization and participation that challenge the hegemony of market capitalism and aim to reduce the precarity and alienation of people. Settee (2011) explains that social economies, or economic endeavours focused primarily on social wellbeing of community members, are compatible with core Indigenous values of relational reciprocity and deep respect for all life. An economy of nourishment, enhanced through the proliferation of an Indigenous commons, could also support and enhance the crucial leadership roles of Indigenous women and two-spirit people in prairie cities (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). Ultimately, urban land and space must be re-appropriated from dominant market uses and private, exclusionary property ownership for the purpose of cooperatively accessing and developing community resources and infrastructure.

So suppose this city block, just to give us an easy to visualize line, so the block between Ave I and whatever's next door, collectively everyone in this neighbourhood...just owned this space, and we pay for the space, we pay for our needs collectively... we'd have more pride in ownership of the community that we're living in, and the community that we're serving, and have access to a resource that's going to assist us in thriving and not just surviving.  
[Director, Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op]

Such a re-appropriation of land and space for the use and benefit of urban Indigenous residents to collectively enhance cultural resurgence in Saskatoon would constitute actions of urban decolonization, including the transfer of land, space, and authority from state. Furthermore, through such a re-designation and revitalization of urban land as Indigenous common space, the grassroots leadership of people who have dedicated their lives to enhancing wellbeing through trust relationships and mutual support networks may be elevated.

...just give the land back to the women; to the mothers and to the women who are actually the central aspect of First Nations society. And so, I think that would be a sweet thing, if the City was like “we’re not just going to give this to a government entity and shake a hand and have this MOU or something. We’re literally just going to give the land back to the women, and we’re not going to have any strings attached to that. We’re just going to say here is your land,” and not way off in the country, like in nowhere, because we know that Indigenous people are forced to move into cities. This is where they now reside, this is their traditional territory, and that’s where we should go... I think there’s implications for...treaties...to be transposed in a really holistic way, if municipalities were to not just act in a politically correct manner, but actually to [ask], “how do we actually restore some of what was lost through colonization?” So, it seems kind of poetic, but that would be a real, fundamental shift.  
[former Askîy intern, male]

It is evident from the perspectives highlighted in this section that participants’ future-seeking ambitions are much more transformative than mainstream urbanism and market-centred ‘revitalization’ allow. Ideal processes of neighbourhood revitalization entail the enhancement and expansion of an ‘economy of nourishment’ that is supported through increased access to urban land and space. An urban Indigenous commons, or the proliferation of collectively, community controlled and stewarded land and spaces in Saskatoon, could help to regenerate the spirit and intent of treaty relationships ‘on the ground’ in urban regions, as well as provide a material land base from which to enhance Indigenous urbanism.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusion – Emergent Spaces and Resurgent Urbanism: Regenerating Indigenous Territory in Prairie Cities**

The purpose of this research was to examine existing conditions and possibilities for enhancing Indigenous urbanism in prairie cities, and to investigate how mainstream spatial production intersects with indigeneity through two examples or cases of urban change: First Nations' urban reserve creation in Saskatchewan cities and neighbourhood 'revitalization' in Riversdale, Saskatoon. This inquiry was largely informed by the personal narratives and lived experiences of Indigenous participants who experience or contribute to these significant urban changes. This project interrogated the production of exploitative property regimes, asymmetrically structured under state jurisdiction, that reproduce and reinforce settler accumulation by Indigenous dispossession across interconnected urban and rural geographies; it unsettled academic and public discourses that uphold dominant values, forms, and practices akin to settler colonial urbanism; and it advanced Indigenous urbanism as an ancestral, territorial, and treaty 'right to the city' with transformative, resurgent potential to improve urban life and the multiplicity of relations therein. This conclusion provides an overview of Chapters Two and Three; discussion of the main findings in Chapters Four and Five through a critical analysis of mainstream urbanism, governance, and planning in Saskatchewan cities; and an argument that settler society and the local state must 'make space' for transformative Indigenous urbanism and an urban Indigenous commons as a basis for decolonized coexistence in prairie cities.

Chapter Two developed a conceptual literature review and critical analytical framework to describe political, economic, and social forces through which urban space is produced and Indigenous urbanism is practiced in Canadian and specifically prairie cities. The political and economic spatiality of settler colonialism, which is predicated on the permanent occupation and ownership of Indigenous territory, was established as an ongoing structure that continues to dispossess Indigenous nations and communities of land, resources, sovereignty, and self-determination. Settler colonialism is productive of and dependent on legal property relations and forms of socio-spatial organization structured to secure the mobilization, extraction, and circuitry of resources, commodities, and capital. This structure is ongoing, enforced and operationalized

through technologies of jurisdiction, and represents a continued negation of the numbered treaties which should legally and respectfully provide a basis for shared sovereignty, territorial governance, and mutual obligations to ensure the vitality of land, people, and all life across the prairies – including in cities that remain Indigenous and treaty territories.

Many Indigenous people and communities are systematically alienated by and from the colonial-capitalist socio-spatial order, which leaves little material *space* for the regeneration of nourishing relations across Indigenous territory. Chapter Two drew attention to contemporary state and social practices akin to neocolonialism – specifically a liberal politics of recognition through which First Nations are coerced to accept land claims settlements without a large scale return of Crown land, territory, jurisdiction, nor shared sovereignty representative of treaty governance – and neoliberalism, which is defined by the offloading of government responsibilities and a renewed compulsion for market logics of economic growth, private accumulation, and individualistic self-sufficiency that relentlessly saturate into people’s lived spaces. These paradigms are employed in state strategies to economically constrain, politically coerce, and strategically pacify resistance among First Nations while also exacerbating harmful material conditions to which many Indigenous people across prairie cities are systematically exposed.

First Nation band councils must navigate a convoluted terrain of federal policies, legislation, and procedural requirements to regain some autonomy from the *Indian Act*, additional reserve parcels, and strictly allocated resources to build ‘own source’ revenue through participation in neoliberal market economies – despite Canada’s and generations of settler society’s wealth deriving from the violent occupation of Indigenous land and extraction of territorial resources. Chapter Two outlined new urban reserves as one pathway through which First Nation band councils are creating nascent material spaces with land claims settlement monies that extend attenuated forms of Indigenous jurisdiction into prairie cities. Urban reserves enable some First Nations to improve urban land for pecuniary growth in addition to grounding an institutional, service, and symbolic presence for urban members. They are conditioned by the state as legally translated Indigenous property beholden to overvalued real estate markets and land use priorities of municipalities under provincial jurisdiction; however, they are also emergent spaces that reappropriate urban property as Indigenous land, in the process affecting evolving relations with urban settler society and the state, especially with municipalities. As

Chapter One suggested, new urban reserves facilitate a particular approach to Indigenous urbanism that increasingly permeates settler and state boundaries through jurisdictional cooperation and economic convergence in Saskatchewan cities.

Chapter Two also argued that urban spatial production is driven heavily by rentier ownership classes (of land, property, capital, and private enterprises) and fueled by the social capital, political influence, and consumption preferences of middle to upper class settler society. Private property rights, and particularly the right to *exclude*, are epidemically wielded through privileged acts of whiteness that reinforce an individualistic, racialized, and falsely meritorious ‘right to the city’ that is hierarchically divisive. Struggles of poverty, violence, precarity, and socio-spatial threats associated with propertied whiteness are certainly a reality for many urban Indigenous residents and represent ongoing economic isolation, dispossessions and enclosures of land, the severing of kinship relations and accumulated knowledge of place, the intergenerational traumas of colonization, political disenfranchisement, and systematically limited access to property and resources. However, Indigenous communities in prairie cities have also carved out significant spaces in and through which relational values and connectivity, Indigenous knowledge systems, and cultural meanings are learned and shared in daily life; an emergent ‘social economy’ of community organizations and mutual aid networks.

Gentrification is described in Chapter Two as an urban process of creative destruction and material redevelopment whereby financial and social capital are asserted onto/invested into historically devalued neighbourhoods to ‘improve’ the socioeconomic character of central city space – typically under the guise of ‘revitalization’. Chapter two argued that neighbourhood revitalization in prairie cities is akin to recolonization because Indigenous people and spaces are rooted in central neighbourhoods, which are habitually perceived by whitestream society and institutions as empty, waste, unproductive, or devoid of value, and are therefore targeted for replacement and displacement via the restructuring (valorization) and policing of public space and private real estate. Revanchist motivations to remove undesirable people and spaces is coupled with a frontier mentality of resettlement, while spatial production is strategically but narrowly planned in prairie cities to maximize real estate exchange values, property investment, commodity and traffic flows, and to accommodate privileged consumption and leisure tastes.

City planning has been theorized as an important contact zone through which Indigenous-settler co-production may add depth to shared civic identities and future-seeking aspirations.

However, Chapter Two argued that local state planning is not only structurally limited in its provincially regulated scope to embrace transformative qualities attributable to resurgent Indigenous urbanism, but it is also complicit in the ongoing colonization of Indigenous people, their lived spaces, their landed territories, and essential resources from which individuals, communities, and nations are alienated by enclosures of settler (private and public) property in land. Municipal governments are compelled to play contradictory governance roles; they must entice private investment to mobilize the ‘highest and best uses’ of urban land to propel property exchange values, market growth, and to appease exclusionary consumption tastes while also dealing most directly (out of all levels of the state) with discriminatory property relations and the inhumane consequences of spatially concentrated, racialized poverty. Resurgent Indigenous planning, creatively implemented by local Indigenous organizers and organizations through agreed upon protocols and self-determined strategies, was described as community-informed and culturally grounded practices that subvert, transform, and/or transcend dominant modes of urban spatial production.

Chapter Three described the research context, methodological considerations, and qualitative methods of data generation and analysis. I positioned myself in relation to the research, participants, and the production of knowledge, recognizing the limitations of this dissertation and my own interpretations as a non-Indigenous student of western academia. Methodological considerations that informed this inquiry were developed through attention to critical geography, Indigenous and decolonial thought, and transformative urbanism and planning. The qualitative research methods were described as a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with a wide range of differently identifying Indigenous participants who have experiential knowledge about urban reserve creation, social economy organizing, and neighbourhood revitalization. Interpretation of results relied on a critical-interpretive and grounded theory paradigm that attempted to balance an analytical ‘unsettling’ of mainstream urban theory and practice in prairie Canada through a lens of Indigenous resurgence.

Chapter Four presented findings from research interviews with First Nation participants, focusing on their experiences and strategic priorities surrounding urban reserve creation as well as their perceptions of land, territory, property, and urban value(s) in the context of treaty governance, sovereign nationhood, and self-determination. The legislative, policy, and regulatory apparatus of new reserve creation was outlined, demonstrating the procedural complexity and

institutional rigidity that First Nations must navigate. Provincial and federal governments were perceived as unwilling, and politically and administratively inapt to meaningfully implement treaty relationships. First Nations, governed by predominantly male Chiefs, councils, and staff who are systematically conditioned to rely on inadequate federal funding and bureaucratic management through the *Indian Act*, are therefore strategically expanding their financial autonomy, institutional capacities, and material land base.

The legislative and policy mechanisms orchestrated by an ever-changing department of Indian Affairs, incentivized to First Nations as sectoral or municipalized self-government ‘options’, tend to favour bands and on-reserve communities with demonstrable ‘economic readiness’ and willingness to mobilize land and labour productivity in local market economies. The federal ATR policy, the Saskatchewan TLEFA, and Canada’s sectoral self-government mechanisms are indicative of a state politics of recognition that subverts First Nations’ sovereign territoriality and treaty rights through monetary compensation that may be invested toward the tedious and piecemeal expansion of reserve bases among unaltered liberal property landscapes. A major finding illuminating the contradictory outcomes of Canada’s politics of recognition was highlighted in participants’ divergent perspectives on the fulfillment of treaty relationships with the state. While some participants appreciated that First Nations are increasingly enabled to purchase and convert marketable land parcels to reserve status – an outcome described as a key component to their exercise of decision-making authority over land management and economic development toward longer-term objectives of financial self-sufficiency and governing autonomy – interviews revealed tensions and strategic nuances around land procurement, new reserve creation, and wealth generation.

First Nations must compete as corporate entities in hyper-valued economic environments in which private enterprises, increasingly tied to foreign investment, vie for strategic ownership over potentially profitable urban property. Urban reserves were described by participants as significant spaces because they provide a partly autonomous First Nation presence in urban land; they represent a small step toward the realization of treaty relationships that First Nations have long respected and upheld, with little to no reciprocity from Canada or Saskatchewan. Furthermore, urban reserves establish a form of Indigenous jurisdiction within Canadian cities, albeit delegated and restricted under the *Indian Act* through lopsided power relations with the Canadian state. The enactment of First Nations’ partial jurisdiction and partially autonomous



decision-making in Saskatchewan cities was described as providing material and symbolic ground from which band councils can support and advocate for their members, and expand their land base, in both urban and rural settings. Urban reserves also harbor long-term potential for First Nations to experiment with alternative, resurgent forms of urbanism, though this potential is currently constrained by federal ATR requirements and the high costs associated with participation in local property markets.

Urban reserves are emergent spaces in Saskatchewan cities that contradict and, for the time being, cooperate with settler jurisdictions as well as liberal property regimes while embedding distinctly Indigenous land and socio-spatial practices in urban space. Despite the appearance of improved Indigenous-state relations facilitated through urban reserve creation – particularly between First Nations and municipalities – Chapter Four demonstrated that tensions exist between the motivating logics of First Nations and the Canadian state at federal, provincial, and municipal levels to negotiate land claims settlements and to facilitate political and economic cooperation. Furthermore, urban reserves do not represent renewed treaty relationships nor responsibilities for which First Nations have long advocated. Treaties are considered sacred because they are gifted from Creator, upholding profound aspects of what it means to be human beings living in equitably and sustainably organized societies: the mutual benefits of sharing; a shared respect for sovereignty and self-determination; a common desire to settle differences through understanding and negotiation among equals; to compromise; to adapt the relationship to address changing conditions; and ultimately to create conditions for a just and nourishing coexistence.

Urban reserve creation under the Saskatchewan TLEFA is a process that promotes cooperative relations between First Nations and municipal governments through the negotiation of economic and jurisdictional compatibility in Saskatchewan cities. But, despite the presence of cooperation and negotiated compatibility, there continues to exist a foundational conflict arising from vastly divergent interpretations of treaty and territory between First Nations and the Canadian state. Urban reserves are very much entangled with structures of settler colonialism and neoliberal capitalism, which is evident in First Nations' seemingly contradictory reasoning for utilizing Canada's regulatory machinery and municipalities' spatial ordering of property as part of a longer-term project to regain jurisdiction over land, and to diminish dependency on the settler state.

Part of this reasoning stems from a belief shared by some participants that Canada will never willingly implement the full spirit and intent of the numbered treaties, but also that the capitalist mode of production through which the state governs may eventually face insurmountable economic crises, exacerbated by climate change, that destabilize its functioning power. So, there is a seldom-acknowledged temporal dimension to urban reserves. They are expedient but provisional opportunities for some First Nations to access urban land and markets for longer-term strategies to expand their land base and enhance economic self-sufficiency, governing capacity, and the material conditions of band members. Yet, the motivations among First Nations are distinctive since wealth created through urban economic development and the incorporation of Indigenous-owned businesses is circulated in varied ways back to community members and to improve on-reserve material conditions. I therefore suggest that urban reserves are liminal, transitional spaces that provide a template for improved Indigenous-state relations, but more importantly, a mechanism that First Nations are harnessing to grow their economic and political capacities to regain land and authority into the future.

Chapter Five examined how urban Indigenous residents and social economy practitioners perceive neighbourhood revitalization in Saskatoon's west side core, to what they ascribe value in urban space and place, and in what ways they aspire to improve the qualities of urban life; in other words, how participants conceptualize, experience, and contribute to Indigenous urbanism, its existing conditions, and its transformative possibilities. The chapter began with a presupposition and summary of representational (newspaper media) discourse analysis, which suggested that neighbourhood revitalization is not a new, natural, nor apolitical phenomenon in Riversdale. The neighbourhood's Indigenous community has long been targeted by revanchist, reactionary violence; a status quo response among real estate and business owners to combat the area's racialized and propertied devaluation over decades of antagonistic socio-spatial relations and diminishing returns on ground rents.

The findings from interviews and focus groups began with an overview of what participants value in Saskatoon's west side core. Being that neighbourhoods like Riversdale, Pleasant Hill, and King George are home to many Indigenous residents, social proximity and cultural familiarity in daily interactions were emphasized, adding support to the notion that many people wish to remain in urban places with which they identify through their relationships with people in and across their lived spaces. Cultural familiarity was associated with networks of

mutual support, reciprocity, and trust; values that are put into practice among Indigenous-led social enterprises, community organizations, and kinship-centred programs and services.

Educational spaces were emphasized as crucial to nourishing young people, building community, and embedding indigeneity in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods, particularly through programming that is developed according to culturally grounded pedagogy. This includes youth access to spaces that connect education to other facets of learning and wellbeing that are not offered in the public school system. Participants conveyed the significant impact that young people's personal senses of identity, safety, trust relationships, and community belonging can have on positive learning experiences. They also highlighted a common belief that renewed connections to land, ceremony, and language would generate conditions of nourishment that many Indigenous youth are systematically denied. Several participants expressed their view of land as life and teacher; as integral to an education that deepens children's nourishment and senses of place, identity, belonging, and responsibility.

Community organizations like the White Buffalo Youth Lodge and Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op offer spaces where Indigenous youth may learn knowledge and skills that are relevant to who they are, where they live, and support them to live more nourished, connected lives. In addition to re-envisioning and enhancing educational spaces in Saskatoon's inner city and beyond, participants stressed the need for far improved access to safe housing, healthy food, safe gathering spaces, and wrap-around or integrative services as essential resources for Indigenous youth and adults alike. Housing was highlighted as a significant determinant of health, but acquiring a safe, adequate, and stable residence often depends on the fulfillment of several other interconnected socioeconomic and emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Participants emphasized the importance of generating stability in community members' lives through balanced supports delivered effectively through culturally grounded and consistent trust relationships. However, most organizations that currently provide such services struggle to acquire consistent and sufficient funding to pay for rent, utilities, and staff wages, with little to operationalize aspirations of community resurgence. Youth who live in poverty or unstable homes have little to no access to services nor safe drop-in spaces beyond regular daytime operating hours.

The liminality of community spaces dedicated to the resurgence of Indigenous values and community cohesion in urban life was associated with persistent struggles to operate non-profit

and socially motivated organizations amid private real estate markets and a neighbourhood that is undergoing significant economic, social, and material change to its propertied landscape. Participants perceived that core neighbourhood revitalization has amplified the economic exclusion of Indigenous residents who are unable to cross socio-spatial boundaries demarcated by privileged whiteness. Participants comprehensively acknowledged that in the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon and beyond, the existing economic system of production, consumption, and redistribution does not meet the Indigenous community's unique needs and desires, nor does it embrace values of the good life that are distinctive among Indigenous peoples living in prairie cities. According to interviews and focus groups, local economic and socio-spatial organization should embrace relational and reciprocal values of community cohesion embedded in land that is respected as life and as teacher; it should support a wide range of accessible and safe housing options, food sovereignty practices, opportunities to nurture cultural identity, languages, and Indigenous knowledge, collective reciprocity and sweat equity (all forms of labour apart from and including wage employment – particularly women's labour), and the self-determination of Indigenous communities.

Participants also observed that neighbourhood revitalization is exacerbating social antagonisms and spatial contradictions in the Riversdale area. The valorization of inner-city real estate, concurrent with a rising cost of living and proliferation of exclusionary consumption options, has led to the displacement of people and families due to landlord evictions and increasingly unaffordable rents and costs of living. Many participants observed that neighbourhood revitalization has generated private economic activity in the area, but in so doing has further alienated and criminalized many Indigenous residents who are socially marked and surveiled as out of place *liminars* whose presence disrupts urban progress and threatens consumers' and privileged newcomers' senses of comfort. The revitalization of Riversdale has not translated into more resources for community service organizations, nor has it enriched the qualities of life of their clients. Trendy, upscale restaurants operate alongside a food bank and a free community kitchen; renovated, single family homes share street, backyard, and alley spaces with boarding houses and deteriorating, sometimes overcrowded rental properties; public infrastructure and commercial façades have improved the aesthetic qualities of 20<sup>th</sup> street and its arterial roadways, but Indigenous residents have limited opportunities to improve their often-harsh material conditions.

Chapter Five argued that the Indigenous social economy is constrained by and beholden to growth-machine priorities and property exchange values that fluctuate with an ever-shifting circuitry of capital, which leads to uneven and inequitable development across space and time. Under such conditions, given that much of Saskatchewan's wealth has been extracted from land that was agreed to be shared and co-governed through treaties, urban Indigenous communities should also be supported by the Canadian state and wealthy owners of propertied assets through suitable resources directed toward the resurgence of land- and value-centred qualities of life. Participants described values in urban land that the urban Indigenous community aspires to actualize; values that might deepen people's senses of identity, belonging, and place in prairie cities; values that reach well beyond urban land's productive capacity, wealth generating potential, or even its public uses that are currently approved by city halls.

Indigenous urbanism, as neighbourhood revitalization strategies reveal, is valued by whitestream settler society as a cultural commodity for its enhancement of urban exchange values – its ability to be marketed to potential investors and visitors – far less so than it is valued for its resurgent potential to transform how people relate to one another and to land in prairie cities. Many urban Indigenous people are at home in their ancestral territories and connected to deeply rooted and expansive kinship networks embedded across urban space, yet many are vulnerable and sometimes violently displaced due to shifting market conditions and the creative destruction and remaking of property. Property is the underlying system of socio-spatial organization and regulation that restricts urban Indigenous people from operationalizing a fuller density of distinctive values and aspirations in the city. Therefore, an acceptance of Indigenous urbanism must decentre property and capital as the primary determinants of land use, political influence, and access to space and resources, *particularly* in central city neighbourhoods where large numbers of Indigenous people have carved out a sense of place and home. Here, the decentering of private property translates to the reclamation of material urban space in support of grassroots communities' desires for living well together.

There are many creative ways that urban spaces and properties can be reappropriated by Indigenous organizations or for individual projects that add cultural and nourishing value to urban residents' lives. This would require Indigenous urbanism to be accepted by municipal governments as a multiplicity of spatial practices that include resurgent projects, some of which may be incommensurable with existing land use and planning paradigms. The ongoing liminality

of Indigenous urbanism amid settler spatiality is not due to an ‘impossible contradiction’ between indigeneity and modern city life; it is rather indicative of a fundamental divergence of *values* between mainstream settler urbanism, which reproduces individual self-enterprise, self-sufficiency, and the private accumulation of wealth via property ownership, and the collective resurgence of ancient and place-rooted values of responsibility, relationality, and the good life, which seek to extend reciprocity to all human and non-human kin.

It is not simply an expansion of First Nations’ involvement in urban governance and planning institutions that is needed to enhance Indigenous urbanism; municipalities must also begin to respect that Indigenous peoples have always engaged in their own planning practices and have knowledge and ideas about land and space that do not conform to, nor fit neatly within, liberal possessive property logics and market-oriented priorities of investment, accumulation and growth that local governments are structurally compelled to facilitate. First Nations and the broader Indigenous population living in prairie cities, including large Métis communities, are building capacity to revitalize jurisdiction grounded in territorial law, and municipal governments, including planning departments, can play important roles acting in solidarity and partnership with Indigenous communities to develop creative approaches to land and property that enhance Indigenous urbanism, community ‘ownership’, and that add depth to our shared civic identity. However, realistically, the City of Saskatoon and other municipalities are currently ill-equipped as institutions managing colonial authority and facilitating neoliberal market economies to confront and respond meaningfully to urgent *truths* about urban Indigenous life in prairie cities and others across Canada.

To experiment creatively with Indigenous urbanism requires the de-essentialization of property as a commodity through the reclamation or reappropriation of land and spaces that allow for increased access and participatory control among people and organizations whose access to space and resources is systematically stifled. Even First Nations with urban reserves are constrained by and coerced into adapting these parcels to conform with the mainstream production of urban space, in part because they are expected to comply with existing zoning bylaws and land use plans, but also because First Nations must purchase the land on the open market *and* demonstrate their economic development potential prior to reserve conversion under the federal ATR policy. Because land is a highly valued commodity in cities, it is currently impractical for many First Nations to develop lands in ways that do not generate a significant

return on investment. And yet, given their unique status as land held in perpetuity, urban reserves provide a template for the expansion of Indigenous urbanism in prairie cities. Many possibilities exist for First Nations to harness urban reserves in creative, perhaps even subversive ways that expand and enhance Indigenous resurgence in prairie cities. Liminal spaces, despite their underlying ambiguity, are defined by this transformative potential.

In addition to First Nations' urban reserves, the creation of an urban Indigenous 'commons' presents a potentially transformative point of convergence for Indigenous urbanisms that empower community resurgence in prairie cities. An urban Indigenous 'commons' refers to a politically separate and culturally distinct land or 'property' base that is repurposed by residents and organizations that already form an 'invisible infrastructure' of kinship and community support. It would require that land be identified and transitioned from public or private property into the stewardship of the local Indigenous community, elevating the leadership (of predominantly women) and access to resources among social economy and community organizations, supported financially by the state and eventually First Nations that are well-versed in urban reserve creation and development. An urban Indigenous commons could support a much-desired transition to Indigenous stewardship of territorial relationships; from liminal spaces to the regeneration of urban places as Indigenous territory. An urban Indigenous commons is itself an insufficient name because it is a generalized concept referring to the collective 'ownership' or stewardship of urban land through a multitude of connected, dedicated spaces, rather than a locally derived name and objectives generated through agreed upon cultural and community-oriented decision-making protocols.

To summarize, Indigenous land in prairie cities that is collectively reclaimed by urban communities, alongside the proliferation of First Nations' urban reserves, could empower an economy of nourishment to plant and expand roots, literally through food sovereignty practices such as urban agriculture, public food forests full of edible options with free access to traditional medicines, and economic/sustenance trade – even urban markets – with rural and reserve communities. An economy of nourishment could also encompass the expansion of quality and safe gathering spaces, trauma-informed and compassionate wrap-around services, ceremonial spaces, land-based education and programming, and residential housing options that meet people's individual and complex social needs while also recognizing and confronting residential exclusion and houselessness as an inevitable outcome of inequitably (de)regulated real estate

markets and private property paradigms. An ongoing structural problem with the mainstream production of space is that exchange values of property as a commodity in real estate markets are heightened as principal determinants of urban land use and community planning in prairie cities. All considerations of social, environmental, and altogether spatial justice are subverted to the political influence of a wealthier and more powerful settler majority, and the necessities of a perpetually expanding and shapeshifting circuitry of capital. Indigenous urbanism requires that cities themselves adjust or make space for indigeneity to thrive, and a resurgence lens broadens Indigenous urbanism to necessarily include aspirations of territorial and relational stewardship that are incommensurable with extractive, exploitative, and structurally alienating forms of socio-spatial organization.

Further research is needed to enhance nuanced and intersectional understandings of urban indigeneity through the scope of Indigenous urbanism to account for the growing diversity and density of personal identities, experiences, spatial practices, social networks, and futurities of Indigenous people in prairie cities. Questions of land use, access to resources, place-making, community planning, and urban qualities of life cannot be boiled down to an all-encompassing Indigenous community or single definition of urban ‘indigeneity’; they are inseparable from the personal identities of individuals with corporeal, lived knowledge and experience that inform people’s subjective realities. There is much to learn about the intersectional ways that colonial-capitalist spatiality affects people differently, and how emergent communities of predominantly young Indigenous folks, increasingly in solidarity with BIPOC allies and shared political movements, are redefining the parameters of identity claims, kinship relations, reciprocity, and self-determination; many of which are guided by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people whose deepening knowledge of trauma-informed and culturally safe harm reduction and community care are immensely important elements of resurgent Indigenous urbanism.

Planning theory and practice must also recognize the legitimate challenges and opportunities that Indigenous resurgence poses to the production of space, and that insurgent forms of Indigenous planning such as protests, occupations, blockades, material re-appropriations of space, and mutual aid encampments are legitimate and powerful responses to the continued authority of fundamentally unjust forms of socio-spatial organization dominated by the interests of state and capital. In other words, Indigenous communities, increasingly represented by youth, women, and 2SLGBTQIA+ folks are already engaged in planning and



socio-spatial organizing practices that are seldom acknowledged in geography and planning literatures, and certainly not in mainstream urban planning practice. What might urban planning strategies look like that seek to enable the reclamation of urban land as Indigenous territory, that empower community agency over social determinants of health and environmental (material) qualities of life, that enhance the nourishment and self-actualization of individuals, that expand our shared notions of family, neighbour, and trust relationships, and that reimagine urbanism as an adaptable, inexorable coexistence that actively and materially upholds treaty relationships and the mutual responsibilities?

## Appendix A – Information and Consent Form



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

Department of Geography and Planning  
117 Science Place, Saskatoon SK  
S7N 5C8 Canada  
Telephone: (306) 966-5654  
Facsimile: (306) 966-5680

*Face-to-Face Interview-Official  
Participant Consent Form*

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**Project Title:** City Planning and Indigeneity on the Prairies

**Researchers:**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Ryan Walker, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Saskatchewan, 306-966-5664, [ryan.walker@usask.ca](mailto:ryan.walker@usask.ca)

Co-Investigators: Dr. Yale Belanger, Department of Political Science, University of Lethbridge, 403-382-7101, [belayd@uleth.ca](mailto:belayd@uleth.ca); Dr. Loleen Berdahl, Department of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan, 306-966-1952, [loleen.berdahl@usask.ca](mailto:loleen.berdahl@usask.ca)

Collaborators: Prof. David Newhouse, Department of Indigenous Studies, Trent University, 705-748-1011, ext. 7497, [dnewhouse@trentu.ca](mailto:dnewhouse@trentu.ca); Dr. Brenda Macdougall, Department of Geography, University of Ottawa, 613-562-5800, ext. 7954, [brenda.macdougall@uottawa.ca](mailto:brenda.macdougall@uottawa.ca)

Research Assistant: Ben Fawcett, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Saskatchewan, 306-715-853, [ben.fawcett@usask.ca](mailto:ben.fawcett@usask.ca)

**Purpose and Objectives of the Research:**

- The purpose of the research is to learn to what extent Prairie cities are engaging with Indigenous citizens, organizations, and governments in city planning processes, and how planning practice and knowledge can be improved. Our research is taking place in Brandon, Winnipeg, Thompson, Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary and Edmonton.
- The four objectives of the research are to: (1) understand the approaches municipalities are taking to support and create Indigenous planning initiatives in the city; (2) determine the state of non-Indigenous and Indigenous public perspectives on local Indigenous histories, cultures, discrimination, self-determination and aspirations for how to enhance Indigenous presence and agency in the public realm of city planning and design; (3) understand the current and future potential roles of urban Indigenous communities, organizations, and governments in city planning processes; and, (4) create a planning framework that aims to improve the state of planning practice with Indigenous citizens, organizations, and governments in Prairie cities.

**Procedures:**

- You will be asked a series of open-ended questions to get your perspectives on municipal planning and local civic issues in your city. Twenty to twenty-five interviews of this type will be conducted in your city, with municipal officials, federal government officials, and representatives from urban Indigenous organizations, as well as some Indigenous

employees from various socially-mandated organizations. We are doing similar procedures in six other Prairie cities.

- With your permission I would like to use an audio recorder to record our interview, which will then be transcribed and used as data in the study. You may request that the recording device be turned off at any time.
- The interview normally takes no longer than one hour, and can be carried out in a location of your choice.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

**Funded by:** Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

**Potential Risks:** There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research, beyond those you may associate with speaking openly from your professional vantage point.

**Potential Benefits:**

- We hope that this research will help to improve the ways that municipal planning is practiced with Aboriginal citizens and organizations in Prairie cities. We also anticipate that this research will help to improve the way post-secondary students in professional planning programs across Canada are educated with regard to engaging with non-Indigenous and Indigenous citizens, and urban Indigenous organizations on issues of city planning with Indigenous communities.

**Confidentiality:**

- Your name, and the fact that you are participating in this study, is known to Dr. Walker and his university research assistant(s). The audio file from this interview will be transcribed into a MS Word file and your name will appear at the top of that file. Walker and his university research assistant(s) are the only people that have access to the audio recording and transcript from this interview.
- The data from this research project will be published and presented at conferences; however, your identity will be kept confidential to the extent that you choose on page 3 where you will select the attribution that may be attached to direct quotations we report from the interview. Your name will not be listed in any publications or presentations.

**Storage of Data:**

- The digital voice and transcript files, and associated data analysis files, will be stored on the password protected computer drives at the University of Saskatchewan while the data analysis is underway.
- Once the data analysis and publication of results is complete, raw data files will be stored by Dr. Walker on his password protected institutional server at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of 5-10 years, after which time it will be deleted.
- Completed consent forms will be stored in Dr. Walker's locked filing cabinet in his office at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of 5-10 years, after which time they will be shredded and disposed of.

**Right to Withdraw:**

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time, without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Should you wish to withdraw, data from your interview will be deleted, provided that it has not already been incorporated into a publication (under preparation, review, or in final form) or into a presentation.

**Follow up:**

- Please keep your eye on the website of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network ([www.uakn.org](http://www.uakn.org)), under the Prairie Research Centre, where we will load final reports from the study once the project is complete.

**Questions or Concerns:**

- Contact one of the researchers using the information at the top of page 1;
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Research Ethics Office [ethics.office@usask.ca](mailto:ethics.office@usask.ca); 306-966-2975. Participants outside of Saskatoon may call toll free at 1-888-966-2975.

**Consent:**

Do you give your permission to have our interview audio-recorded? Yes: \_\_\_ No: \_\_\_

Please place a check mark beside one of the following ways that attributions may be linked to statements you make during the interview:

1. Official title and agency, government, or nation name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Agency, government, or nation’s name only (but not my official title) \_\_\_\_\_
3. The jurisdiction where agency or government is active  
(Municipal office, Federal department, community organization, First Nation) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other, including no attribution at all \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; you have had an opportunity to ask questions and your questions have been answered. You consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to you for your records.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

*Researcher's Signature*

*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

## Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Guides

### Questions to First Nation representatives:

1. Do you currently have working relationships with any of the municipalities near to your principal reserve lands?
  - a. Can you describe for me your community's relationship with these municipalities?
2. Does your community have experience establishing urban reserves? (Yes/No)
  - a. Was/were your urban reserve(s) created through TLE or ATR frameworks?
  - b. From your standpoint, what are the challenges for establishing urban reserves?
  - c. What are the benefits to your community for establishing urban reserves?  
→ Economic? Cultural? Political? Social? Anything else?  
→ In your view, are these immediate benefits or longer-term benefits?
3. *It's my understanding that Treaty Land Entitlement provides a formula for First Nations to reclaim land that is owed due to historic dispossession, and for upholding Treaty promises for reserve lands that reflect the population size of each band.*
  - a. Do you believe that Treaty is honoured through the process of establishing urban reserves? Please explain.
  - b. Are there any ways that urban reserves benefit or uphold Treaty rights of urban Indigenous people who are non-status, not a member of a particular First Nation, or are Métis?
4. Is Treaty Land Entitlement a satisfactory framework for fulfilling First Nations' treaty rights to land? Please explain.
5. How do urban reserves fit into your nation's sense of traditional territory? Please explain.
  - a. Ideally, should First Nations be entitled to lands other than what the TLE framework outlines? If so, in what capacity and to what extent?
6. Does the process of creating and operating urban reserves reflect a nation-to-nation relationship? Please explain.
7. *The main motivation for urban reserve creation and land use, especially from the perspective of Canadian governments, seems to be First Nations' economic development and financial prosperity.*
  - a. What are your thoughts about this statement?
  - b. What does 'prosperity' mean for your First Nation?
  - c. Do urban reserves provide an effective basis for generating prosperity?
  - d. Are there any notable differences or similarities in motivation between your First Nation and municipal, provincial, and federal governments?

8. Ideally, are there uses beyond commercial or industrial development that urban reserves might fulfill?
  - a. What about social uses like residential housing?
  - b. How do municipal, provincial, and federal governments either support or constrain your community's urban vision and ambitions?
9. Do urban reserves provide an effective basis for practicing self-determination in cities? Please explain.
  - a. Are there other ways to advance self-determination in urban areas?
10. What advice would you give to municipal, provincial, and federal governments to help improve how urban reserves are created and used?
11. Should First Nations be involved in urban/regional land use planning beyond single parcels of reserve lands? If so, in what capacity and for what purposes?
12. What sorts of alternatives would you propose, if you could, to the urban reserve creation process, and TLE in general, that might enhance First Nations access to and control over urban lands?
13. If opportunities existed to expand TLE and the urban reserve model in Saskatchewan,
  - a. What creative uses of Indigenous urban space would you envision taking shape?
  - b. Idealistically, what does indigenized urban space, or an Indigenous prairie city, look and feel like to you?
14. Do you have any final thoughts on anything to do with urban reserves or First Nations' influence over urban space?

Questions to representatives of Indigenous community organizations:

1. First, may I ask how you prefer to identify as an Indigenous person?
  - a. What communities do you belong to? What nation or nations do you identify with?
  - b. Where is 'home' for you?
2. In what ways are you attached to the city's central west side neighbourhoods?
3. In what ways are inner city neighbourhoods important places for this city's Indigenous residents?
  - a. How have Indigenous cultures been nurtured, and in what ways are they embedded or expressed in Saskatoon and particularly its core neighbourhoods?
4. In what ways does/do your organization(s) work to improve the wellbeing of urban residents?

- a. How does your organization support Indigenous people to live good lives in this city?
5. In what ways does your organization, or you in your position, incorporate cultural values into your work?
  - a. How is this reflected in the ways your organization plans its objectives and operations?
6. Can you describe the significance of having Indigenous community-designed and controlled spaces within the inner city?
  - a. What about in Saskatoon generally?
7. In your opinion, what are the most important spaces in the inner city that support Indigenous community vitality, and the choices and abilities of residents to live good lives as urban Indigenous people?
8. Can you describe your perceptions of recent changes to Riversdale (i.e. over the last 5 to 10 years)?
  - a. Specifically, how have neighbourhood changes affected yours and/or your clients' sense of:
    - Comfort and Belonging?
    - Safety?
    - Economic opportunity?
    - Community?
  - b. Ideally, what does neighbourhood revitalization in the inner city mean to you?
9. Have you, your organization, or your community been consulted by the City to have a voice in neighbourhood revitalization efforts?
  - a. To what extent?
  - b. Was it useful or significant in any ways?
10. In what ways do you think Indigenous residents have influenced recent neighbourhood revitalization efforts?
  - a. Do any recent changes stand out as reflecting or supporting the needs and aspirations of Indigenous residents who live in the area?
11. *Some people say that city hall should engage with Indigenous peoples and their organizations in the city using different approaches than they use with non-Indigenous citizens.*
  - a. Do you think having different or separate approaches to engagement between city hall and Indigenous people is a good idea?
    - Why is it a good idea? [Or why is it not a good idea?]
    - Do you have any ideas for what those different approaches might be?



12. Do you think urban land and space are currently used in appropriate ways to support the rights, needs and aspirations of Indigenous residents in this city?
  - a. If yes, how so?
  - b. If no, how might it be used more effectively? Be as creative and idealistic as you'd like.
  
13. *Some people say that more support and space is needed to develop alternative Indigenous economies in Prairie cities, and especially in those cities' core neighbourhoods where many Indigenous people reside and have long been excluded from the mainstream economy.*
  - a. Do you have any thoughts about this?
  - b. Are there any barriers that work against this kind of Indigenous community and economic development?
  
14. If Indigenous residents and organizations had more control over neighbourhood and community planning, what, if anything, do you think would be different in the inner city?
  - a. What about in Saskatoon generally?
  
15. What kinds of spaces are valued or needed for Indigenous residents to feel fully at home and live good lives in the inner city?
  - a. What about in the city generally?
  
16. By now you'll have a pretty good sense of what my interests are in this research. Are there ideas or issues that I've missed that you think are important?

## Appendix C – Focus Group Interview Guide

1. In what ways are core west side neighbourhoods important places for Saskatoon's Indigenous residents?
  - a. How have First Nations and Métis cultures been nurtured, embedded, or expressed in this city's core neighbourhoods?
2. Can you describe if there's anything significant about Indigenous community-controlled spaces in the inner city? (A space can be a piece of land, a particular building or organization, whole neighbourhoods, outdoor areas, or even homes).
  - a. What are the most important spaces in the core neighbourhoods that support Indigenous community vitality, and the choices and abilities of residents to live good lives as urban Indigenous people?
  - b. What about Indigenous spaces in Saskatoon generally?
3. Can you describe if there's anything significant about the presence of First Nations' urban reserves in Saskatoon? For example, Fire Creek Gas and Grill?
4. Can you describe your perceptions of recent changes to this neighbourhood (over the last 5 to 10 years)?
  - a. Specifically, how have recent neighbourhood changes affected your sense of:
    - Comfort and Belonging?
    - Health and Safety?
    - Economic opportunities?
    - Community?
5. In what ways do you think Indigenous residents have influenced recent neighbourhood changes, or what people with real estate and commercial interests are calling "revitalization"?
  - a. Do any recent changes stand out as reflecting or supporting the needs and aspirations of Indigenous residents who live in the area?
  - b. What does neighbourhood revitalization ideally mean to you?
6. If Indigenous residents and organizations had more control over neighbourhood planning, what, if anything, do you think would be different in the inner city?
  - a. What about in Saskatoon generally? Be as creative as you'd like in your visioning.

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