TERRITORIAL STIGMA ON THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES:
REPRESENTATIONS OF NORTH CENTRAL, REGINA

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Arts
in
Justice Studies
University of Regina

by
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Regina, Saskatchewan
March, 2014

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Angela Carol Miller, candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Justice Studies, has presented a thesis titled, *Territorial Stigma on the Canadian Prairies: Representations of North Central, Regina*, in an oral examination held on December 5, 2013. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

The community of North Central, located within the small prairie city of Regina, Saskatchewan in Canada, is known for high crime rates, poor socioeconomic conditions and a large concentration of Aboriginal residents. The area’s negative reputation was furthered when MacLean’s magazine named it “Canada’s Worst Neighbourhood” in 2007. The goal of this research is to offer a richer context for this "reputation" by investigating North Central as a stigmatized territory. Territorial stigma has harmful effects (i.e. negatively impacts the social, economic, physical and mental wellbeing of residents) and as such, the role of representation and stigma must be analyzed so that inequality between neighbourhoods may be addressed proactively. This research project asks: how do residents and non-residents reproduce and resist dominant representations of North Central, Regina? This question is investigated through the analysis of fifteen semi-structured interviews using NVivo qualitative research software and Attride-Stirling’s thematic network analysis. The analysis revealed three global themes: 1) North Central is a socially constructed location and concept; 2) representations in the news media and 3) interpersonal representations. This thesis reveals that both residents and non-residents of North Central acknowledge that North Central is a troubled inner-city neighbourhood but participants tend to both challenge and emphasize various aspects of North Central, sometimes reproducing dominant representations of North Central even while trying to resist them. This research provides a greater understanding of the complex social construction of dominant representations of stigmatized urban communities.
Acknowledgements

There are not enough words to thank Dr. Michelle Stewart, my supervisor, for reading and editing endless numbers of drafts, helping me secure funding, providing critical reflection and for being my biggest cheerleader and taskmaster. Thank you also to Dr. Emily Eaton, Dr. Ken Montgomery and Dr. Nick Jones for agreeing to serve on my committee. Their time and invaluable expertise is greatly appreciated. I am grateful as well to Rob Knox for creating the customized map of Regina used for the mapping exercise. This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). My family and I greatly appreciate the financial support received from SSHRC along with the SSHRC enhancement, Graduate Studies and Research Graduate Scholarship, Graduate Centennial Merit Scholarship, two Graduate Teaching Assistantships and two Research Assistantships from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. I would also like to thank Dr. Hirsch Greenberg and Dr. Nick Jones for encouraging me to enter graduate school and for your numerous letters of recommendation over the years.
Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my family and friends whose words of encouragement helped me move forward whenever I needed inspiration. I would especially like to express an extra special feeling of gratitude to my children, Kelly, Liam and Brenna, who made numerous sacrifices so that I could go back to school and follow my dreams. I also dedicate this thesis to the many residents and workers in North Central who have supported me throughout my Masters program. I would also like to thank Carmine, Kelly and my Mom for providing hours of proofreading and listening to me ramble. I also dedicate this work to those who volunteered to participate in the research interviews—your contribution is priceless.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

North Central is an inner-city community located in the Canadian prairie city of Regina, Saskatchewan. North Central is a stigmatized area, understood to have high crime rates, poor socioeconomic conditions and a large concentration of Aboriginal residents\(^1\). The community is referred to colloquially as “the hood.” It is widely considered to be a dangerous area of the city inhabited by unemployed, indigenous, drug-addicted gangsters and prostitutes. This reputation was further enforced by a report from *MacLean’s* magazine naming North Central as “Canada’s Worst Neighbourhood” (Gatehouse, Jan. 2007). This damning article received conflicting reactions from community members. Some appreciated the added awareness, attention and resources brought to the area by this exposure (The StarPhoenix, Jan. 2008) while others felt that the one-sided nature of the article perpetuated stereotypes and exaggerated the negative conditions of the neighbourhood (The Leader Post, Jan. 2007). The goal of this thesis is to investigate North Central’s reputation further by answering the question: how do residents and non-residents reproduce and challenge dominant representations of North Central?

Urban sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2008) has argued that, in addition to the experience of poverty and racism, marginalized areas suffer from a territorial stigma that impacts both the residents and the area. Studies show that the wellbeing and life chances of residents in stigmatized areas are negatively affected in terms of social, economic (see

\(^1\) As per the Constitution Act of 1982, “Aboriginal” refers to the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada. “First Nations” refers to the indigenous people of Canada, not including the Inuit and Métis. “Inuit” refers to the indigenous people of Northern Canada. “Métis” is not defined within the 1982 Constitution Act but typically refers to people with European and First Nations ancestry.
for example Hastings, 2004), physical and mental health (see for example Bruhn, 2009). In other words, stigma and the practices that surround it have significantly harmful effects. It is therefore important that the role of representations and stigma be analysed as part of the process of marginalization in Regina. By doing so, problems of economic inequality and social polarization between neighbourhoods may be addressed so that all residents might achieve a higher level of health and wellbeing and a fair and equitable level of prosperity.

Illustration 1.1 – Map of Regina

(Adapted from City of Regina, 2013d)
1.1 Contemporary Context

Regina is located in the province of Saskatchewan, at the centre of the prairie grain belt, making it an ideal location as a service centre, transportation hub and distribution centre. It is the provincial capital and is one of only two major cities in the province (the other being Saskatoon). Recent growth in the city is attributed to a booming economy resulting from the oil and potash resource industries as well as increased government spending on infrastructure (CMHC, 2012). Today, Regina is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada despite its relatively small population of 193,100 (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Despite recent economic growth in the city, the extent of marginalization through racial segregation and concentrated poverty in North Central, Regina is among the highest in Canada (Walks & Bourne, 2006). Similar levels are also found in inner-city communities in Saskatoon and Winnipeg, Canada’s two other large prairie cities. The following facts compiled from the 2006 Census by the City of Regina illustrate the extent of spatialized inequality found in this community: approximately 40 percent of North Central residents have less than a high school diploma; approximately half of the families there are headed by one parent; and the unemployment rate in North Central is twice that of the rest of the city at 12 percent compared to 5 percent (City of Regina, 2006). By 2006, the average family income in North Central of $34,976 was nearly half the Regina average of $67,172—46.8 percent of North Central residents are considered low-income (City of Regina, 2006). This neighbourhood has the worst socioeconomic demographics
Within Regina, the neighbourhood of North Central suffers from a reputation as a dangerous, socioeconomically and racially marginalized community. However, the exact geographic location and defined boundaries of this community are not widely known. In fact, there is even some dispute between the City of Regina and the North Central Community Association (NCCA) regarding the areas’ official boundaries. People talk about their perceptions of the area—and even suggest that it is an area that should be avoided—without being able to say for certain where North Central begins and ends (personal communication, Jessica Hannah, former Program Coordinator, North Central Community Association, March, 2011).

Officially, North Central is located on 533.9 hectares of inner-city land (City of Regina, 2006a). Regina City Planning currently defines the area as four distinct neighbourhoods. “Albert-Scott” is located on the east side (bounded by 4th Avenue, Albert Street, the Canadian Pacific tracks and Elphinstone Street). “Exhibition” is on the west side (bounded by Lewvan Drive - where the Grand Trunk Pacific tracks were located, 4th Avenue, the Canadian Pacific tracks and Elphinstone Street). “Washington Park” is north of both “Albert-Scott” and “Exhibition” (bounded by the Canadian National tracks, Albert Street, 4th Avenue and Pasqua Street). These three smaller neighbourhoods constitute the larger neighbourhood of North Central as defined by the NCCA. The City of Regina also includes the area to the east known as the “Warehouse District” (bounded by Albert Street, the Canadian Pacific mainline, Broad Street and

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2 For example, the 2006 average income in Downtown Eastside, Vancouver was $25,132 compared to the Vancouver average of $68,271 (City of Vancouver, 2012).
the Canadian National mainline) which includes a large number of the city’s bars, dance clubs and upscale condominiums (See Illustration 2). The neighbourhood is bound on three sides by the Canadian National Railway tracks, the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, and Lewvan Drive. Albert Street and/or Broad Street serve as the boundary on the fourth side depending on whether one is using the city’s definition or the NCCA’s definition of North Central. For the purposes of this research, NCCA’s definition of North Central will be used because it represents a simpler geographic description and is a grassroots, community-based definition of the area.
Unlike many inner-city communities, North Central is not a “concrete jungle.” According to the City of Regina, approximately 9,290 North Central residents live on approximately 533.9 hectares of land in this inner-city area (City of Regina, 2006a). This translates to less than 18 residents per hectare. Despite being the largest community in Regina, it is not densely populated. There are no rows of high-rise apartment buildings and no identifiable tracks of subsidized housing. Instead, landscaped yards and numerous elm trees line the streets. Most of the properties in North Central are single-detached homes on 25-foot lots (City of Regina, 2006a). This is not to say that the area is without substantial challenges. Nearly one in five homes needs major repairs (City of Regina, 2006a). Inadequate investment in park maintenance, street cleaning and repairs by the city, disinvestments in maintenance and repairs by landlords, and limited access to government-sponsored programs to assist with renovations and replacement of aged housing have each contributed to a high rate of physical decline in this location.

Over the last decade, a sharp increase in the cost of housing has had a substantial impact on North Central. Nearly half of the properties are rented (City of Regina, 2006a). In 1991, less than one in five renters in North Central spent more than 30 percent of their household income on rent compared to over half of renters in this neighbourhood in 2006 (City of Regina, 1991; City of Regina, 2006). Although the City of Regina has not yet released a compilation of data from the 2011 census, this figure has undoubtedly gone up given recent housing shortages. Vacancy rates in Regina have hovered around one percent since 2008 and they are currently the lowest of any census metropolitan area (CMA) in Canada (CMHC, 2012). This substantial decrease in vacancy rates has driven up the rental prices. In the Central Zone this has resulted in an average monthly rate of
$841 (CMHC, 2012) compared to $598 in 2006 (City of Regina, 2006), representing more than a 40 percent increase. North Central is a part of the Central Zone. The CMCH (2013) projected the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Regina will be $1050 by 2014. Rents are rising and tenants are receiving less value for their money. Incomes are not keeping pace with this rise in property costs resulting in little choice for low-income residents but to continue paying the high cost of housing in the inner city.

A lack of affordable groceries in the neighbourhood has also increased the cost of living for some residents of North Central. From the time that North Central’s only grocery store closed in 2000 (Silverthorn, 2000) until the recent opening of Ngoy Hoa Asian Foods Ltd. in 2012 (Chabun, 2012), the area has been a “food desert.” Food desert is the term used to describe impoverished areas without an affordable source of healthy food (Smoyer-Tomic, Spence, & Amrhein, 2006). Although a 2006 study found that 82 percent of North Central residents accessed a grocery store by car (CS&R Associates, 2006), for residents without vehicles or driver’s licenses, buying good food can mean a lengthy bus ride or paying expensive cab fare to get to a grocery store. Alternatively, residents shop at expensive convenience stores where there is a limited supply of healthy food. The new international food store is a welcome addition to the neighbourhood; however, this store offers a specialized selection and higher prices compared to the grocery stores located in more affluent Regina neighbourhoods. Living in a food desert increases the cost of living and also impacts the health and wellbeing of low-income residents. Being a food desert has further added to the experience and perception of North Central as an impoverished neighbourhood.
Degraded areas with run-down housing, high rates of poverty and ethnic or racial concentration are often associated with high crime rates (Lupton, 2003; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Wilson & Kelling, 1982) as is the case in North Central. Crime, addiction and the prevalence of prostitution and gangs are pressing issues affecting this community. Residents have reported that discarded needles and condoms, as evidence of drug addiction and prostitution, have damaged the reputation of North Central, increased residents’ fear of crime and lowered property values (Parnes, 2003).

Crime rates were generally decreasing across Canada from 1991 to 2004; the reverse was happening in Regina during this time period (Wallace, Wisener & Collins, 2006). In 2006, the year before North Central was named Canada’s worst neighbourhood by *MacLean’s*, Regina had the dubious distinction of having had the highest reported crime rate per capita of any census metropolitan area in Canada for nine of the last ten years (Wallace, Wisener & Collins, 2006). This situation is slowly improving. In 2011, crime rates in Regina decreased by 10 percent. Nevertheless, the metropolitan area still has the second highest police-reported crime rate and the highest police-reported crime severity index in Canada (Perreault, 2013). In police reports, North Central is indicated as the area with the highest overall crime rate within the city (Regina Police, 2013).

When considering these alarming statistics it is important to remember that a large portion of crimes go unreported and some communities may be more willing to report crimes than others, thus figures that measure differences in crime rates may not depict true levels of criminal activity (Goff, 2008). Statistics alone should not be relied upon to convey a complete picture of the amount of crime in a particular area (Goff, 2008). High crime rates may also result from the increased police presence in North Central. Crimes
are more likely to be detected and reported when policing is increased (Levitt, 1998). An increased police presence might be seen as a response that would make the neighbourhood safer for all residents but this is not necessarily the case. Historical records and interviews with Aboriginal people indicate that societal, systemic and institutionalized racism have led to aggressive and discriminatory policing of Aboriginal people (Comack, 2012). This has resulted in disproportionately high arrest and conviction rates in inner-city neighbourhoods on the prairies where the urban Aboriginal population is disproportionately concentrated (Comack, 2012). Approximately 40 percent of Regina’s Aboriginal population lives in North Central (City of Regina, 2006a). Additionally, smaller cities with areas of concentrated crime are more likely to score higher on reported crime rates per capita than larger cities with areas of concentrated crime as the overall crime rates are diffused by their city’s larger population (Wallace et al., 2006). Thus, North Central is not necessarily a dangerous place to live for all residents in all areas even though high crime rates might be interpreted in this way.

Racism directed at Aboriginal peoples residing in North Central is a significant issue affecting the area. Canada’s Aboriginal population is a racialized group that includes those identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit descent.

Miles (1989) defines Racialization as:

... a synonym for racial categorization which is a process for delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within those boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics. It is therefore an ideological process).

Similarly, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) provide the following definition of race:

Race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not object, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society invents, manipulates or retires
when convenient. People with common origins share certain physical traits, of course, such as skin color, physique, and hair texture. But these constitute only an extremely small portion of their genetic endowment, are dwarfed by that which we have in common, and have little or nothing to do with distinctly human, higher order traits, such as personality, intelligence and moral behaviour.

Drawing from Miles (1989), Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) and Hall’s (2000a, 2000b) concepts of race and racialization, I refer to race as a social construct whereby people are categorized as one stereotyped group (racialized) according to supposedly biological or cultural traits that are associated with a particular geographical area or origin. This is a “dialectical process of signification” in that both the racialized and the racializer construct definitions of membership in opposing groups i.e. colonizers implicitly racialize themselves as “white” and superior in contrast to the colonized who are racialized as “black” and inferior (Miles, 1989). Racism occurs when the racializer believes that particular racialized groups are inferior or problematic because of the traits for which they are racially defined (Miles, 1989) even though race is a social construct rather than a biological fact (Hall, 2000a, 2000b; Miles, 1989). Racialized groups of people are neither innately inferior nor superior to other racialized groups.

With the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, many racialized groups have organized politically to fight racial discrimination (Miles, 1989). This is not a simple task. Despite decades of advocacy, historical and contemporary racist discourse and symbolism, racist attitudes and institutionalized racism continue to result in systemic barriers that affect the socioeconomic wellbeing of those who are racialized as “non-white” (Kobayashi, Cameron & Baldwin, 2011).

In terms of the identity of areas in Canadian prairie cities, Aboriginality has become conflated with concentrations of poverty in the inner city and “whiteness” with
the affluence of the suburbs (Razack, 2002). The neighbourhood of North Central is stereotypically thought of as a homogenous urban Aboriginal community (Razack, 2002).

There is, however, a diverse mix of Aboriginal (approximately 40 percent) and mostly white non-Aboriginal residents from various income brackets along with a small percentage (approximately 5 percent) of recent immigrants (Environics Institute, 2010).

Due to the high percentage of non-Aboriginal residents living in North Central as well as the number of Aboriginal residents who live outside of North Central, there is some debate as to whether or not it is technically a “ghetto,” although it is often referred to as such colloquially—an internet search on July 28, 2012 (using the Google search engine and linking the terms “ghetto,” “North Central,” and “Regina”) returned 167,000 hits. According to one academic definition, a ghetto exists when an area contains 70 percent visible minorities, 60 percent of which are from a single racialized group of which no less than 30 percent reside elsewhere in the city (Johnston et al., 2002, 2003 in Walks & Bourne, 2006). Although the concentration of Aboriginal people in North Central is approximately 40 percent, the majority of the city’s Aboriginal population lives in areas other than North Central (City of Regina, 2006a). However, it is hard to accurately determine how many Aboriginal people live in particular areas, partly due to the multiple methods of defining who is and is not considered Aboriginal and the movement within the city, to the reserves, and back again (Newhouse & Peters, 2003; Peters, 2005). An alternative definition of a ghetto is that it is first and foremost “an area of forcible relegation of an ethnic or cultural group” (Wacquant, 1995 in Wacquant, 1997, p. 343). Aboriginal residents are concentrated in North Central, but this area does not have a history of forcible relegation (although Canada does have a history of forcibly
relegating the First Nations on reserves and in residential schools). Thus, using these academic definitions, North Central would still not be considered a ghetto. Nevertheless, whether North Central is technically a ghetto, it has achieved notoriety as a ghetto community.

When *MacLean’s* magazine named North Central as “Canada’s Worst Neighbourhood” in 2007, it represented the area as a ghetto through the images and language in the article. Images presented by the media can be ambiguous, conveying more than one potential meaning. Images communicate denotative (literal), connotative (thematic) as well as sub-textual messages that may be interpreted in various ways by readers (Hall, 2000b). Attempts to fix meanings, for instance through captions, is the work of representational practice thus representations are created through the discourse of both image and text (Hall, 2000b). Stuart Hall draws on the work of Michel Foucault to argue that widespread ethnocentric or hegemonic representations, as socially constructed signifiers, create and/or reinforce negative stereotypes within a reciprocal knowledge/power relationship (Hall, 2000b). In other words, representations in the media reflect and reify so-called “social facts” or ideas that take on a power of their own (Hall, 2000b). When these widely held systems of thought become deeply ingrained in the culture they become extremely difficult to change since they have become both institutionally systematized and ingrained in the social psyche as how things are and how they will always be (Hall, 2000b).

The images in the *MacLean’s* article (Gatehouse, 2007) are racially charged representations of drug use, law and order enforcement, physical and social disorder and poverty. Other than the white-looking police officer, fire inspector and mayor, all of the
subjects in the article’s photos appear to be visible minorities—of Aboriginal descent—which contributes to the mythos that all of the residents of North Central are Aboriginal while highlighting power differences marked by race and class. Two of the photos depict young men who appear to be Aboriginal being arrested (see Illustration 1.3 for example) and another shows a white-looking fire inspector using a flashlight to look through the window of a rundown house with the caption “‘we’re living in a third world country here,’ says a community association president.” Two other pictures depict drug use – one featuring an emaciated woman injecting herself, the other showing a young man heating knives at a stove (a method for inhaling drugs such as hashish) with the caption “experts say that Regina’s inner city has more IV drug users per capita than Vancouver’s Downtown East Side.” Another picture depicts a two-year old child peering from behind a faded wooden fence with the words “some criminals in Regina ‘steal the food out of people’s deep freezers during break and enters.’” A picture showing a group of people with closed eyes and raised hands has the caption “worshipers at Four Directions praying for a change.” There is also a picture of an apocalyptic-style wasteland of garbage on an abandoned lot with downtown high rises towering in the background (see Illustration 1.4). Judging by the shot and the camera angles, this picture was likely taken in the
Heritage neighbourhood, closer to downtown, rather than North Central. These images perpetuate racial stereotypes through depictions of bodies of Aboriginal people in impoverished conditions engaged in criminal activities. This furthers North Central’s reputation of being a dangerous Aboriginal ghetto and of Aboriginal people being dangerous.

Some celebrated the exposure and the subsequent attention and resources brought to the area because of this media event (The StarPhoenix, Jan. 2008) while others felt the label of “Canada’s worst neighbourhood” was undeserved and that the article should have celebrated the more positive aspects of the neighbourhood such as the areas’ sense of community, mutual support and grassroots initiatives (The Leader Post, Jan. 2007). There are currently over 60 non-profit and government organizations working to benefit the area and improve residents’ quality of life and many of these institutions have been working to revitalize the neighbourhood for decades. Images highlighting this work (See Illustration 1.5 and 1.6) paint a very different picture of the North Central community that runs counter to the themes within the MacLean’s article.

![Illustration 1.5 – North Central Community Garden](from North Central Community Association; photographer unknown) ![Illustration 1.6 – Go Green Mural Project in North Central](from North Central Community Association; photographer unknown)

The MacLean’s article is not the only time that North Central was highlighted by the media. The television series Moccasin Flats focused on poverty, racism, crime,
addiction and underdevelopment in North Central and the hardship, isolation and hopelessness experienced by residents (McCullough, 2008). Many of the hits from the aforementioned internet search returned descriptions of this television drama that describe it as a show about a “harsh ghetto neighbourhood.”

Not everything written in the media about North Central is focussed on crime (see Table 1.1). An analysis of the top 20 headlines from a search for North Central completed on April 17, 2013 on *The Regina Leader Post* website (www.leaderpost.com) suggests

Table 1.1 – Relevant Headlines from April 17, 2013 Search for North Central Regina on www.leaderpost.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Improvement Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police investigating suspicious death in North Central Regina - Dec-31-2012</td>
<td>Volunteers clean up North Central Regina - Apr-25-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina convenience store clerks trap would-be shoplifter - Feb-01-2010</td>
<td>Inaugural Feed the Need Program launched at North Central Family Centre - Apr-25-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third fire added to list of suspicious blazes - Mar-02-2013</td>
<td>Basketball a positive experience for six-player team from Regina's North-Central neighbourhood - Feb-07-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness claims to have heard confession - Jan-23-2009</td>
<td>Baskets making ends meet for Regina families - Apr-11-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina police investigate stabbing - Feb-16-2013</td>
<td>Ministry of Education provides more than $480,000 to support community literacy programming – Jan-13-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man pleads guilty to escape from Regina Provincial Correctional Centre in 2008 - Aug-16-2009</td>
<td>RCMP to help build Habitat for Humanity home in Regina - Nov-19-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two teenage boys facing second-degree murder charges in connection with Regina's recent homicides - Dec-14-2009</td>
<td>Habitat for Humanity does more than build homes - Nov-13-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina police investigating apparent homicide - Jan-09-2013</td>
<td>Regina community groups share $100K in funding - Apr-11-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina fire officials say arson caused $70,000 damage to North-Central home - Feb-05-2012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-time gang member testifies at trial - Jan-26-2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that over the last five years the local newspaper has written nearly as many articles about initiatives to improve the well-being of North Central residents as it has written about crime in the area. Although eleven out of twenty stories were crime-related, nine stories highlighted efforts to improve the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the subtexts in the headlines of these stories suggest that North Central is dirty, needy and illiterate. Efforts to improve the neighbourhood may indeed contribute to the stigmatization of the area depending on how these efforts are depicted by the media and interpreted by readers.

Evidence suggests that North Central is a marginalized community with a negative reputation. Representations in the media reflect and produce dominant societal beliefs (Goodman, 1992) and create widespread and indelible images that continue to be projected well after conditions in an area have improved (Dean & Hastings, 2000). This contributes to persistent and long-term stigmatization of marginalized areas (Dean & Hastings, 2000). Research into how residents and non-residents reproduce and challenge dominant representations of North Central will contribute to a better understanding of ways to address territorial stigma and improve the area that will, in turn, benefit those who have been marginalized. The following examination of the history of Regina and North Central provides a greater understanding of the processes that have contributed to the current negative representations and territorial stigma in North Central.

1.2 History of Regina and North Central

History plays an important role in both the study of stigma and places. Geographically, all spaces have a history whereas places have a collective memory resulting from a material, social and political history that impacts the built environment, the identity of a place and its relationships with people and other places (Smith, 1984).
What is stigmatised, by whom, and why, must be examined historically and contextually to understand how to best address stigma since morals and cultures change over place and time (Hall-Clifford & Kleinman, 2008). An overview of the history indicates class as well as racial antagonisms since settlers first arrived in the area.

1.2.1 History of Regina

The city of Regina was built on a site 12 miles east of a traditional buffalo pound on the Canadian prairie (City of Regina, 2003). At one time, Regina was the capital of the North West Territories and later became the capital of the province of Saskatchewan. Despite current prosperity derived from natural resources (mainly potash and oil), the area was not considered an ideal place to build a city because of a lack of nearby water sources and building materials. In a greeting commemorating the city’s golden jubilee in 1953, Lieutenant-Governor W. J. Patterson stated that:

When Regina was selected as the capital of The North West Territories many uncomplimentary remarks were made as to its suitability and grave doubts were expressed as to its future. It is true that nature had not been particularly kind. Located on a bare, dry, treeless plain, which up to then had been distinguished only by a pile of buffalo bones, the future did not appear very promising. (Neal, 1953, p. 5)

Thus, the founders of Regina worked hard to prove themselves to the naysayers in Eastern Canada by taming the “savage land” in order to create their vision of an urban civilization. This is a situation that has not changed much in hundreds of years as evidenced by the city’s “I Love Regina” pride-raising campaign that was started in 2002 by former mayor Pat Fiacco (City of Regina, 2013). By way of promotional material (cups, shirts, advertisements etc.), this exercise in boosterism hoped to improve Regina’s image locally and throughout the country. The project aimed to retain citizens, attract
new residents, and promote Regina’s potential for economic development and growth (City of Regina, 2013).

Unfortunately, history shows that economic growth and exploitation of vulnerable communities go hand-in-hand especially during times of boosterism and rapid development. When 16th century French explorers first came to Canada they claimed that the land was *terra nullius*—uninhabited and unowned—therefore free for the taking; this ignored the sovereign rights of the indigenous peoples they encountered (Day, 2002). The doctrine of *terra nullius* was also invoked in 1858 when Henry Hind’s expedition to Saskatchewan claimed the prairies were empty and ready for colonization even though the area was home to a number of First Nations, Métis and Hudson’s Bay fur traders (Day, 2002). Miles (1989) discusses how colonists and explorers racially “othered” and labelled as inferior the people whom they encountered based on the various phenotypic (i.e. skin colour) and cultural traits that appeared different from the European “norms.”

Settlers to Saskatchewan did likewise to the First Nations people whom they encountered. White supremacy was used by “white” settler societies to rationalize the unjust economic exploitation of “non-whites” (Miles, 1989). White supremacy was also used to rationalize the symbolic (referring to Canada as the “Great White North”) and structural policies (such as the reserve system and stringent immigration policies) that transformed Canada into a country that is widely imagined or taken-for-granted as “white” (Kobayashi, Cameron & Baldwin, 2011).
When Treaty 4 was signed in 1874, the prairie First Nations (mainly the Cree and Salteaux) were moved to reserves to make way for the domination of the land by predominantly British, American and other European settlers (Drake, 1955). In 1885, after the trial and execution of Louis Riel (a Métis leader and political activist), the First Nations were further separated from their traditional land when Saskatchewan introduced a “pass system” that only allowed members of the First Nations to leave reserves with permission from the Indian Agent who represented the Federal Government (Neal, 1953). Thus, through the processes of colonialism and settlement, the First Nations people were systematically removed physically and conceptually from urban areas (Peters, 2004), including Regina and the surrounding area.

White settlers were enticed to move to Saskatchewan when the government of Canada gave away free quarter sections (160 acres) of farmland through the Dominion Lands Act (Department of Agriculture, 1878). Regina boomed from the growing farm industry and the city became the administrative and market centre for Southern Saskatchewan. By 1903, the city had grown from a population of 300 and became an official city when the population reached 3000 (City of Regina, 2003). By 1907, the city

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3 Treaty 4 is a treaty between “Her Majesty the Queen and the Cree and Salteaux Tribes of Indians at Qu’Appelle and Fort Ellice” which covers most of Southern Saskatchewan and parts of Southern Alberta and Manitoba. According to the Canadian government’s official text of the treaty, this land was ceded to the Federal government in exchange for an initial monetary payment, an annual payment of $5 to band members, small gifts of clothing every third year to Chiefs and Headmen, a supply of ammunition and twine every year to a value of $750, tools for farming, reserves, and reserve schools (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2012). Treaty elders have stated that their understanding of this treaty, according to their oral and spiritual traditions, is that this land was not ceded—instead, the treaty was intended to establish peaceful relationships between the signatories and was an agreement to share the land (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000).

4 This pass system was actively enforced until the 1930s although it was not abolished until 1961 (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000).
was growing so fast that publicity materials were outdated before they could be distributed (Neal, 1953).

During World War I, the initial boom and development in Regina died down between 1914 and 1918 (Brennan, 1989). This was followed by a post-war fall in grain prices, the crash of the stock market in 1929, drought in the 1930s, and World War II from 1939 to 45 (Brennan, 1989). During this time, the city had difficulty collecting taxes and thus little investment in the working class neighbourhoods took place (Brennan, 1989). Approximately 2400 dwellings were still being supplied with water from 90 public water taps in the 1950s (Neal, 1953). After the wars ended, prosperity returned with good crops, another wave of immigration in the 1940s, and a baby boom in the 1950s.

Table 1.2 – Aboriginal Population in the CMA of Regina by Decades from 1901 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aboriginal Population</th>
<th>percent of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2860</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>6405</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>15295</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>19785</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From censuses of Canada 1901 to 1981 in Brennan, 1989; Canada Census 2001; NHS 2011)

At its bicentennial in 1951, the city had a population of 73,000 (Brennan, 1989). During the 1950s, the city expanded its borders as newer and larger developments opened on the outskirts of the city. Research from the 1970s showed that there was a spatialized
class divide between the north-east and south-west sides of the city (Luscombe, 1977). There was also a racial divide with the upper-class south side of Regina being predominantly British and the lower-class north side being predominantly Ukrainian (Davies & Barrow, 1973). At this same time, the number of Aboriginal people living in Regina began to rise rapidly as the pass system was abolished. Many members of the First Nations moved from the reserves to the city in search of educational and employment opportunities however the increase in the Aboriginal population is also a result of high Aboriginal birth rates and legislative changes such as Bill C-31 which provided a means of reinstatement for individuals and their children who lost status through the Indian Act (Peters, 2004) (see Table 1.2).

In the 1970s, concerns were repeatedly expressed in the local newspaper that Regina was experiencing problems with “racial strife” that were reaching levels seen in large American cities (Brennan, 1989). In 1974, the police responded to the perception that rising crime rates were caused by this demographic change by creating a special “task force” and increasing their patrols in areas with high concentrations of Aboriginal residents. This resulted in numerous allegations of police brutality (Brennan, 1989). By 1977, positive steps were made when the police and Native organizations joined to form the Regina Native Race Relations Association (RNRRA), the first of its kind in North America with a mandate to improve police and Aboriginal relations by increasing cultural awareness for the city police (Brennan, 1989). Despite such efforts, racial tensions between Aboriginal residents and representatives of the justice system continue to be particularly severe on the Canadian prairies (Comack, 2012).
The existence of prejudice and discrimination towards Aboriginal peoples has led to violence and injustice toward Aboriginal residents in Regina. For example, one can look at the court transcripts from 1996-2000 regarding the murder of Pamela George, a Salteaux woman from the inner city who was hired as a sex worker and then brutally killed by two young white University students from the suburbs who were caught after they bragged to their friends (Razack, 2002). Sherene Razack (2002) discusses the openly racist attitudes and language used during the proceedings. During court, the judge advised jurors to consider that Pamela George was a troubled sex worker and also advised the jurors to consider that the accused showed great potential. In the end, the accused were given an eight-year sentence for their crime, which outraged many Aboriginal community members (Razack, 2002). Razack (2002) concluded that Regina’s colonial and settler past had resulted in a spatialized justice between the “white” areas of the city and the “Aboriginal” inner-city area as a result of pervasive racism.

Territorial stigma is said to affect an area in addition to the stigma caused by racism and concentrated poverty (Wacquant, 2008). With its long history of spatialized poverty and racism, it is difficult to separate the perceptions and stigma related to the racialized and impoverished identity of North Central from that associated with territorial stigma. A history of North Central suggests, however, that the area has been marginalized and stigmatized since the early 1900s, long before the community acquired an Aboriginal identity.

1.2.2 History of North Central

North Central is one of Regina’s oldest, working-class neighbourhoods. Of note, North Central was originally situated at the edge of the city and was the least developed
area although it is now part of the inner-city. The majority of the neighbourhood is located on the outskirts of the original town limits set in 1883, with Washington Park added once the city limits were expanded in 1911 (Hatzitolios, 1997). North Central was originally referred to as the “North Side” (Hatzitolios, 1997). According to local historian Hatzitolios (1997), the North Side has always been known as a rough area by residents outside the neighbourhood —especially those not familiar with North Central residents. It was literally and figuratively referred to as “the wrong side of the tracks,” since the neighbourhoods’ identity was strongly impacted by the railroads that bordered on three sides (Hatzitolios, 1997). This negative label existed well before North Central was referred to as “the hood” or “a ghetto.”

The neighbourhood has historically been inhabited by the marginalized—initially populated by primarily Eastern European immigrant, blue-collar workers and civil servants in the late 19th century (Elphinstone NDP, 1981; City of Regina, 2006a). The unsavory reputation, poor amenities and unsanitary conditions associated with the nearby railway tracks would have made the North Side unattractive and thereby more affordable for low-income workers. Residents typically built small shacks and modest homes whereas the real estate speculators, bankers and business owners who primarily lived on the south side built more elaborate properties (Elphinstone NDP, 1981). Thus, from its earliest days, there was a classed division in both the built environment and the inhabitants of the south and north ends of Regina.

Writing in 1955 about the early settlement of the North Side, local historian Earl Drake stated that:

The city fathers sometimes forgot about this recent residential development: once they neglected to unplug a North Side sewer, and they
allowed the erection of a large cow-barn just one block from Albert School [however] such treatment did not deter growth; it only made North Siders more conscious of being members of a distinct labouring-class district. (p. 136)

Few North Siders owned cars but if they did, they often found themselves stuck in Saskatchewan gumbo (thick heavy mud) as the streets in North Central were not paved nor gravelled until at least the late 1930s (Regina Elphinstone NDP Association, 1981). The North Side was also endowed with wooden sidewalks well into the 1930s. Most homes in North Central were still “non modern” (i.e. lacking indoor plumbing) in the 1950s (Regina Elphinstone NDP Association, 1981). Instead, residents had to make use of the ironically named “honey” wagon until they were hooked up to the sewer line, primarily at their own expense (personal conversation, Rob Deglau, Executive Director, North Central Community Association, March 2011). Public water stands were still located in North Central up until the 1980s (personal conversation, Rob Deglau, Executive Director, North Central Community Association, March 2011). North Central was one of the last areas in Regina to acquire modern amenities as few taxpayers resided there and those who did had little influence with the mostly elite members of the city council (Brennan, 1989; Drake, 1955).

With the availability of Canada Mortgage and Housing’s Mortgage Insurance Funds (MIFs) in 1954, larger homes in other neighbourhoods became more affordable for homebuyers, leading to outmigration from North Central (Regina Elphinstone NDP Association, 1981). At the same time, there was a growing in-migration of Aboriginal residents from the reserves. Many urban Aboriginals became tenants of absentee landlords in North Central, especially in the Albert-Scott neighbourhood (Regina North Central Community Society & Regina (Sask.) Planning Dept, 1980). This area had a
rental rate of approximately 20% by 1976, more than twice the rate of North Central’s other two neighbourhoods (Regina North Central Community Society & Regina (Sask.) Planning Dept, 1980). It would likely have been difficult for many leaving the reserve to raise the appropriate capital to purchase a home. Thus, the availability and affordability of homes in North Central likely contributed to the current concentration of low-income Aboriginal people in this area.

In 1980, the North Central Community Society claimed the community had substantial concerns about racism toward Aboriginal residents but they were more concerned about retaining the residential character of the neighbourhood in the face of an expanding downtown (Regina North Central Community Society & Regina (Sask.) Planning Dept, 1980). In addition, there were problems centred on the age of the community and strain on infrastructure caused by inadequate planning by city planners for the rapid growth that had occurred during Regina’s early years (Regina North Central Community Society & Regina (Sask.) Planning Dept, 1980). The North Central Community Society stated that the neighbourhood was “under attack” and marched to City Hall to demand government sponsored investment and revitalization (Regina North Central Community Society & Regina (Sask.) Planning Dept, 1980). Nevertheless, the North Central Community Society conceded that the neighbourhoods’ location, being separated from downtown, provided advantages not experienced by the neighbourhood to the south (Cathedral). As a result, North Central had remained extremely stable with most residents having lived there for more than ten years and with the majority of housing being tenant owned. This may be why more of the city’s budget and efforts focused on the Cathedral neighbourhood in the 1980s rather than North Central.
With help from the City of Regina and government programs, the Cathedral
neighbourhood (located just south of North Central) began to gentrify\(^5\) in the 1980s
(Parnes, 2003). At that time, both North Central and Cathedral had been targeted by the
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation as areas that could be revitalized by replacing 10
percent of the existing housing stock with new double-density construction. It was
concluded, however, that 20 percent of the housing needed to be replaced in North
Central in order to have an impact (Parnes, 2003). At the same time, there was an im-
migration of residents attracted to the aesthetics, housing style and affordability of the
Cathedral neighbourhood especially because rising interest rates and housing prices had
made the more affluent Regina neighbourhoods prohibitively expensive (Figueroa, 1994).
Gentrification resulted in rising housing prices in Cathedral and an outmigration of low-
income earners who moved to more affordable areas such as North Central (Parnes,
2003). Since then, the Cathedral area has been transformed into a trendy, bohemian
neighbourhood. Unlike Cathedral, North Central has continued to deteriorate and by
1994, residents indicated that the community’s negative image, poor housing and high
crime rates had become key issues (NCCS, 1994).

North Central still suffers from this negative reputation. There has been very little
written academically that challenges the dominant representations of North Central. For
instance, Walton (2011), examined challenges women face raising families in North
Central; all of the interviewees expressed negative views of the area. The participants
also noted a lack of adequate housing, community support and positive social influences

\(^5\) Revitalization is a process of increased investment and renewal. As neighbourhoods gentrify due to new
business start-ups, in-migration of young professionals and an associated rise in housing prices, low-
income earners are pushed out into other areas where housing prices drop and conditions diminish due to an
increase in concentrated poverty (Hackworth, 2007; Smith, 1984). Further discussion in section 2.1.
in North Central. These research results should not be considered representative, however, as they are reflections of the experiences of mothers living in low socioeconomic conditions within North Central as opposed to the experiences of North Central mothers in general. The majority of the participants were Aboriginal, lone-parents, had low education levels, received social assistance and were clients of a particular agency in North Central although this is not the case for the majority of North Central residents. Nonetheless, having had particularly negative experiences while living in North Central, it is understandable that the mothers in this study reinforced negative perceptions of North Central rather than challenging the areas’ negative reputation.

Artist and Ph.D. student Marnie Badham (2011), from the University of Melbourne, worked with North Central residents to create ten cultural indicators used to identify and measure whether or not community-based goals are being met. The goals and indicators are based on residents’ concerns as articulated through workshops, art projects and interviews with residents and community leaders. The first of the ten indicators referred to the community’s external image or reputation. Residents had indicated that progress should be made in this area by promoting “an increased understanding between North Central and the broader City of Regina” (Badham, 2011, p. 6). Residents also suggested that the level of improvement in this area could be determined by calculating the “ratio of positive versus negative media reports with interpretation from local residents and clients of North Central Services” (Badham, 2011, p. 3). Residents have said that visitors to North Central frequently show a great deal of disrespect for the area and its residents by littering and generally engaging in what these residents referred to as “trashy behaviour” (Parnes, 2003). It may not be self-evident as to
whether or not negative conditions in North Central have resulted from territorial stigma but these residents are clearly concerned about the effects of North Central’s negative reputation. Given evidence of the detrimental effects of territorial stigma elsewhere and the dominant representations of North Central in the media, residents’ concern regarding the areas’ negative reputation should be taken seriously.

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Research

Given the various representations of North Central and evidence of the detrimental effects of territorial stigma, the purpose of this research is to investigate how representations of North Central, Regina are reproduced and resisted by residents and non-residents alike. This will provide a greater understanding of the strategies used to impact perceptions of stigmatized communities. This will contribute to program providers’ and policy planners’ understanding of how to address conditions of structural and symbolic violence in North Central and other communities suffering from territorial stigma in order to improve residents health and wellbeing and to achieve equitable levels of prosperity. This research may be of benefit to other marginalized groups currently concentrated in stigmatized territories. Such groups include but are not limited to urban Aboriginal communities, those living in poverty, the unemployed, the poorly educated and single-parent households (the majority of whom are women). Furthermore, this research will contribute to the international body of research regarding territorial stigma and allow for cross-cultural comparison regarding territorial stigma and representations of inner-cities on the prairies and North Central in particular as compared to other marginalized areas of the world.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Most territorial stigma research to date has focused on the U.K. (Lupton, 2003), Australia (Atkinson & Jacobs, 2008; Dean & Hastings, 2000; Hastings, 2004; Warr, 2005), Europe (Damer, 1992; Devereux, Haynes & Power, 2011; Gourlay, 2007; Wassenberg, 2008) and the United States (Keene & Padilla, 2010; Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Some Canadian academics have written in the context of revitalization about the stigmatization of low-income neighbourhoods and housing projects in Toronto (Purdy, 2003; Lindgren, 2009; Silver, 2011), Vancouver (Robertson, 2007), Winnipeg (Silver, 2011) and Calgary (Silver, 2011). However, there has been very little research on territorial stigma conducted in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The phenomenon of area-based stigmatization in marginalized urban areas is referred to within the relevant body of literature by various names such as spatialized stigma (see for example Keene & Padilla, 2010), place-based stigma (see for example Kelaher, Warr, Feldman & Tacticos, 2010), territorial stigma (see for example Wacquant, 2008) or neighbourhood stigma (see for example Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). So as to avoid confusion about the difference between place and space, or what constitutes a neighbourhood, for the purposes of this research the term territorial stigma will be used. Wacquant (2008) stated that territorial stigma affects residents of a marginalized neighbourhood in addition to poverty and ethnic or racial prejudice. As such, it is similar to the form of stigma known as “tribal stigma” as it affects members of a group (Wacquant, 2008). For the purposes of this research, territorial stigma will be conceptualized as the relationship between one or more negatively perceived attributes of
contiguous geographical areas and the associated stigmatizing processes within a power situation that allows these processes to unfold (adapted from Link & Phelan, 2001). Drawing largely from stigma theory, this definition focuses on the material and social processes that lead to negative perceptions of territories while acknowledging that these processes occur because of inequities in power and influence. These inequities become spatially manifested within the city resulting in stigmatized territories. Through territorial stigmatization these inequities in power and influence are reproduced spatially unless they are challenged on both a material and ideological basis through particular social practices.

2.1 Spatial Inequality, Marginalization, Segregation and Group Antagonisms in the City

Weber (1958) defines the city not by the size of its population, but by the structures within it that function to serve the needs of the state, the region and the city’s populace. There is a reciprocal relationship between cities and societies (the city strongly impacts societies that in turn impact cities) (Cinar & Bender, 2007). The city has always been a space where class antagonisms become spatialized due to constraints on individual agency that result from larger societal processes. These constraints are experienced by marginalized individuals facing racialized and/or classed antagonism in the city.

The urban link between space, class and ethnic or racialized differences can be traced back to the pre-modern city and continues in today’s modern urban centres. During the feudal system, peasants lived on the outskirts of medieval towns and certain ethnic groups, such as Jewish communities, were segregated in ghettos within cities (Sjoberg, 1955). Through the process of industrialization in the 18th century, modern cities have developed as large capitalist spaces for production, consumption and reproduction that
exacerbate classed divisions and the uneven distribution of resources (Marx & Engels, 1973). This has exacerbated differences in social, economic and cultural capital and the structural constraints that cause limitations to individual dispositions and agency (Bourdieu, 1985).

The modern city has become a complex space that people try to understand philosophically and theoretically in terms of their idea of what the city is and their relationship with it (Young, 1986). At the turn of the century, Simmel (1903) wrote about the impact of the modern city on urbanites. He argued that urbanites develop a blasé attitude and become disinterested in much of what happens in the city, and to their fellow urbanites, as a defense against the onslaught of urban stimulus. This occurs despite the fact that city residents are particularly reliant on each other due to the highly specialized division of labour that requires clockwork-like routines and punctuality from city residents (Simmel, 1903).

For some, especially those considered “different,” the anonymity of the modern city liberates them from the oppression they experience in the closeness of smaller communities (Young, 1986). Wirth (1956) states that cities not only tolerate but reward difference because it is through difference that people become useful given the greater level of specialization and division of labour in the city. However, numerous homogeneous groups can be found within a large heterogeneous urban population. Wirth (1956) theorises that “like individuals” become spatially sorted into ethnic or racially concentrated areas within the city. This happens through the process of ethnic or racialized minorities being pushed out of areas dominated by the ethnic or racialized majority. Meanwhile, they are drawn to tolerant areas that provide services that meet
their unique cultural needs and where they find solidarity with others who are similarly situated. Thus, those who migrate from smaller communities may find themselves living in “cultural ghettos” or enclaves within the city although this may not be by choice or personal agency.

Early urban sociologists from the Chicago School have noted that ethnic minorities and the “lower class” tend to be spatially concentrated within the modern city. Purportedly, cities developed in concentric rings with immigrant and working class ghettos near the downtown centre and upper class housing, predominantly inhabited by White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, in the outermost ring (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1967). Park, Burgess and McKenzie (1967) found European immigrants primarily settled in the inner city out of these segregated areas and then moved out as second generations became culturally assimilated. Subsequently, other ethnic or racialized minorities moved in, such as African Americans. However, not all cities follow this concentric pattern of spatialized classed and ethnic inequality.

Toronto’s enclaves, for instance, are mostly located in the inner suburbs (Walkes & Bourne, 2006) and marginalized areas are often located in the outer suburbs in European cities (Wacquant, 2008). Similarly, before the City of Regina expanded its borders in the 1950s, the railroad track in Regina divided the North and South with working-class and ethnic and racialized minorities primarily living in the North. With ongoing expansion, the city is now growing in concentric circles, with racialized minorities and socioeconomically impoverished individuals living in areas closer to the central business district. Despite the variance in the patterns of differentiation, spatial
segregation in the modern city continues to be based on classed and racialized differences and antagonisms (Wacquant, 2008).

Spatialized marginalization should not be conflated with ghettoization. Although the inner cities of many urban centres have come to be known as areas of depravity and poverty, these areas of advanced marginality are not necessarily ghettos although they may be referred to colloquially as such. Wacquant (1997) argues that some sociologists (such as Jargowski & Bane, 1991 in Wacquant, 1997) conflate true ghettos with areas experiencing poverty rates over 40 percent which they incorrectly define as “poverty ghettos.” Instead, Wacquant (1995 in Wacquant, 1997) provides the following definition of the ghetto as:

...a bounded racially and/or culturally uniform socio-spatial formation based on (1) the forcible relegation of (2) a ‘negatively typed’ population, such as Jews in medieval Europe and African-Americans in the modern United States, to (3) a reserved, ‘frontier territory’ in which this population (4) develops under duress a set of parallel institutions that serve both as a functional substitute for, and as a protective buffer against, the dominant institutions of the encompassing society but (5) duplicate the latter only at an incomplete and inferior level while (6) maintaining those who rely on them in a state of structural dependency. Put differently, the ghetto is an ethnoracial formation that combines and inscribes in the objectivity of space and group-specific institutions all four major ‘elementary forms’ of racial domination, namely categorization, discrimination, segregation and exclusionary violence. (p. 343)

Under the above definition, Canada does not have a history of urban ghettoization. This is not to say that Canada does not have a long history of spatial segregation. For example, “forcible relegation” of Aboriginal people to reserves by the predominantly white settler society through a system of treaties and reserves can be aptly described using the above definition.
Wacquant (2008) stated that the *banlieus* in France are not, in fact, ghettos at all even though French residents and the media had called them Americanized ghettos. He argued that this was due to historical and structural differences in these areas. For instance, although there are high concentrations of Arab immigrants in the *banlieus*, these areas have not reached the levels of racial concentration found in American ghettos. French Arabs are not and have never been forcefully segregated within these marginalized areas. This is unlike African Americans who were subjected to legally mandated segregation through the Jim Crow laws between 1876 and 1965 (Wacquant, 2008). Furthermore, Wacquant (2008) argued that there are more government sponsored social programs that mitigate the effects of marginalization in *banlieus* whereas American ghetto residents have been abandoned by their government and left to develop their own methods of surviving the effects of marginalization. Wacquant (2008) states that the *banlieus* are best described as “anti-ghettos.” He says what these areas have in common is that both are areas of advanced marginality resulting from various degrees of ethnic or racial discrimination, neoliberalism, globalization and deindustrialization. He also suggested that urban areas of advanced marginality suffer from negative perceptions—a territorial stigma—which has a deleterious effect on the area and its residents in addition to other forms of discrimination. An area does not need to be referred to as a ghetto for it to be territorially stigmatized, however calling an area a “ghetto” without looking at the area’s unique context and structural problems is a blatant act of territorial stigmatization.

Enclaves, like ghettos, are areas with high concentrations of minority members, but these areas are usually viewed as locations where residents benefit from living in
close proximity to other members of their particular group through choice rather than forceful relegation. Urban theorists Mohammad A. Qadeer (2003) and Ceri Peach (1996) suggest ethnic groups may benefit from enclaves as mechanisms of developing and maintaining cultural pride, advocacy, protection and support networks through creation of economic advantages via “ethnic entrepreneurship” (i.e. providing services that cater to ethnic groups and niche markets that provide cultural enrichment for those outside of the community). Qadeer (2003) argues that in countries that support multiculturalism, the choice to live in ethnic enclaves can lead to greater opportunities, increased social supports, and higher median incomes as is witnessed by the existence of some flourishing “ethnoburbs” in Metropolitan Toronto. Walks and Bourne (2006), found Canadian enclaves fared better economically than communities that are more diverse (although not necessarily better than predominantly Anglo-Saxon communities are). Enclaves may benefit minority members who congregate close together by choice, but concentrations of marginalized group members in urban centres typically result from social structural constraints on individual choice, such as capitalism and racism.

David Harvey (2009) problematizes industrial capitalism as it results in the exploitation of the lower classes and unequal distribution of resources, especially the use and ownership of land and spaces within the city. Topography (physical features of the land), location of neighbourhoods, pollution, local history (i.e. known predators having lived in the neighbourhood), neighbourhood design, type of housing and architecture, zoning, lot sizes, marketing and location and quality of amenities such as shopping and entertainment centers, places of worship, recreational facilities, libraries, hospitals, schools, police detachments and fire stations can greatly affect the quality and reputation
of a neighbourhood and the price of real estate (Knox, 1987; Galster, 2009, 2010; Low, 1999; Lupton, 2003; Segal, 1979). Higher-income residents are able to pay a premium to live in the parts of the city that best suit their needs while the least desirable areas of the city are left for those with the lowest incomes (Harvey, 2009). These are usually areas where life is hard and finding employment is even harder. Xavier de Souza Briggs (2005) argues that segregation leads to a loss of social capital which inhibits social mobility and thus residents become trapped in cycles of poverty concentration and social exclusion. Put simply, the rich are able to use space for their own benefit while the poor become trapped by space (Harvey, 2009).

Globalization, economic restructuring, demographic changes and municipal policies greatly affect neighbourhood conditions and dynamics. Neoliberal tax-cuts and the retraction of welfare programs purportedly free markets and create a trickle-down effect that increases wages and the consumer power of the poor (Gough, Eisenschitz, & McCulloch, 2006). The trust in market solutions to societal problems through “supposed” non-governmental interference and the liberated movement of people and capital across international borders has led to the process of “glocalization” where the retraction of federal power and social responsibilities through decentralization occurs alongside a changing global economy (Hackworth, 2007). This has resulted in an increased onus placed on municipalities to address the social problems that impact the city, such as unemployment and a lack of affordable housing that are compounded by globalization (because businesses requiring low-skilled employees move overseas to areas where wages are suppressed and rising immigration increases the demand for housing putting pressure on local housing stocks).
Unfortunately, city councils tend to focus on projects that will create commercial growth while ignoring and exacerbating problems in the poorer and most underdeveloped areas of the city due to the influence that big business and private investors have over urban planners (Rutheiser, 1997; Cooper, 1994). According to Hackworth (2007), financial institutions are especially able to influence social policy at the city level by controlling municipal governments’ access to credit and financial resources needed to implement social programs. Municipalities also cater to businesses and investors, promoting commerce and marketing their cities to attract high-income consumers in order to increase their tax base. Ironically, the combination of tax incentives to attract industries and the additional strain on infrastructure created by these new industries and urban growth can lead to the depletion of municipal resources, uneven development and cuts in public services, especially to marginalized low-income communities that contribute fewer municipal tax dollars (Hackworth, 2007).

When communities experience increased investment and revitalization, they usually gentrify due to new business start-ups, in-migration of young, mostly “white” professionals and an associated rise in housing prices (Hackworth, 2007; Smith, 1984). Low-income earners are simultaneously displaced to other inner-city communities where housing prices become even more depressed due to an increase in concentrated poverty in these areas (Hackworth, 2007; Smith, 1984). Hackworth (2007) and Smith (1984) have both theorized that the process of gentrification has changed as a result of neoliberal profit-driven ideology, moving from a process driven by tenant-owners fixing up their properties to real estate agents and developers redeveloping for profit (this includes the current trend of condominium conversions). Large development firms have been coerced
to invest in the revitalization of the inner city through rezoning, relaxing of by-laws and tax incentives, which force smaller investors out of the real estate market. Governments have also participated in neoliberal practices through the destruction of social housing and forced movement of low-income workers into the suburbs to make room for an expanded downtown core and to provide cheap labour for factories built on the outskirts of the city (Hackworth, 2007; Silver, 2011; Smith 1984). As a result of these processes, marginalized individuals tend to get pushed out of these areas into other marginalized areas. This causes even higher rates of concentrated poverty and economic polarization in the city.

Globalization and economic restructuring has also affected the availability of jobs in marginalized communities (Bourgois, 1995; Cheshire, 2007; Wilson, 1996). Due to global competition, relocation of factories and industrial jobs overseas and the growth of the knowledge and financial sectors, the demand and wages for those with higher skill levels is growing while the demand for low-skilled and less educated workers is decreasing, their wages are stagnating and they are facing increasingly high levels of unemployment (Bourgois, 1995; Cheshire, 2007). Moreover, as cities grow and central business districts expand, land rents increase and push industrial factories with large land requirements out of the inner city and into the suburbs causing a spatial mismatch between the educational and skill levels of many inner-city residents and the location of the suitable jobs for these residents (Bourgois, 1995; Wilson, 1996). The schools in the inner city have failed to teach the skills and cultural capital required to obtain jobs in the growing knowledge sector located in the high rise, rent maximizing developments that are predominantly located in central business districts (Bourgois, 1995; Wilson, 1996).
Bourgois (1995) explored this phenomenon when he wrote about the lack of legitimate employment opportunities for Puerto Ricans living in El Barrio in New York, which has led to a growth in the informal economy, including the illegal drug trade, within this area.

According to Wilson (1996), joblessness and poverty have contributed to the breakdown of traditional families in the inner city, leading to increased social disorganization. The lack of legitimate jobs makes participation in the informal economy, such as the illegal drug trade, a rational option for those excluded from the formal job market (Bourgois, 1996). Davis (1992) suggests that media representations sensationalize crime, drug use and the “original gangster” culture of the inner city which has led to “law-and-order policing” and an institutionalized segregation of residents.

Fear of the inner city exacerbates the marginalization of ghetto residents through “white flight” and the creation of structural and systemic “walls” that contain the inner city (i.e. curfews for inner-city residents) and the “war on drugs” and “zero-tolerance policing” which sanction over-policing of the underclass and racial minorities (Davis, 1992). The building of gated communities is a physical manifestation of the relationship between racism, class antagonism and fear of “the other” (Caldeira, 1996). This exemplifies a high degree of symbolic and objective segregation along the lines of racial, cultural, economic and social differences within the city.

Jane Jacobs (1992) suggested that designing dense, socially-diverse, walkable, mixed-use communities (i.e. with apartments for people with a variety of incomes located above street-level restaurants and grocers) is the key to politically empowering residents of inner-city communities. She suggested that doing so would provide positive role models for troubled children and create safe communities by increasing the likelihood
that illicit or unwanted activities and circumstances would be detected and “policing” by other residents. This paternalistic theory has been rather well received by urban planners and policy makers but the danger of Jacobs’ proposed solution is that the needs of marginalized residents in mixed-use and socially-mixed neighbourhoods may be diminished or ignored (Cheshire, 2007; Keene & Padilla, 2010; Silver, 2011). Even Jacobs (1992) warned that the needs of less powerful residents may not be met when changes are forced and/or happen too quickly.

Wilson argues that the best way to address the growing disparity caused by unemployment in the inner city is to develop universal social programs (job creation, education, healthcare, daycare, living wages, and earned tax credits) that would benefit everyone while disproportionately benefitting inner-city residents. Bourgois (1995) suggests that unemployment, poverty, chauvinism and violent crime experienced in the inner city can be reduced by: a) legalizing drugs and thereby making participation in the drug trade less profitable, b) by making entry into the legitimate labour market easier and more attractive by improving the health and educational systems, c) by not clawing back welfare payments and other social benefits until workers have achieved a decent income and by d) eliminating racism and social exclusion through a shift in human values. This last suggestion may be the most crucial, as it is overly optimistic to expect that universal social programs could gain wide acceptance under current economic and political landscapes of neoliberalism and conservatism, where most people blame individuals for their problems and deny social responsibility. An ideological shift in beliefs and values is needed at the societal level in order to make lasting structural changes.
In today’s discourse of individual responsibility, the structural conditions that lead to concentrated poverty and deplorable conditions in the inner city are typically ignored and the residents of these places are pathologised instead. Ethnographic research provides evidence that racialized minorities, the unemployed, uneducated, poor, under housed or homeless are frequently blamed and punished for their lack of foresight and inability to prevent and overcome their misfortunes (presumed to be the consequences of their actions) (Bourgois, 1995; Bourgois, 2009; Wacquant, 2008). Banfield (1970) exemplifies this demonization of the poor when he posits that urban decay, disorder and crime occur in the inner city because members of the “underclass” residing there are “present-oriented” and thus impulsive, irresponsible and immoral. Through the discourse of individual responsibility, not only do those who succeed take personal credit for their prosperity and blame inner-city residents for their lack of success, but also many inner-city residents fail to recognize the structural constraints with which they are faced (Bourgois, 1995).

Through class divisions, uneven development, globalization, neoliberalism and the discourse of individual responsibility, structural constraints on the inner city are growing larger. A study by Chen, Myles and Picot (2011) found that despite substantial economic growth, Canada’s poorest neighbourhoods are being left behind and inequality between neighbourhoods is on the rise due to the reduction in economic transfers, changes in the labour market, the growing income gap, and the spatial segregation of low-income individuals.

Patterns and processes of spatialized segregation and class antagonism are deeply embedded in the city as well as the urban imaginary. Bourdieu (1995) uses the term doxa
to describe a social process, such as group differentiation, that becomes part of accepted reality, a part of life that is so pervasive that most people do not think about or challenge the process even if it is harmful to themselves or others. Drawing from Gramsci, Hall (2000) uses the term hegemony to describe the same social process as one where the dominant group uses its power over another group to create a society that is constructed according to their own values and beliefs that subsequently become widely accepted as natural and normal. Drawing from Foucault, Hall (2000) suggests that everyone, from the most powerful to the least, affects (albeit unequally) the circulation of power and ideas such as group differentiation by producing/reproducing or challenging discourses, knowledge, practices and institutions. This happens even on an individual or micro-level even though this process occurs as a result of inequities in knowledge and power.

It is unlikely that capitalism, globalization and neoliberalism will end any time soon given how normalized these hegemonic ideologies or doxas have become. Instead, an analytical framework is needed to better identify and understand classed, ethnic, and racialized antagonisms and processes of segregation that are embedded through social processes in the city. Stigma theory could provide an analytical framework for a greater understanding of the role and effect of these processes as related to negative perceptions regarding areas that are marginalized.

2.2 Conceptualizing Stigma

Given that stigmatization is a process that derives from and exacerbates differences between and among individuals and groups through the exercise of power in conflict with other individuals and groups, the phenomenon of stigmatization is of relevance to those who approach social justice and urban theory from both a social
constructionist and conflict perspective. The study of stigma has traditionally been categorized as a symbolic interactionist or social constructivist perspective. Symbolic interactionism is an individual or micro-level theory of society that focuses on the relationship between human behaviour and the subjective meanings or definitions that individuals attach to objects or behaviours (symbols and signs) (Hurlbert, 2011; Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). In symbolic interactionism, meanings and definitions are constructed and reconstructed through interpersonal experiences and interaction with external environments. Which attributes are considered important enough to identify and what meanings are attached to them is determined through these social interactions. Signifiers, signs or symbols that represent significant attributes and convey particular meanings (through language as well as images) may be produced through politics and discourse and are thus created in a cultural context (Hall, 2000a; Hall, 2000b). Stigmas constructed in this manner as attributes become signifiers or signs that convey stereotypes. Social construction is a lifelong dynamic process of socialization wherein dominant representations, cultural understandings, ideologies and beliefs can be changed through experiences and interactions that challenge dominant meanings and definitions (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003).

In 1963, sociologist and symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman (1963) argued that groups and individuals with certain socially salient attributes (such as a dark skin colour or low-income) become categorized and stereotyped through their categorical associations as deviant or problematic by the dominant normative group. Goffman (1963) referred to the relationship between these signifying attributes and the socially-constructed negative stereotypes signified by them as a “stigma;” that which bears a
stigma is widely seen within a given society as less than whole, socially tainted and discredited. Goffman (1963) theorized that there are three categories of stigmas—physical (deformities), internal (character blemishes or pathologies), and tribal (membership in certain racial or cultural groups). Ascribed or “existential” stigmas are obtained through a condition over which an individual has little or no control whereas an achieved stigma is obtained through the perceived or actual actions of the stigmatised (Falk, 2001). A courtesy stigma is achieved through an association with that which is stigmatised (Goffman, 1963). Normative group members attempt to exert social control through overt and subtle signalling of what is and isn’t socially acceptable and stigmatise individuals who fail to “pass” according to their norms, thus it is the perceptions and valuations of the dominant group that make a particular attribute into a stigma rather than any innate quality of the attribute or the stigmatised (Goffman, 1963). Social control of stigmatized individuals may also be enacted by fellow members of minority groups when they adopt naturalized values and perceptions of the dominant group (Goffman, 1963). When members of stigmatised groups or those with stigmatised attributes internalize the norms of the dominant group and subsequently negatively judge themselves and other group members using the same standards they are said to be “self-stigmatising” (Goffman, 1963).

Ignoring the negative effects of stigma resulting from social exclusion and shaming, Gerhard Falk (2001) purports that stigmatization is a natural and beneficial process. He suggests that stigmas serve the necessary purpose of identifying and sorting those who do not belong from those who do belong, reinforcing group norms thereby creating social solidarity and group cohesion. Another perspective purports that
excluding and shunning stigmatised others is a natural response used to effectively defend against physical or psychological harm and “the existential and moral experience that one is being threatened” (Morone, 1997, p. 998). Of course, when viewed from these perspectives, it is important to note that stigmatization is only beneficial to the stigmatizers as they become the dominant “normalized” group and those who are stigmatized become marginalized through the process of stigmatization.

When differences are defined as stigmas rather than celebrated, they become a tool used by the normative group to define themselves as superior and others as inferior resulting in an oppressive system of social stratification. As stated by Iris Marion Young, “in the dynamic of racism and ethnic chauvinism in the U.S. today, the positive identification of some groups is often achieved by first defining some groups as the Other, the devalued semi-human” (Young, 1986, p. 13). Rather than devaluing some people as “others,” she proposes a “politics of difference” that recognizes the value and ubiquity of uniqueness as an ideological and institutional means of “giving political representation to group interests and celebrating the distinctive cultures and characteristics of different groups” through “openness to unassimilated otherness” (Young, 1986, p. 22). Through this proposed ideology, Young (1986) envisions a city without oppression where difference is recognized, affirmed and celebrated by all residents—both differences among people and differences among places within the city.

In *The Social and the Genesis of Groups*, Bourdieu (1985) theorizes that the authority to name and categorize others and thereby generate group differentiation is possessed only by those with a high level of symbolic capital achieved through reputations of esteem associated with high levels of economic, social or cultural capital.
Those who possess this authority lower the symbolic capital of others by perpetuating negative stereotypes regarding categories other than their own. By doing so, they create a relatively larger difference between the symbolic power ascribed to those with the authority to exercise symbolic violence compared to those categories that are denigrated by this process (Bourdieu, 1985). Bourdieu (1985) suggests that this higher level of symbolic capital can then be leveraged to obtain additional symbolic, social, cultural and/or economic capital so that those with the ability to do so have a self-serving incentive to engage in a perpetual cycle of symbolic violence. This results in a continuously growing divide between those with and those without the various forms of capital that is related to processes of social exclusion, such as that described by Gough et al. (2006) in their examination of the relationship between capitalism and social exclusion. Although he refers to this process as the exercise of symbolic violence, Bourdieu’s description of this process that exacerbates differences in power and capital is similar to the process described in stigma theory as stigmatization. In essence, unequal distributions of capital and a desire to obtain higher levels of capital (in all its forms) is arguably an incentive to stigmatize others but it is necessary to have power and authority or influence over others in order to do so.

Adding to the analysis of power in stigma theory is Link and Phelan’s (2001) work that argues for a conceptualization of stigma focused on the social processes that allow “one group’s views to dominate so as to produce real and important consequences for the other group” (p. 367). In this framework, stigma exists when “elements of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows the components of stigma to unfold” (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 367).
In other words, stigmatization only occurs when a group has the “social, economic, and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories, and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination” (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 367). This is not to say that the stigmatised are unable to exert any agency to defend themselves against stigma—some stigmatised groups exhibit very high levels of self-esteem and resilience despite being the subject of prejudice and discrimination (Howarth, 2006; Crocker, 1999). With the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, many racialized groups organized politically to challenge stereotypes and fight discrimination through public protests, educational initiatives and legal challenges (Miles, 1989). Nonetheless, stigmatizers use their power to put the object of their derision on the defensive so that the targets of discrimination must work harder to overcome the barriers with which they are faced. For instance, historical and contemporary racist discourse and symbolism, racist attitudes and institutionalized racism continue to result in systemic barriers that affect the socioeconomic wellbeing of those who continue to be racialized as “non-white” despite advances achieved during the civil rights movement (Kobayashi, Cameron & Baldwin, 2011). Thus, Link and Phelan (2001) purport that stigma research must produce interventions that either change the attitudes and beliefs of dominant groups or remove their power and ability to act on these attitudes and beliefs. One method of doing so is counterhegemonic discourse. The symbolic power exercised by “representing or presenting someone or something in a certain way” is possessed by everyone although some individuals have more power to do so than others (Hall, 2000a; Hall, 2000b).
2.3 Territorial Stigma

Although Irving Goffman (1963) noted that there are urban areas that form a territorial base for stigmatised individuals and groups, Loïc Wacquant (2008) may be the first urban sociologist to purport that a “suffusive territorial stigma is firmly affixed to the residents of such zones of socioeconomic and symbolic exile that adds its own burden to the disrepute of poverty and the resurgent prejudice against ethnoracial minorities and immigrants” (p. 271). Wacquant (2008) purported that the reputation of such stigmatized areas as places to be feared and avoided is usually an inaccurate reflection of the actual conditions in such neighbourhoods. The result of this is that residents of the area are discriminated against because of where they live. To avoid this, residents might seek to distance themselves from the neighbourhood and other residents leading to a breakdown in community and a subsequent loss of political effectiveness in terms of advocating for solutions to the areas’ problems. Thus, Wacquant saw the problems of the inner city as being structural, ideological and political. Wacquant (1993) called for further research in order to better understand the existence and effects of territorial stigma.

Studies by Permentier, van Ham and Bolt (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011) have shown that perceptions that a place is stigmatised result in changes in residents’ behaviour even when there is a high level of neighbourhood satisfaction. The residents of stigmatised areas tend to migrate out of the neighbourhood, become politically mobilized in order to affect changes, or disassociate themselves from the area and their neighbours in order to avoid being stigmatized. Other studies have shown residents’ reactions to perceived neighbourhood stigma can lead to poor health outcomes as strong emotions trigger harmful psychoneuroendocrine mechanisms and unhealthy coping strategies such as
alcohol or drug use (Ellaway, Macintyre & Kearns, 2001; Klein, 2004; Kulberg et al., 2010; Kelaher et al., 2010). Thus, residents’ perceptions of outsiders’ attitudes and beliefs about an area, even without overt actions of discrimination by outsiders, can have profound social and economic consequences for an area and its residents.

Research regarding the effects of neighbourhood representations and reputation has contributed to a greater understanding of territorial stigma (Andersen, 2008; Permentier, 2009; Permentier et al., 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011). Hortulanus (1995, p. 42 translated in Permentier, 2009, p. 17) proposes that neighbourhood reputation “refers to the meaning and esteem that residents and other involved parties attribute to a neighbourhood. Reputation also refers to the relatively stable image a neighbourhood has among city residents and to its place in the urban neighbourhood hierarchy.” This hierarchy refers to the relationship between a neighbourhood’s positive or negative reputation and that of other neighbourhoods in the city. Reputations can be either positive or negative whereas a stigma indicates an attribute that society considers deplorable (Permentier, 2009). An area that has achieved or received a negative reputation is stigmatized by this reputation. Permentier suggests that the behaviour of residents of stigmatized neighbourhoods changes in one or more of the following ways: 1) they intend to exit the neighbourhood and will do so as soon as possible (Kleinhans, 2009; Permentier et al. 2007, 2009) or 2) as expressions of their anger and dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood and their stigmatizers, residents will become activists who voice their complaints about the neighbourhood and attempt to affect change or they engage in graffiti and other acts of vandalism. Thus, Permentier’s research suggests that negative
perceptions regarding a neighbourhood can lead to harmful behaviours if the area becomes stigmatized.

Territorial stigmatization can impact group and community relationships within marginalized areas. Some studies suggest that residents of stigmatized neighbourhoods will engage in territoriality, forming groups that engage in defence and conflict with groups from other neighbourhoods, which is seen to mitigate the destruction via stigmatization of a sense of belonging, security, esteem and self-actualization for group members (Kintrea et al., 2009). Other studies have shown that in stigmatized neighbourhoods, some residents will hide the fact that they are from the neighbourhood or disassociate themselves from their neighbours (Wacquant, 2008, 2010). Residents are susceptible to the same social processes that lead to stigmatization by outsiders and thus they may have negative perceptions and expectations of their neighbours (Bruhn, 2009; Kulberg et al., 2010). Goffman (1963) noted this phenomenon of in-group stigmatization and disassociation in other stigmatized groups.

Places may also be stigmatised when inhabited by residents that are perceived, by the dominant majority, to be “problematic.” In examining three stigmatised areas in Britain, Annette Hastings (2004) found that low-income housing is particularly stigmatised because the tenants are perceived as irresponsible, unclean, lazy, drug and alcohol abusers, unintelligent, unskilled, socially deviant, poor role models and unfit parents. It is important to note that this is not to suggest that racialized or low-income residents deserve to be pathologised as “problem populations” but that an area is stigmatised when its residents are perceived in this way. Hastings (2004) found that based on their perceptions of the area, outsiders avoided stigmatized areas and discriminated...
against residents (for example, by refusing to hire residents from certain areas). When outsiders avoid stigmatized areas, real estate prices drop in the area and businesses have trouble attracting customers. In another study, Hastings (2009) found that municipalities tend to disinvest in stigmatized areas, provide fewer services in these neighbourhoods and allow public areas such as sidewalks, streets and parks to fall into disrepair.

When an area suffers from disinvestment by local residents, businesses and governments and the condition of ageing inner-city properties and amenities worsen, neighbourhood reputation declines, stigma grows, stable residents migrate out, residents with few resources move in, social disorder ensues, vandalism and increased crime follow and the cycle continues (Power, 1996; Lupton, 2003). This results in a downward spiral of neighbourhood decline. This process is similar to that proposed by Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) “broken windows” theory which purports that crime rates increase as a result of social and physical disorder (such as littering, loitering, graffiti, broken down housing and public drunkenness). This leads to increased levels of fear among residents that subsequently cause neighbourhood inefficacy and an inability to exert the level of social control required to deter more serious crimes. This academically disputed theory has been widely accepted by the general public and policy planners and has led to a police crackdown on minor crimes in many cities such as New York which implemented “zero-tolerance policing” in the 1990s (Harcourt, 2001). Harcourt showed that this crackdown on disorder did little to affect crime rates and instead hurt members of marginalized groups in areas of the city that were targeted by police during this initiative.

Theories regarding neighbourhood decline as a result of physical and social disorder pathologise residents as the cause of disorder and increased crime, without taking into
consideration the biased perceptions of external agents and other processes that impact social and economic conditions at the neighbourhood level.

The perception of disorder is highly subjective. Sampson and Raudenbush (2004) found that evaluators perceived more disorder than could be objectively measured in neighbourhoods with high poverty rates and racial and ethnic concentrations. This bias occurred because observers expected to see disorder due to implicitly or explicitly held ethnic, racial and class stereotypes (Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004). Thus, prejudice can influence perceptions of physical and social disorder that are said to cause territorial stigma.

In proposing his fifteen mechanisms of neighbourhood effects, George Galster (2010) defines stigma as an institutional mechanism whereby key agents, usually outsiders, control important institutional resources located in the neighbourhood and/or control access between the neighbourhood and markets. Key agents are those with authority such as police officers, politicians, and housing authorities who can exacerbate the deprivation of residents and poor neighbourhood conditions through acts of discrimination based on territorial stigma (Hastings, 2004). Stigmatization may also result in fewer amenities and services in these neighbourhoods if those allocating resources feel that equitable distributions are inappropriate (Hastings, 2009). Redlining or postal code discrimination can make it difficult if not impossible for residents to acquire bank loans, mortgages or employment (The Gazette, Sep. 2008; The Vancouver Province, Jan. 2008). Policing practices may be tailored to officers’ perceptions of the community (through practices of police discretion, over policing or engaging in police brutality), politicians may advocate differently depending on their evaluation of residents
as potential voters and tax contributors, and housing authorities may provide fewer or greater resources and engage in different screening processes depending on their perceptions of the area and residents (Hastings, 2004). Thus, changes in the attitudes and perceptions of external actors towards a stigmatised place can have profound social and economic consequences.

How, then, should stigma be addressed? Some policy planners suggest that territorial stigma can be addressed through the implementation of area-based social programs targeting employment, crime, education, skills, health, and housing to reverse neighbourhood decline and stigma (van Gent, 2009; Lupton, 2003). For example, in 2001 England’s New Labour government made a commitment through the National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy that within 10 to 20 years no citizen would be seriously disadvantaged by where they live (Lupton, 2003). Australia implemented similar programs on a more regional scale (Warr, 2009). Critics of these programs caution that local residents need sufficient training in order to be effective and fully involved in the process and that renewal professionals fail to facilitate community involvement adequately, tending to see their role more as information providers and resource securers (Wood, 2002). One may also wonder to what extent community members are able to take ownership of the renewal process when the government holds the purse strings (Lupton, 2003; Silver, 2011).

A frequently proposed solution to neighbourhood stigma is the development of mixed-income housing or social mixing. Social mixing is engineered in areas of concentrated poverty and ethnic or racial segregation by tearing down existing social housing and developing new social housing that includes units for higher income
residents (i.e. HOPE VI in the U.S.) or by providing subsidies or vouchers which enable low-income earners to purchase or rent housing in more expensive areas of the city (i.e. “Moving To Opportunity” in the U.S.) (Cheshire, 2007; Galster, 2010; Keene & Padilla, 2010; Musterd & Andersson, 2005; van Gent, 2009). In Canada, mixed income rental units are being added to the large, stigmatized social housing complex of Regent Park in Toronto (Silver, 2011). In Regina, the municipal government is marketing the relocation and replacement of Mosaic Stadium, currently located in North Central, as an opportunity to create a mixed-use and diverse residential area in its place that will revitalize the inner city (City of Regina, 2011). Supporters of social mixing hypothesise that by increasing economic diversity, territorial stigma becomes eliminated but this has proven overly idealistic. Keene and Padilla (2010) found that the stigma associated with living in a marginalized neighbourhood moves with residents as that history remains part of their identity even when others are unaware of where they were from. Also, studies have shown that when there is an income gap or class division in neighbourhoods, residents usually do not network across the class divide (Galster, 2010). Moreover, as higher-income residents move into a neighbourhood, their interests can overshadow those of the disadvantaged residents (Crump, 2002; Duke, 2009; Silver, 2011). Low-income residents become displaced or homeless, especially as new developments typically contain fewer units of low-income housing (Crump, 2002; Duke, 2009; Lupton, 2003; Silver, 2011). Since social mixing treats the symptom of stratification and not the cause, chances are that in time these areas will once again become segregated spaces (Crump, 2002). Since this is the case, either territorial stigma needs to be addressed proactively or in a way that does not displace residents.
Proactive planning does show promise in terms of mitigating the onslaught of territorial stigma. A study in Australia by Baum et al. (2011) noted that, 20 years after it was built, the health and social capital of residents of the community of Onkaparinga was higher than expected given their socioeconomic status. This was attributed to the neighbourhood design process using urban planning and social planning that integrated physical and social elements, contained community influenced health models, and engaged in participatory and collaborative decision-making and leadership. This strategy echoes Jane Jacobs (1992) call for urban planning as the solution to revitalization but in the case of Onkaparinga, the neighbourhood was low-income, but was never associated with depravity, thus the community did not gain a “bad reputation” and seemingly avoided being stigmatized, although the paper did not discuss stigma specifically. The drawback of the proactive planning approach is that it does not provide a solution for areas that are already experiencing stigma.

External representations of stigmatised neighbourhoods are frequently “distorted versions of the lived reality of these locations” expressed and formed by people with limited or no direct contact with the community (Gourlay, 2007). A lack of connection and ignorance fuels stereotypes, fear and discrimination (Allport, 1958). In studying non-residents' perceptions of stigmatised neighbourhoods, Gourlay (2007) found that the reliability of their perceptions was clearly dependent on the level of their direct experience with the neighbourhood.

One institution that helps construct and perpetuate public perceptions is the media. The following three studies (McLaren et al., 2005; Wassenberg, 2004; Devereux, Haynes & Power, 2011) have used different methodologies to examine the role of the
media with regards to territorial stigmatization in marginalized communities. In the first study, McLaren et al. (2005) developed a method to quantify and rank neighbourhood reputations through content analysis of a constructed week sample (CWS). The study found that articles about neighbourhoods with poor socioeconomic conditions were mostly negative whereas neighbourhoods with good socioeconomic reputations rarely made the news. Another study conducted in Toronto examined local newspaper articles written about 13 neighbourhoods that were classified as high priority areas due to their rising poverty levels, high social needs and inadequate social services and infrastructure. This research found that the majority of articles about these areas were about crime and neighbourhood decline whereas the downtown news coverage focused on sports and entertainment despite the fact that crime rates were much higher downtown than in the other high priority areas (Wassenberg, 2004). The last study presented here is an analysis of media representations of an Irish housing estate conducted in 2011 which found that over 70 percent of the articles written about the area were focussed on crime followed by regeneration at 10 percent (Devereux, Haynes & Power, 2011). Moreover, even potentially positive articles about this housing estate included stigmatising language such as “troubled city suburb” (Devereux, et al., 2011).

When the media uses problematizing discourses and representations, it influences the degree to which territories within the city are stigmatised by making discrediting information widely available (Damer, 1992; Cole & Smith 1996 in Hastings, 2004; Lindgren, 2009; McLaren, Perry, Carruthers & Hawe, 2005; Wassenberg, 2004). Journalists may do this because they believe that their reports are accurate reflections even if they homogenize the area and its residents but they may also tend to
sensationalize the amount of crime and decline in areas with poor socioeconomic conditions (Devereux et al., 2011) as these stories are highly marketable (Lindgren, 2009; Wassenberg, 2004; Devereux et al., 2011).

Hastings (2004) found that “having detailed knowledge” of a neighbourhood tended to reduce the likelihood that people associated stigma with residents’ characteristics. Research highlights the benefits that accrue when the cycle between ignorance and stigma is broken (Atkinson & Jacobs, 2008). Dean and Hastings (2000) suggest that progress in deterring neighbourhood stigma is made when communication and public relations strategies target the perceptions of influential external agents such as journalists, politicians, realtors and employers who have the power to affect the level of territorial stigma by responding to, shaping and/or challenging an area’s image.

2.4 Summary

Inequality between neighbourhoods is growing and the conditions in stigmatised territories within the city are worsening. Research suggests that to improve the conditions of the most marginalized communities it is not enough to forcibly integrate diverse populations, alter or repair the physical environment and/or focus on increasing the income of residents. This is not to say that these measures are not necessary but doing them alone without changing negative perceptions will not eliminate territorial stigma. Thus, to achieve greater equity throughout the city, a holistic approach is needed that improves objective conditions in marginalized places and also addresses negative public perceptions, stereotypes and reputations of these places in order to effect sustained improvement. To do this, however, will require a greater understanding of the connection between negative representations and stigma in marginalized urban places; and how these
negative representations are reproduced and challenged. This will inform a better understanding of how to challenge and alter stigmatizing perceptions so that a more integrated and socially inclusive city may be achieved. Research suggests that it will only be possible to reverse or prevent the effects of territorial stigma and achieve a city where all residents share in the benefits of economic growth and prosperity when the mechanisms and effects of stigmatization are fully understood.

2.5 Research Question

Given a history of negative representations of North Central in the media and the detrimental effects of territorial stigma, this research will answer the question: how do residents and non-residents reproduce and resist dominant representations of North Central?
CHAPTER THREE

Methods

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Territorial stigma is conceptualized as the concurrent processes of labelling, stereotyping, distancing, status loss and discrimination of a bounded contiguous geographical area within a power situation that allows these processes to unfold (adapted from Link & Phelan, 2001). Using this conceptualization, this research utilizes a theoretical framework appropriate for analyzing mechanisms that influence the social construction of stigma and the social structures that constrain or exacerbate differences in power that make stigmatization possible. Bourdieu (1995) suggested that an analytical framework can be developed for analyzing wider constraints on structures and ideology while acknowledging that structures are socially produced and that individual agency may be utilized to impact structures and ideologies. Bourdieu referred to this as structural constructivism or constructive structuralism because it combines elements of structural analysis and theories of social construction such as symbolic interactionism (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This framework was utilized within this research as a means of analyzing how the ability to reinforce or challenge socially constructed dominant representations of North Central is constrained or enabled by social structures such as status.

This research weaves together aspects of structural and constructivist analysis in order to answer the research question and explore the phenomenon of territorial stigmatization in the marginalized community of North Central. This qualitative research
produces an inductive analysis to understand how participants perceive, communicate and react to theirs’ and others’ understandings and portrayals of conditions in this stigmatized community.

To answer the research question, interview responses were analyzed using both open coding with NVivo software and Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network analysis. The latter is a five-step qualitative analytical method wherein coded text (nodes) are grouped according to basic themes, then sorted into organizing themes, and then grouped into global themes. The five steps are:

1) Code material
2) Identify themes
3) Construct thematic networks
4) Describe and explore thematic networks
5) Interpret patterns

This method is intended to be both a flexible and rigorous method of data analysis.

3.2 Interviews with Residents and Non-Residents

3.2.1 Interview Population and Sampling

Participants were selected using the non-random sequential sampling technique. With this technique, as many relevant cases as possible are examined until the researcher runs out of cases, time or money (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 140). This method allowed for flexibility in terms of total sample size so that a greater or lesser number of interviews could be conducted within the time frame depending on the number of volunteers that responded.

The target was to complete 12 interviews while maintaining a ratio of one resident
for every two non-residents. At least four residents of North Central and eight non-residents were to be interviewed. This goal was exceeded as fifteen interviews were conducted. Five residents and ten non-residents were interviewed between October 1st and November 30th, 2012. A greater number of non-residents were interviewed since previous studies assessing North Central focused only on residents’ and community leaders’ perceptions (personal communication with Rob Deglau, Executive Director, North Central Community Association, March 2012) plus it was plausible each group would reproduce and resist dominant representations of North Central differently.

After receiving Research Ethics Board approval in September 2012, participants were recruited via posters put up around the University and throughout the city at community organizations, public bulletin boards and coffee shops. Volunteers were asked to participate in a one-hour interview regarding perceptions of various neighbourhoods in Regina. Residents and non-residents of North Central responded to the poster by e-mail. If a prospective participant was under 18 or lived outside of Regina, they would have been advised that they did not qualify to participate in this study. No one had to be turned away for either of these reasons.

3.2.2 Interview Consent and Withdrawal Process

A consent form, including information regarding confidentiality, was e-mailed to all potential participants when they volunteered. Prior to the interview, potential participants were provided with a written copy of this form. Both the participant and I reviewed and signed the form at the interview before the interview began. Participants were allowed to terminate the interview or withdraw up to November 30, 2012 at which time all notes and recordings related to their participation in the research would have
been destroyed. Withdrawal was not allowed after data collection ended, as it would have impeded the analysis and presentation of research results. No one withdrew consent.

3.2.3 Reciprocity

Participants were offered a non-alcoholic beverage and a $5 gift card from a local coffee shop to show that their time and input was appreciated while not unduly influencing, coercing or inducing their participation in the research. Participants were asked to provide a mail or e-mail address (on the consent form) if they wanted an executive summary of the project results. If neither of these options was feasible, they were advised that an executive summary would be available after August 2013 at the North Central Community Association at 1264 Athol St., Regina.

3.2.4 Risk Management and Data Security

There were no expected risks to participants other than the possibility of anxiety or stress while recalling experiences or situations that distressed themselves or others. To minimize this risk, participants were advised that they could refuse to answer any or all questions and that they could take a break or discontinue at any time. None of the participants made a request of this type. In addition, participants were assured that every possible effort to maintain confidentiality would be followed. Contact information for me, my supervisor, the Research Ethics Board and the crisis line/mobile crisis were provided on the consent form in case participants had questions or concerns.

To ensure confidentiality, the digitally recorded interviews and written notes were labelled as Interview A, B, C and so on and corresponding pseudonyms were used for analysis and writing. All responses were kept in a locked briefcase or cabinet when not in use and were viewed in a private location while being analyzed. Consent forms were kept
separate from the data. Any digital or computer files containing participants’ personal information such as e-mail addresses have been password protected. All research papers and consent forms are kept in a locked cabinet for five years in a secure location and may only be viewed by myself and my academic supervisor. After five years the paper copies will be shredded and the electronic files will be permanently deleted.

3.2.5 Interviews

Interviews were digitally recorded using a handheld device. I also made written notes of personal observations during the interview. These notes and participants’ answers to semi-structured questions were transcribed verbatim into qualitative research software (NVivo) in order to discern thematic response patterns (Neuman & Robson, 2009) using Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network analysis. Interview lengths ranged from approximately 45 minutes to 2 hours. This translated into approximately 17.5 hours of recorded interviews resulting in a total of 396 pages of transcription.

Participants were asked questions contained in a semi-structured interview guide (see appendix B). This gave participants a variety of opportunities to share or challenge dominant representations of North Central and to discuss how North Central is and has been represented by others including the media. The semi-structured interview design allowed me to pursue new themes, ask questions for clarification, confirm what interviewees were saying by summarizing and repeating what was heard, reflect on statements and confirm initial analysis during the interviews while keeping the interview focused on the research topic (Kvale, 1996). I also strived to be self-reflective and aware of personal biases in terms of what was asked as well as reactions, responses and interpretations informed by personal experiences, worldviews and previous knowledge.
about the subject that might influence the participants’ responses (Kvale, 1996).

During the interview, participants were asked to self-report their length of residency in Regina, what neighbourhood they lived in, what areas of Regina they frequented the most, and what areas of Regina they felt the most and least comfortable in (conducted through a mapping exercise). Participants were asked to describe their familiarity with North Central (i.e. never heard of it, know it through reputation, visiting, volunteering, working or living there and approximate amount of time spent there). Those who had heard of North Central were asked to describe the area in their own words and to compare North Central with other areas of the city. The social construction of dominant representations of North Central was investigated by asking participants what, if anything, they had heard about North Central in the media and what, if anything, they had heard about North Central from friends, family and others. Participants were then asked to self-report whether they believed that their perceptions of North Central had been influenced by these sources of information. Finally, participants were asked what, in their opinion, had influenced their view of North Central the most.

To collect general demographic information, participants were also asked to provide their year of birth, education level, income class, ethnic background and sex or gender. This last choice was given since some people may resent being limited to a male/female binary while some participants might prefer not to identify their gender or be unfamiliar with the term. The participants’ demographics were collected in order to provide some context for participants’ responses. Also, an area for further research might be an analysis of participants’ responses based on age, gender, level of education, income or ethnicity.
3.2.6 Mapping Exercise

The city-defined boundaries of North Central are not necessarily the same as participants’ perceived boundaries of the area. Racial or ethnic concentration, physical barriers (i.e. train tracks or bodies of water) and economic characteristics all play a part in determining how neighbourhoods are mentally mapped and socially constructed (Suttles, 1972). Defining, labelling and categorizing neighbourhoods “simplifies innumerable daily decisions dealing with spatial activities” including whether one avoids an area (Milgram, 1972, p. 494). Thus, knowing what area is generally defined by the public as North Central should provide a better idea of what areas are affected the most by North Central’s reputation as well as what area the participants refer to as North Central. This mapping exercise was also done in order to determine whether participants had formed perceptions of North Central without knowing where North Central is located. It was anticipated that such a finding would indicate that North Central is as much a “concept” as it is an objective location.

Participants were asked to outline or circle North Central on a map of the city. Community names and boundaries were not marked on this map but major streets and landmarks were included. Participants were instructed to either outline specific boundaries or draw a circle or other shape to indicate the general size and location of the area to the best of their ability. Analyzing and layering the perceived boundaries from all participants allowed for the production of a perceptual map of the area socially constructed as North Central. This layering technique is similar to the method used to create a “crowdsourced map of neighbourhood boundaries” within Boston (Woodruff, Jul. 2012) where a website was created with an interactive map on which visitors could
indicate the boundaries of Boston neighbourhoods that they were familiar with. I then used mapping software to layer these boundaries and indicate the degree of consensus for each area through gradient shading. To do this, the boundaries indicated by each participant were drawn one at a time onto a single copy of the customized map of Regina. As each new boundary was added, areas of consensus were created or consensus increased in existing area (think of overlapping areas in a Venn diagram). Each time the amount of consensus in an area increased the area was given an additional score of one. For instance, the overlapping area between two participants’ responses would receive a score of two. If a third of participants’ response overlapped all or part of an area scored as two, that area would now receive a score of three. Using Paint software, each section was drawn on a digital scan of the customized map of Regina and shaded at a factor of five percent grey shading for each degree of consensus. Areas perceived by only one participant to be part of North Central were filled with five percent grey shading and areas perceived by twelve participants to be part of North Central were filled with sixty percent grey shading.

3.2.7 Thematic Network Analysis

It is a researcher’s job to identify, analyze and interpret the meaning and significance of each code and the themes that they find within the data. As such, the participants’ responses and my notes were transcribed and analyzed between December 2012 and July 2013. To answer the research question, I used the Attride-Stirling’s (2001) five-step thematic network analysis. The initial step of coding nodes and preliminary analysis was used to look for basic codes and themes within the data. All significant words and phrases were coded and grouped as nodes within NVivo 10 (qualitative
research software). Over 500 nodes were produced using this method. Memo writing as well as graphs and models of the data constructed using NVivo were utilized to explore and analyze the various nodes that were identified from this preliminary analysis of the data.

This process was used to analyse participants’ perceptions about a) North Central in the news, b) their own descriptions of North Central, c) what they would say to others about the area and d) what others have said to them about North Central. Each node was then analyzed and grouped to construct basic themes.

Following this stage of analysis, I moved to step two of Attride-Stirling’s (2001) thematic network analysis in which basic themes are sorted into organizing, and then global themes. I worked with sticky notes as labels for various basic themes constructed from the data that I grouped and regrouped until I was able to identify a concise thematic network. Using the research question as a guideline, the basic themes were organized under the topics of North Central as a location and a concept, representations of North Central in the media and interpersonal representations of North Central. The resulting table of themes (Table 4.1 in Chapter 4) was then used to construct a thematic network (Illustration 4.1 in Chapter 4) consistent with step three of Attride-Stirling’s (2001) method. Step four and five—describe and explore the thematic network and interpret patterns—are discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents a summary of findings and suggestions for further research.

3.3 Study Limitations

Limitations of this study include the probability of social desirability bias in participants’ answers given the sensitive nature of the subject of stigmatization. The
promise of confidentiality and the intimacy of one-on-one interviews are intended to mitigate social desirability bias by encouraging honesty from participants although such a bias cannot be eliminated entirely. Advertising through posters in Regina for volunteers willing to discuss perceptions of neighbourhoods may have resulted in less polarization between non-residents and residents than was expected. There were no requests to participate from residents in the north, east and west ends of Regina which contain the city’s highest income and most ethnically and racially homogenous neighbourhoods. It is also possible that asking volunteers to respond by e-mail discouraged people with limited computer access. There are a high number of students among the participants. Two of the non-resident participants who volunteered had an additional incentive as they were taking a course at the University and received extra credit for participating in a research project. This extra incentive and the potential for students to participate in research as it relates to their own interests might explain the higher proportion of students.

3.4 Researcher Positionality

As a researcher, my subject position plays a role in this project. I grew up in a working-class family and have intermittently lived on social assistance as an adult. I am neither Aboriginal nor a member of a visible minority. I first heard about the negative reputation of Regina’s north end when I attended the University of Regina for a year in 1989. I moved to Regina in 2001 and recall being told about North Central’s negative reputation by a co-worker shortly after I moved to the city. I currently reside in the city’s North East Community, two blocks from the railroad tracks. Some subsections of my neighbourhood share many attributes of North Central but the area is not as stigmatized. In 2008 I returned to school to obtain a Bachelor of Human Justice at the University of
Regina and completed two work placements in inner-city neighbourhoods (Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry and the North Central Community Association). From 2009 to 2010, I sat on the Board of Directors of Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health, a student-driven health clinic located in North Central. I have been employed by the North Central Community Association as the coordinator of a human services database and sat on the North Central Community History Project Committee from 2010 to 2012. I focussed on completing my research project from May 2012 to the end of 2013 and was not active in the community during that time.
CHAPTER FOUR

Research Findings

This chapter analyzes participants’ responses, alongside examples from the 2007 *MacLean’s* article that named North Central “Canada’s worst neighbourhood” as well as other public sources that mention this article in order to answer the question: how do residents and non-residents reproduce and resist dominant representations of North Central? Three themes are presented that answer this question. The first section examines what North Central represents to participants in terms of both an abstract concept and an objective location since it is important to know what area participants are referring to when they discuss North Central. The second section examines dominant representations in the news media and how participants reproduce and resist messages in the news. The third section of the chapter examines how participants themselves engage in practices that reproduce and resist dominant representations of North Central.

Previous research about stigmatized areas suggests that non-residents primarily get their information from negative media stories which may contribute to non-residents viewing stigmatized communities more negatively than residents do (Damer, 1992; Cole & Smith 1996 in Hastings, 2004; Lindgren, 2009; McLaren, Perry, Carruthers & Hawe, 2005; Wassenberg, 2004). Previous studies about North Central’s reputation focused solely on residents’ and community program providers’ views (Badham, 2011; Parnes, 2003). As such, one of the goals of this research was to examine and compare the perceptions of residents and non-residents of North Central. However, following data collection and analysis, I realized that the relationship is not as polarized as I had originally anticipated. As such, I will not be engaged in comparisons between residents
and non-residents and will instead analyse responses from participants as an integrated group.

The sections reveal that the media was not the only source of information about North Central for most participants. There was a general consensus among participants that North Central is a troubled inner-city neighbourhood in Regina but the extent and type of troubles discussed varied considerably. All participants engaged in practices that reproduced and resisted the areas’ dominant representations. Even those who advocated for change or promoted positive aspects of North Central mentioned the neighbourhoods’ negative reputation and the issues faced by the area and its residents. Furthermore, attempts to improve the area’s negative reputation are frequently scorned. In short, it would appear that dominant representations are more easily reproduced than resisted making territorial stigmatization particularly resilient.

Two illustrative charts are presented that reflect the method of analysis discussed in Chapter Three. Table 4.1 shows how the three global themes were established through step two of Attride-Stirling’s (2001) method in which the basic themes were sorted into organizing and global themes. These themes were then used to construct the illustrated thematic network shown in Illustration 4.1.
Table 4.1 – Identification of Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Themes</th>
<th>Organizing Themes</th>
<th>Global Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with Area</td>
<td>Socially Constructed Location and Concept</td>
<td>Resilience of Territorial Stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Inclusion and Exclusion of What Does Not Fit with Concept</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained from News Sources</td>
<td>News Media Representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproducing the News Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resisting the News Media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ Perceptions</td>
<td>Interpersonal Representations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproducing Interpersonally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resisting Interpersonally</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Illustration 4.1 – Thematic Network
4.1 Socially Constructed Location and Concept

4.1.1 Familiarity with Area

Previous studies have suggested that it is very difficult to challenge perceptions of stigmatized communities since non-residents typically do not venture into these areas and residents are unlikely to associate with non-residents due to de facto segregation and isolation (Bourgois, 1995; Wilson, 1996). For this reason, non-residents would plausibly have negative views of the area informed by biased or outdated media reports even after significant improvements to the area have been made (Dean & Hastings, 2000; Hastings, 2003). Contrary to the literature on marginalized inner cities and stigmatized territories, participants’ responses suggested that residents who participated in this study are not particularly trapped in North Central; they feel free to move in and out of the area and chose to live there because it is affordable. Many of the non-residents who participated in this study have spent time in North Central and/or have associated with residents of North Central. Even those who are relatively unfamiliar with the area are influenced by sources of information other than the media.

Noah suggests that because Regina is a small city, many non-residents have a relatively high degree of familiarity with North Central compared to larger cities.

But the thing about Regina is...from North Central to where we are today is six kilometres...North Central is very visible just because we are a small, small city or a very large town, whichever way you want to look at it. (Noah)

Noah and Anne (a married couple who were each interviewed separately) indicated that they are middle-aged, university-educated members of the middle-class who both grew up in Regina. When asked to identify their ethnicity, Anne self-identified as Canadian and Noah as Métis. They previously lived in North Central and moved after
six years to what they perceive to be a much safer community in southern Regina. All participants except for one indicated that they shop, visit friends and go to restaurants or movie theatres outside North Central. Noah explained that residents have to venture outside of the community for shopping, employment and entertainment due to a lack of local services. Noah’s comments are supported by Lesley who shared:

We have to go pretty much anywhere but North Central because there's nothing there except for housing [laughing]. Like, we can't even buy our groceries there. (Lesley)

Lesley indicated that he is a young, middle-income university student who has lived in North Central for about five years. Lesley self-identified as being of mixed ethnicity although he is the only participant whom I presumed, based on his phenotypical characteristics, to be a visible minority of Aboriginal decent. This presumption served as evidence that I am also guilty of engaging in the practice of racialization despite being critical of this othering practice.

One resident, Bernice, indicated that she experienced a high degree of isolation living in North Central. Bernice indicated that she is an older, low-income, Métis woman with a grade three education who has lived in Regina most of her life. She has lived and worked in North Central for nine years. When asked where she spends most of her time she replied:

Here [at work in North Central], or in my house [in North Central]. That's about it. I don't go anywhere... I go to GT [Giant Tiger], that's about it...Not unless, I, I get a ride [and that happens] once in a blue moon (chuckles), not very often. (Bernice)

This isolation may be related to her living in poverty, working within the community, not having a vehicle and a self-admitted tendency to isolate herself socially no matter where she lives.
The high concentration of social agencies and low-income housing in North Central may attract a large number of low-income and marginalized residents, but it also attracts non-residents to the area. The majority of non-residents who participated in this study had either worked or volunteered in North Central. Although they sold their properties a few years ago, Evelyn and her family were landlords in North Central. Dillon, Justina and Ken’s work occasionally brings them to North Central and Heather has occasionally volunteered and attended events in North Central. Ken presented himself as an older, white, middle-income male who is an active resident of the Cathedral community and has lived there for a total of 22 years off and on. Ken indicated his perception improved after he spent time in the area and got to know the children through his work.

With my work I spend more time in North Central and I'm learning more about the neighbourhood...and I'm feeling less threatened going in there now because I got to know some of the people. (Ken)

Since there is movement of residents and non-residents in and out of North Central, opportunities exist for residents, non-residents and former residents to socialize with each other and build familiarity and solidarity. Non-residents’ impressions about North Central are partly informed by the personal experiences communicated to them by the North Central residents with whom they are acquainted. Some non-residents have friends or family who live or work in North Central.

Somebody I worked with lived there and they moved their house and sold only because they wanted a bigger house. It wasn't a case of the neighbourhood. (Ken)

I mean my Mom lives over there. I have a friend who lives over there...they've had troubles but you can get break-ins in every area of the city. (Justina)
Justina considers herself to be a white, middle-aged, university-educated, low-income resident of Cathedral who has lived in Regina for about 16 years.

The few participants who were not familiar with North Central (Carmen, Maggie and Omera) were relative newcomers. For the newcomers who were unfamiliar with the area, the label “North Central” had little or no fixed meaning attached to it. However, despite being unable to describe or talk about the area with confidence, these participants had either been in North Central or had heard information about the area from others. Carmen and Maggie, for example, had been told of an area in Regina inhabited mostly by First Nations people.

A friend told me that there are some areas where, I don't know, it's the government or some institution give houses for cheap price and she said that especially First Nations people live around that. (Carmen)

Does like um, like, North Central, like where, like, all the, I guess Natives live...my friends always tell me about it but I've never been over there at all...Well, my Dad always said to never go in certain parts of Regina. Um, there's one part or whatever that's just full of, full of all those people. They're not bad or anything, I don't judge people by their colour. (Maggie)

Carmen self-identified as a middle-income, exchange student who would be considered an indigenous South American. She is a graduate psychology student who has spent approximately two years living in the Cathedral neighbourhood of Regina. Maggie self-identified as a young, white, middle-income university student who moved from a farm outside of a small Saskatchewan city to the Whitmore Park neighbourhood in southern Regina two years ago. Omera indicated that she is a middle-income, Southeast Asian university student who moved to Regina from Toronto a year ago. She also lives in Whitmore Park. Since the newcomers who participated are still familiarizing themselves with Regina, it is likely that the impressions they are obtaining of the area along with a
mental map of the area’s location will, in time, become fixed to the signifier “North Central.”

Most participants had a considerable amount of first-hand experience within the neighbourhood. This is not in keeping with the presumption within the literature that non-residents do not spend time in stigmatized areas and therefore must rely on the media to inform their perceptions of such isolated areas. It is plausible that more participants would lack personal experience in North Central if residents in Regina’s highest income neighbourhoods had been interviewed. These areas are further away, there is a greater polarity in terms of neighbourhood conditions and the overall socioeconomic status of residents is high compared to North Central. For example, Dillon stated that North Central and Wascana View, a high-income neighbourhood in East Regina, are like two different cities. As such, residents from these high-income neighbourhoods might be less likely to spend time in the inner city or associate with those who do. However, familiarity does not guarantee that the label North Central will convey a meaning that is fixed or equivalent for all participants since individuals perceive and discuss North Central through different lenses and employ a variety of techniques to promote or challenge various characteristics associated with North Central.

4.1.2 Perceived Boundaries

In order to determine what area participants referred to as North Central, each participant was asked to show the researcher the area they thought of as North Central on a map of Regina. The map included only major streets and landmarks and not community names or boundaries. Participants could either outline specific boundaries or draw a
circle or other shape indicating the general size and location of North Central to the best of their ability.

Some participants had more difficulty with the mapping exercise than others. Carmen was completely unfamiliar with North Central and did not attempt to mark its location on the map. Omera and Maggie were familiar with the concept of North Central or “the hood” but not its location.

Does like um, like, North Central, like where, like, all the, I guess Natives live, or I'm not entirely sure...I'm thinking that's the east end but I'm not entirely sure. (Maggie)

Yeah, I think, there about...Um, it's mostly on the name, that it's North Central. And it's on the fact that I know where North is and I know where East is and I know where South is and I know where downtown is. (Omera)

For Bernice, the association between “the hood” and North Central was very fuzzy. She said that she has no concept of North Central but she can relate to “the hood” since that is where she lives. However, she says that when the media talks about crimes occurring in North Central, she knows they mean “the hood” but she thinks that North Central is a different area that extends further north. Both Bernice and Justina found the mapping exercise very frustrating. Despite trouble reading and using the map, each attempted to indicate North Central.

By analyzing and layering the perceived boundaries as indicated by each participant, a map was produced of the area socially constructed as North Central (see Illustration 4.2). This was done by: 1) drawing the boundaries indicated by each participant onto one map, and 2) gradient shading areas to represent the number of times participants’ perceived boundaries overlapped. The actual area, as defined by the North Central Community Association, is indicated with a red border. Although the defined
area is somewhat darker, some participants mistakenly identified areas beyond the defined borders as part of North Central. Many included only part of North Central in their responses. The name itself does provide some clue as to its location so this may explain why all participants drew or circled an area within the north side of central Regina.

Illustration 4.2 – The Area Socially Constructed as North Central

The darkest areas on the map are the areas considered part of North Central by most of the participants. Gail generally speaks favourably about North Central but has a very different perception of the area most commonly identified as North Central which lies within the broader community. Gail considers herself to be an older, white, middle-income, college-educated female. She first moved to North Central for eight years with her husband when she moved to Regina in the eighties.
I will say that the first neighbourhood, ten-block Retallack, is now considered a place that you don't want to live within the grand neighbourhood of North Central. I kind of identified it as, you know, the closer you are to Albert Street or the little hub around Elphinstone Street is, I mean they're kind of dangerous locals...high rental, a lot of drug activity, a lot of crime activity, a lot of arson...I still wouldn't live in that strip that I mentioned because, you know what, then my perception might be altogether different, because then I would be cocooned, I would not feel safe driving out to a meeting at night and coming back, uh, without a garage to safely get my vehicle in and safely get into the house. I would be on my guard all the time and I would feel very tense and I would be telling you different stories right now. (Gail)

Although there is great variation as to which contiguous areas participants identified as North Central, people generally did not perceive North Central as part of the higher income areas in the south, east or west ends of Regina. In this sense, North Central may be more easily identified by where and what it is not rather than where exactly it begins and ends.

4.1.3 Selective Inclusion and Exclusion of What Does Not Fit with Concept

Places or incidents that do or do not align with one's understanding of North Central may be omitted or included in a conceptual understanding of the area. For instance, Evelyn conceptually excluded the community high school even though it is located in the area she indicated as North Central on the map.

Albert Scott Collegiate is not right in this North Central area but they do try to put out programs too for that, for the kids. (Evelyn)

Evelyn told me that she is a retired, Asian, middle-income, university-educated woman who has lived and worked in Regina for 36 years and now lives in the Albert Park neighbourhood in southern Regina. Evelyn presumably believed that Albert Scott Collegiate is not part of North Central because it does not fit within her negative concept of the area.
Likewise, Dillon included an incident that happened outside of the area he circled as North Central as an example of a neighbourhood crime story. In fact, the story he referred to happened in the North East community in Regina, a few doors down from where the researcher lives. A child was left in a van and died while the parents were using drugs (The Leader Post, May 6, 2011).

_Umm, so, uh, can you tell me more about what kind of crime stories you hear about in North Central?_ (interviewer)
Um, like mostly petty thefts or robberies. Uh, what was that case, wasn't there, uh, like a baby left out in a van last year or something. (Dillon)

Dillon presented himself as a young, white, low-income university student who moved to Regina five years ago from a small town in Saskatchewan. He has lived in the North East community near North Central and he now lives in the Albert Park community in South Regina.

Dillon and Evelyn’s confusion about what is or is not located within the boundaries of North Central suggest that they have been conditioned to associate negative events or spaces with North Central and concurrently, not to correlate positive events or spaces with North Central. This conditioning is driven by what they have heard or read in the media and their own experiences and interactions with others. Evelyn and Dillon both indicated that the media stories they remember about North Central are generally crime related. Both Evelyn and Dillon had experience working in North Central and were therefore familiar with the area although each had formed different impressions. Evelyn’s experience as a landlord in North Central reinforced her bad impression of the neighbourhood. Dillon, on the other hand, emphasized that his experiences in North Central had led him to conclude that the area is not as bad as people believe and that bad things happen elsewhere in the city—although he still associates certain crimes with
North Central. When these participants selectively include or exclude locations and events that do or do not fit with their image of North Central, they effectively reinforce their negative perceptions of the area. This is ironic considering that the evidence these participants cited could have been used instead to resist the notion that only bad things happen in North Central and/or that bad things only happen in North Central if they had associated these events or organizations with the appropriate locations.

In highly stigmatized places, the media is typically the dominant means by which non-residents receive information that informs their perceptions of the area since these communities are usually highly segregated and isolated (Dean & Hastings, 2000). However, according to participants’ views or responses, most of them have either spent time in North Central or know friends and family who live there. This may mitigate the extent to which participants can say for certain that the media influences their perceptions of North Central since the media is not their only source of information about the community. Nevertheless, most participants do feel that the news media has painted a particularly negative portrait of North Central.

4.2 News Media

The following section examines how participants engage with media and manage the messages they receive about North Central through news media about North Central.

4.2.1 Retained from News Sources

Participants were asked to self-report whether they follow the news and, if so, what newspaper or station. Asking this open-ended question elicited a wide variety of responses. Participants follow a number of local and national news sources from various mediums including television, newspaper, radio and online sources.
Most interviewees stated that they get their news from two or more media sources. Only three participants (Bernice, Maggie and Carmen) primarily receive their news from only one source. Omera and Carmen indicated that they do not follow any local news sources. Omera, Carmen and Maggie are also new to Regina and unfamiliar with North Central so they have very little information about the area from either the news or first-hand experience with the area. Dillon is also relatively new to Regina but did recall hearing about North Central in the news and talked at length about North Central. He is more familiar with the area through work and volunteering; he also has a friend who lives in North Central. Responses from the other participants were varied. Some participants stated that they couldn’t recall much about North Central in the news lately while others felt that North Central is always in the news.

I haven't really heard anything in the last while, like, I know at first it was really negative, with that article...but, like I haven't heard anything on CBC radio at all really about the neighbourhood in general. (Justina)

What they used to say about North Central and what they say about North Central today, is they're moving away, at least in my perception, they're moving away from making it sound like a negative place, unless something happens, they don't really emphasize "oh it's North Central neighbourhood, another murder there, oh my God!" They don't emphasize that like they used to, which I think is good. (Ken)

It's in the paper every day almost. (Evelyn)

When I turn on the radio or anything I hear North Central, North Central, North Central. (Bernice)

Efforts made by North Central advocates to improve North Central’s reputation by presenting positive messages in the media do not appear to be highly effective. Most participants recalled crime stories about North Central but a few recalled hearing about programs and initiatives like the community clean-up in North Central.
Most of the CBC Saskatchewan reports about crime tend to come from there. (Dillon)

They'll promote the seasonal garbage pick-up, um, you know they'll promote feeding programs...you know including the food bank and they'll talk about some high profile problems like prostitution. (Frank)

The few positive stories that participants remembered from the media were mostly about either local or city-initiated interventions. For instance, Frank stated that he does not hear much about North Central, “when they do talk about it, it's usually some community effort to improve matters.” Frank self-identified as a retired, middle-income, university-educated, white male who has lived in Regina for 50 years. He purchased a small but unique home within North Central twelve years ago. Frank is not pleased about the media trying to put a positive spin on North Central. He says that “the media should be less concerned about correcting supposed misconceptions and negative prejudices about North Central” because “the majority [of residents] know only too well what the problems of North Central are and they become contemptuous of those who try to sugar coat it.” As a resident, he is concerned that presenting North Central in a positive light will result in problems being ignored.

4.2.2 Reproducing Dominant Representations in News Media

Arguably, the most infamous media report on conditions in North Central is the 2007 MacLean’s article by Jonathon Gatehouse that named the area “Canada’s worst neighbourhood.” The article opens with a description of a drug house inspection and subsequent paragraphs discuss prostitution, parental neglect, addictions, poverty and other health and social problems such as the high rates of suicide, AIDS and other STDs along with Aboriginal gang-activity, violent crime and incarceration rates. The article closes with a lengthy description of the efforts made by local police to address high
crime-rates in which the local authorities appear ineffectual. Although the article focuses on crime and disorder, Gatehouse does not proclaim outright that there is a causal link between the two such as Wilson and Kelling’s “broken windows” theory (1982). Gatehouse merely provides descriptions and statistics that paint a picture of extreme depravity where severe disorder and high crime rates in North Central occur hand in hand. It is also plausible, however, that readers will infer a causal relationship between disorder and crime. Gatehouse uses facts and expert opinions to support his claims but most of his sources are not referenced. Many of the facts illustrate conditions for the entire inner city or downtown area, the city as a whole, the province or even the entire nation in order to illustrate the extent of the problem in a small, localized area. It is also unclear whether Gatehouse utilized soundbites from experts that supported the premise of the article while omitting statements that highlighted more positive aspects. As such, readers may form generalized perceptions of issues and their causes in North Central.

Many Regina residents felt that Gatehouse exaggerated and generalized the negative conditions and underplayed community values and volunteerism found in the neighbourhood (The Leader Post, Jan. 9, 2007). These critics did not deny the issues in the area but emphasized that things were improving and that an area should not be defined by its problems alone (McFadzean, Feb. 12, 2007; Polischuk, Jan. 9, 2007). Others disagreed with the critics and argued that Gatehouse accurately represented conditions and revealed a hidden problem that should be addressed rather than denied. They accused Fiacco, the former Regina Mayor, of trying to deny or ignore the need for increased efforts by minimizing the problem (Cote, Jan. 20, 2007; Green, Jan. 31, 2007).
Although the *MacLean’s* article had been written more than six years earlier, its impact was evident among the participants in this study. Seven out of the fifteen people who were interviewed brought up the *MacLean’s* article or the title "Canada's worst neighbourhood.” However, the majority of these seven had not read the article or had difficulty recalling what it said. For instance, Bernice could not remember which magazine had written a major article about North Central, but the fact that a major magazine had rated North Central as having the highest crime rate had made an impression upon her. Ken brought up the article as evidence that North Central is still written about negatively at times but he stated that he refused to read the article because he didn’t see a lot of value in what is written by those who are unfamiliar with the neighbourhood. Similarly, Justina believes the neighbourhood is stigmatized by articles like the one in *MacLean’s* but could not recall what was written in it.

Dillon mentioned the article while relating it to a story about his co-workers in North Central being the most “snake bitten” about negative perceptions of the area. One co-worker, who moved to Regina from Toronto, is from a wealthy family that disapproves of his working in North Central. Dillon stated his own family, from rural Saskatchewan, is not very familiar with North Central yet his co-worker’s family in Toronto expressed disapproval. Dillon explained that because his co-worker had a Master of Arts in criminology, the *MacLean’s* article would have had an impact on him. Dillon recalled reading the article but could not remember what was in it.

It is not surprising that the *MacLean's* article was mentioned frequently by participants. This incendiary article has been kept alive by various media sources. A follow-up article was written in 2008 in *MacLean’s* titled "Regina, one year later.” In
2010, the CBC published an article about North Central titled "'Canada's worst neighbourhood' on the Mend." In 2011, the U of R Carillon published an article titled “Five years later, North Central is still living down its reputation as ‘Canada’s worst neighbourhood’” and another article was published of an interview with the writer titled “I don’t regret anything in the article.” Given the salience of the MacLean’s article, it is plausible that the media may very well produce follow-up reports for years to come.

Even neighbourhood advocates frequently refer to the MacLean’s article. For instance, last year a local radio station did a piece about the North Central History Project. In this piece, a member of the committee stated they “wanted to do whatever we could to demonstrate to the rest of the city and indeed the country [that] we had a wonderful and robust history, and to try and get it out of people’s minds that this was Canada’s worst neighbourhood” (Schick, 2012). There is a Facebook page with 1,616 likes titled "I grew up in Canada's worst neighbourhood and it’s really NOT that bad!” (2013). A 2013 Jane's walk showcased North Central's murals and an advertisement for this walk stated "Once tarnished as ‘Canada's Worst Neighbourhood’ our community has always participated in projects to engage and beautify our surroundings” (Morier & Hanna, 2013). Seen this way, even when advocates resist the label ascribed by MacLean's, it is still being kept fresh in peoples’ memories.

The MacLean's article might never be forgotten since the words "Canada's worst neighbourhood" have become synonymous with North Central, Regina. When the title and the citation are presented without further explanation, the label itself does the work of conveying meaning and stereotyping even if the article itself is never read. Negative images are brought to mind by the words “worst neighbourhood” that will vary from
person to person depending on their personal understanding of what constitutes a bad
neighbourhood.

4.2.3 Resisting Dominant Representations in News Media

Participants demonstrated a healthy dose of skepticism and savvy regarding the
media’s motives for presenting particular views of North Central. Some participants
suggested that the news media’s job is to entertain its readers in order to sell its product
and that they tend to exaggerate facts and practice sensationalism.

It reflects reality but they take the smallest thing and blow it up, making it
appear bigger than it is. (Anne)

Mmmn, probably because if you were to look at police statistics and how
they keep track of, uh, hot spots, and I think I’ve actually done a ride along
and most of the calls were in that area, so it probably is a little bit justified
because there is a lot of criminal activity there but, at the same time it
probably gets blown a little bit out of proportion. (Dillon)

The more negative, like, oh, someone killed someone else or whatever,
like that brings excitement to other people because like, oh, I have to read
more and more and more. (Maggie)

To get a story (laughs). They need to fill their paper or their half an hour
of air time, you know. They need something, right? So, it's salacious—it's
good news. If it's someone just making sure that their yard looks nice it
doesn't make the news...The media’s job is to, you know, sell their
advertising and what not, right? (Noah)

Only Evelyn perceived that the media engages in unbiased, factual reporting of events.

Let me put it this way: they try to stay very neutral, they don't put
negative, don't use negative words, just report what happened, like if there
was a robbery at the corner of 5th Ave., the convenience store not that
long ago, they just report on it, they didn't say, they didn't put any
comments. (Evelyn)

Even though they are skeptical of the media, some participants may believe that even
exaggerated news reports are based on some element of truth. Lesley highlights why this
is a problem for the community by expressing concern about the consequence of the fear
that is generated by the image of North Central portrayed in the media.

It's horrible that they do that because going back to these people I'm
talking about who stay in their houses and don't become a part of the
community...they're really reinforcing...it's like the news is trying to create
this image and the only thing that they're really doing, they're actually
making it worse by making the people who actually live there, who are
good decent people, scared and they don't want to leave their house
 whatsoever and I guess as part of that it's, uh, really making community
building hard, and I think that is really part of the solution. (Lesley)

Although they have very different perspectives, most participants would like to
see the media present North Central differently. Some participants, such as Ivan, felt that
the media should focus less on North Central. Ivan self-identified as a retired, low-
income resident of North Central with a grade three education who has lived in North
Central for about seven years and in Regina for about twenty-two years. He indicated that
his ethnicity is French, Iroquois and English but he does not consider himself to be Métis.

Mm, they should not make up, ah, not make up, watch what they say
sometimes and not, uh, target it. (Ivan)

Some participants also made a connection between the increased media
attention on North Central and over-policing of the neighbourhood.

You put all those cops on the street, especially in one defined area of
course you're going to find crime but then you're not looking as hard in
other places either. (Lesley)

It’s low-hanging fruit. You just have to go to the police, if you have a
good reporter who checks in with the police daily there's bound to be
something that's bleeding over there. So you can find it, whereas over this
stuff over here is like, shhh, the report...Sergeant Smith is not going to
report what he saw here, he's going to report what he saw there. (Heather)

Heather identified herself as a white, middle-aged, low-income graduate student who is
living in the inner-city community of Heritage. She has lived in Regina her entire life and
has resided in many neighbourhoods as a child but she has never lived in North Central.
Gail, on the other hand, believes the media should focus on the many positive initiatives that have come of North Central but needs to do so without perpetuating the negative image of the area. She would like to see the media be more “innovative, innovative...not with couching the story and despite being, blah, blah, blah, they should lead off with the creative minds in North Central have done...” This is the opposite of Frank’s perspective that reporters need to seek out more in depth reports from residents in order to raise awareness of the very real problems that exist in the community.

I do not find that the media is really interested in grappling in a serious way with problems of any kind. Um, someone recently has said that, uh, that today the mass media is more about entertainment than information and I think that is true. (Frank)

One other participant also indicated they would like to see more in depth reporting regarding the issues in North Central.

Uh, obviously it's always nice when, uh, they do a good investigative report and come out with something...substantial and writes information that made the [unclear] direction, but is it their job? No. (Noah)

Participants were asked whether the media had influenced their own perceptions of North Central. Frank answered with a simple “No.” However, most participants’ responses indicated that the media had influenced their perceptions to some extent. Two other participants were more forthcoming about the impact of the media’s negative portrayal of North Central.

Well, it makes me not want to go there as much, as often, as, like, if it's an emergency, if I need to go to the hospital sure I'll go but I wouldn't go there over everything else. (Maggie)

Well, of course, uh, didn't make the neighbourhood look good when you've got so many crimes or so many fires caused by neglectful peoples’ behaviour, leaving cigarette butts somewhere. (Evelyn)
Although Maggie and Evelyn indicated that the media has negatively influenced their views of North Central, the media is not their only source of exposure. Having never spent time in the area, Maggie reported that it was her friends and family that warned her about the neighbourhood. From as early as her childhood she was told to avoid the location thereby knowing about the area long before she moved to Regina for school. Evelyn and her husband were landlords in the area and a series of damaged apartments and high turnover rates made a negative impression. Evelyn had also stated no one can live in Regina for very long and not know about North Central because she believes you learn it is a slum when you research where to buy a home. She also thought acquaintances would tell you it is a bad neighbourhood. Her position is class-marked (through homeownership) but more important is her fundamental assertion that each city has a slum and that new residents would identify where that slum is.

Three participants felt the media had influenced their perceptions before they spent time in North Central but they formed a more favourable impression of the neighbourhood after spending time there.

Umm, before I moved to Regina, yes, and even like in my first couple of years here I’d say, but as I, uh, worked in that area and started volunteering there, went and did my practicum there it changed. It’s just another neighbourhood. (Dillon)

Well, when we first moved there I was kind of like, I was basically just like those other people who I was talking about who stay inside their house all the time...I thought we were moving into, you know, the bad part of town. Whatever. I mean, the funny thing is that it, like when we moved there it seemed like we were living in the Annex still. Of course, just a different house, but (laughs) more trees. (Lesley)

I think I started working there shortly after that article was written, and when I worked there, I mean, I saw some negative things but I also saw a huge community with a huge amount of community resources. (Justina)
Some participants indicated that formal or informal education about the issues facing North Central and/or residents impacted their perceptions more so than the media.

What has really is reading books like “Buffalo People” which helped me understand how complex the issues are, which is why one family moving in and wanting to make it better can’t solve anything. (Anne)

It used to until I became more wise, i.e. got educated and became more aware of the actual facts, so education for me was probably, like the formal education at University, was probably the starting point so now when I see a downtrodden native I know that is not all of them. (Heather)

Although the media may negatively influence perceptions of North Central, evidence from this study suggests that positive personal experiences within North Central, with residents of North Central, and/or education about the issues facing residents may improve perceptions of North Central. However, as found in the previous section, familiarity does not necessarily result in a fixed understanding of North Central nor does it guarantee that residents will resist negative dominant representations of the area. Over the course of the interviews, participants demonstrated numerous discourses that perpetuated and, at times, challenged North Central’s negative reputation.

4.3 Interpersonal Representations

The following section examines interpersonal representations of North Central and demonstrates that participants tend to reproduce negative messages about the neighbourhood even while advocating for positive changes to the neighbourhood and/or while resisting one or more negative dominant representations.

4.3.1 Participants’ Perceptions

When asked to describe North Central, participants primarily discussed North Central as a disorderly and dangerous area, as having an Aboriginal demographic and identity, alongside the area’s low socioeconomic conditions. These topics intersected at
many points as these characteristics are frequently associated with each other objectively and/or subjectively. This makes it difficult to talk about each subject separately. The following discussion provides an example of how individuals both resist and reproduce (concurrently at times) these dominant representations of North Central.

Many participants discussed the high level of physical and social disorder associated with North Central. Noah stated that the first thing that comes to his mind about North Central is “run down” because of “too many rental properties...house after house, you know, block after block...just being left to go and very little done in the way of maintenance on the properties.” The majority of the participants noted the existence of poor housing as a result of neglect from landlords. Anne stated that there are “cats all over the neighbourhood,” “garbage on the street,” and “children running around without supervision—three year-olds sitting outside eating dirt with no-one watching them.” Frank also mentioned that there is a lot of garbage in North Central. Dillon stated that “the streets are terrible and the sidewalks are unkempt.” This was something that particularly bothered Gail.

Since we are a very pedestrian community it's shameful to think of people in walkers, women in strollers and just me walking my dog or anyone who has got mobility issues or even if they don't...Part of it is city neglect the other part of it is common sense neglect from homeowners or renters. It's very, very depressing...I'm not putting my standards, maybe I am putting my standards when it comes to term with this volunteer tree that is covering half the public sidewalk, it's emanating from your property - duh, chop it off at the roots... I'm trying to reconcile, are people that depressed, cocooned that they cannot see it or are they that lazy? I can't understand many other choices other than they are physically unable to in which case you ask for help...Whether poverty is at the root of it, poverty and despair and transience is beyond my understanding, so, sadly I can't justify it. I don't want to justify it and that would go even further to speak of the alcoholism and any other addiction that runs an individual into the ground. Neglect must be, you know, chopping down a little volunteer tree must be the last thing on their mind. (Gail)
Gail’s comments illustrate how the physical disorder in North Central intersects and arguably masks issues of poverty and addiction as well as neglect from the city.

Some participants find that the existence of disorder makes them feel unsafe. Ken stated that the graffiti in North Central is intimidating. Carmen, who says that she has never heard of North Central, pointed to an area within North Central (5th Avenue) and indicated that this area of the city seems particularly unsafe because the houses there look “shabby” which signals to her that people living there must be disturbed otherwise they would take better care of their houses. Carmen is a visiting student from Peru and she told the researcher that she could not imagine that someone would live in such a house because of poverty since people have access to welfare in Canada. She was surprised to hear that there is a shortage of affordable, quality housing in Regina. Many participants blamed the poor quality of housing in North Central on slum landlords.

All of the participants discussed the high level of crime and danger associated with North Central. Several of the residents and former residents of North Central had experienced crime in North Central. Frank recalled preventing a mugging and assisting someone on his doorstep with a stab wound. Ivan recalled being confronted by a group of young boys and fending off an attack by showing them his security badge. Anne recalled witnessing neighbours and young kids fighting in the neighbourhood. That being said, there is a gender divide in the way that participants discussed these brushes with crime.

Frank and Ivan expressed their experiences of crime as opportunities to display valour. Frank felt good about being able to help and Ivan said that he found that living in a dangerous community was exciting. Anne said that when they decided to move out of North Central it was because her husband was worried about her safety and he didn’t feel
comfortable leaving her at home alone every day. Bernice said she has been broken into repeatedly since moving to the area but she cannot afford to move out of North Central although she’d like to. Her former son-in-law is in a gang but she says she feels this provides some protection for her. She has also invested in two pit bulls in order to protect herself at home.

One I put [inside], when I'm at home by myself at night time, I put [the other one] out on the chain and nobody'll come. Like, they won't come to the backdoor and I don't answer my front door. I'll open up my front window, but I don't open up my front door and I don't open up my back door just because my dog is out there, I'll say "who is it" and if they don't answer me, then I just don't open and fine, you know, o.k. dog you can have it. (Bernice)

Evelyn didn’t recall any personal experiences with crime but she did say that she seldom went out at night and would bring someone with her when visiting their properties in North Central because she felt uncomfortable by herself but her husband, being a big man, did not have to be as concerned for his safety while there.

At least one resident, Lesley, indicated that he experienced more crime while living in Broder’s Annex (another inner-city neighbourhood) in Regina than he has experienced in North Central. He admits that he has smelled pot when walking past houses and is aware that there are areas in North Central where you can find prostitutes but he says that these are victimless crimes that should not cause fear in residents. He suggests that North Central is as safe as any other neighbourhood in Regina although he would advise being extra careful at night no matter where you are. Dillon also said reports of danger are exaggerated and he feels more concerned for his safety in downtown Regina than he does in North
Central. Nevertheless, he does say that it is wise to be extra careful in North Central but not to the point of paranoia.

Concerns over safety intersect with North Central’s poor socioeconomic conditions. Gail stated that from everything she has heard, crime in North Central is usually the result of addictions and is usually concentrated in high rental areas.

My perception and certainly where it leads to poverty is addiction, addictive lifestyles, that, lifestyle is such a silly word, addictions, people who suffer from addictions can't hold a job, can't get credit if that's what's needed, can't get a decent house, um, can't focus on school. Whether one is feeding the other, certainly leading to a higher crime rate, um, hhhh, yeah that's, those are certainly the sadder parts of the community as I see it. (Gail)

Bernice, Heather and Lesley also associate the crime rates in North Central with poverty.

I wouldn't go out and do crime just to survive but if I had to I would! But I'd find other ways first before, but I, in jail you get free rent, you get three meals a day, you get a bed, clean clothes, so...you know jail looks better than what it does out here. (Bernice)

I have to imagine more people in North Central are downtrodden which is sort of one key component of why there is crime, because when you're under stress you do crime-like things. You do things in violence, you do things in frustration, you do things that are in desperation because you are poor so it's more likely to come out in that kind of situation. (Heather)

The crime that you see is not necessarily trying to be hurtful of the people in the community. It's, it's more so, uh, I guess you could say the fact that they need, they (laughs), especially when you see rents that high, and the fact that, well, what the heck are they going to do. I mean a lot of these people are, probably don't have jobs and uh, I, I mean, I guess in the presence, like in those situations you see theft. (Lesley)

For some, concerns for safety were linked to perceptions about North Central’s Aboriginal population. Maggie talked a lot about not feeling safe around the hospitals and Rose Street but this was mostly informed by the media and her friends and father saying
that the area is unsafe and that white people shouldn't go to North Central because they'll get ganged up on.

North Central has the highest concentration of Aboriginal residents within Regina. According to Statistics Canada, approximately 50 percent of North Central residents identify themselves as Aboriginal (City of Regina, 2006; City of Regina, 2009). Participants who mentioned the Aboriginal identity of North Central were asked to estimate the size of the Aboriginal demographic in North Central most of these participants provided various estimates ranging from 60 to 98 percent of the population. However, Noah, a former resident and Lesley, a current resident, both estimated the demographic as being about a third of North Central residents. One resident, Gail, stated that although the perception is that most people from North Central are Aboriginal, the reality is that the neighbourhood is ethnically diverse and that most residents are not Aboriginal.

The high concentration of Aboriginal residents has resulted in the area being racialized as an Aboriginal community. Several interviewees’ responses suggest that North Central is perceived as a ghetto where Aboriginal people are segregated from the rest of the population in Regina within a secluded location not unlike the federal First Nations reserves.

No white people live there. It's all just natives. It's like a small in-city reserve. You don't want to live there, you don't want to go there and those people should just stay there, they shouldn't be allowed in our part of the city. Now, I don't believe all that but that's what I believe the stereotype to be...Why don't they just go back to their reserve where they belong (guffaws) and if you see a really harsh looking native downtown, it's like ‘go back to North Central.’ (Heather)
Bernice, a resident, said, "it's like living on a reserve except I'm in the city." She stated that because she appears white, despite being Métis, she is often treated as an outsider. Anne also stated that North Central "is an urban reserve, or at least where the Rez gas station is.” The “Cree-Land Mini-Mart” property, owned by the Piapot First Nations, is designated as Urban Reserve Land but this is only one lot within a large neighbourhood (City of Regina, 2013a).

Bernice also stated that being Métis, she felt like she was “on the fence” and could see how some “bad apples” who complained that they couldn't get work because of racism and other historical factors related to their Aboriginal identity were “spoiling it for everyone.” As she put it, "we're not all bad, and we're not all good, but don't make it worse than what it is.” By sharing her perceptions, she reinforces the stereotype that North Central is an Aboriginal-only community. Furthermore, she reinforces stereotypes by suggesting that those affected by structural and systemic racism need to quit complaining and find a job, while simultaneously proclaiming that people should be judged as individuals and not be stigmatized as a result of the actions of some members of the community. This is one example of how perceptions about Aboriginal people intersect with perceptions about people living in low socioeconomic conditions.

Anne, a former resident, also challenged racism and at other times reinforced the racialized identity of North Central and stereotypes about Aboriginal people related to crime and poverty.

Racism in Saskatchewan is systemic. Any of my friends’ parents and even my Dad, who worked at the University as a professor and my Mom will say “those Indians.” Something like 54 percent haven’t graduated, so the logical jump is that all are uneducated? That’s racial profiling! (Anne)

She angrily recalls a conversation she had with a city counsellor.
We started discussing North Central because it's a huge problem in Regina and the city is doing nothing about it and do you know what he said!!! “We can’t address that because those are reserve problems that they bring with them and we don’t have jurisdiction to fix the problems on the reserve.” That is racist and classist!!!! We are all citizens of this city and it’s our responsibility because people are wage slaves to corporations, poor people who can’t get jobs. (Anne)

However, Anne also brings with her presumptions about Aboriginal residents. For example, she stated that North Central “is where ethnic or Aboriginal people live because of affordability.” From this statement Anne appears to link Aboriginal minorities with particular class positions. Additionally, when describing one of her neighbours, Anne stated, "we had an Aboriginal prostitute living next door who stole stuff from us and her daughter kept invading our privacy.” Anne’s previous statements indicate that she is vehemently opposed to racist attitudes and racial profiling but her need to indicate the woman living next door, involved in the sex trade, was Aboriginal also makes one pause to consider why it was important to indicate her racialized identity.

Justina, a non-resident, also challenged racism and suggested that North Central has become stigmatized for "having all these troubles, whereas everybody has troubles" because people "point fingers" at First Nations and other marginalized people.

Are these people keeping track of more what's going on in these neighbourhoods? Who phones on the white person that's beating their kid versus the First Nations person? I've actually heard a couple of stories, just people talking on the street [saying] "my kid got taken away from me after I had a couple of drinks and somebody called it in" and then I've heard the white person do the same thing and nobody is calling Social Services on them. Who is keeping a count of these things? (Justina)

Later on she reinforced the identity of North Central as First Nations and stereotyped the values of all First Nations even though she did this out of apparent admiration.

Somebody who buys and owns all these material things, that's looked upon as value in their society whereas in First Nations culture, their culture does not value material things at all. They value their community,
they value the earth, they're supposed to be one with the earth. They're supposed to share with the earth, they're not supposed to own things and have titleship to things and whatnot, so it's what you value. Like if anything, if you take a look at North Central, maybe they actually have different values. (Justina)

Some interviewees did not mention anything concerning Aboriginal peoples or identity in relation to North Central. When asked whether this was done purposefully, former resident Noah, who is himself Métis, stated that although he is aware that some people think of North Central as Aboriginal, he personally has not found that to be true thus he didn't think to bring it up. Frank, a white resident of the area, stated he purposefully avoided mentioning the Aboriginal demographic because he considered the subject to be a “red herring” that results in an overabundance of services in North Central for the Aboriginal community compared to the amount of advocacy and services for poor white residents. As he puts it, "no one can live in North Central and not realise that their white neighbour is just as bad off as they are.” However, Frank went on to admit that a majority of North Central residents are Aboriginal and a majority of those Aboriginal residents do suffer from poverty whereas only a minority of white residents live in poverty. Still, he stressed that the Aboriginal population who are apathetic should not be grouped together with those who are upwardly mobile, even though the latter is a small minority, since it is as if they are "two different animals.” Although this statement and the metaphor used are highly racialized, it provides resistance to the stereotype that all Aboriginal peoples, and only Aboriginal peoples, live in poverty in North Central. Both Noah and Frank challenged the dominant perception that North Central is a homogenous Aboriginal neighbourhood.
Stereotyping—whether that be race or class marked—in the area of North Central is a concern because it may lead to false conclusions about the needs and interests of the areas' residents. For instance, the stadium is located in North Central but Evelyn, a non-resident, stated that the city's plans for the stadium have nothing to do with North Central because the local residents don't use the stadium. She supports this conclusion by stating that her husband, a Saskatchewan Riders' season ticket holder, told her that he doesn't see many “natives” at the football games. This provides evidence of the racialized identity of North Central. Furthermore, suggesting that only people who attend football games have an interest in the stadium plans dismisses the interest of residents who may not attend the games but still contribute to the new stadium through their tax dollars and ignores the special interest that North Central residents have regarding what happens in their own neighbourhood. Overestimating the Aboriginal demographic and identity of North Central leads to assumptions about the entire area. Alternatively, underestimating the size of the Aboriginal population might result in fewer services in an area where there are inarguably a large number of Aboriginal residents who might benefit from culturally-appropriate services.

Why respondents’ perceptions vary to this extent is likely attributed to their different experiences within the neighbourhood, the influence of dominant representations communicated socially and in the media upon them, as well as their backgrounds and personal beliefs. It has been shown that prior beliefs may lead to subjective observations that reinforce such beliefs (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). Thus, interviewees’ representations may be based on their worldviews that are influenced
by their personal histories and social positions rather than simply where they reside in the city.

Participants’ perceptions of the area vary considerably; although all agree that the area is impacted by various problems. Individuals have diverse understandings regarding which problems are most significant and why. How participants understand and perceive North Central then impacts how they represent the area when discussing it with others.

4.3.2 Reproducing Dominant Representations Interpersonally

Some current and former residents of North Central retold stories about encounters with gangs or repeated incidents of crime and disorder that they had personally experienced in North Central.

The neighbours’ dogs were eating a deer carcass in the backyard—we’d have never sold the house if people had seen that. I never thought I’d have to go to my neighbour and explain something like that, but he said his dogs were hungry and he needed to feed them. (Anne)

I’ve risked my life at least twice to help neighbours...I’ve experienced an attempted mugging once...I’ve even had a fellow who I found stumbling around my driveway one night, had sixteen stab wounds to his head...brought him into my, my front entrance and had him dripping all of the blood all over the floor. (Frank)

Retelling shocking accounts about their personal experiences in North Central may elicit empathy, inspire admiration for the teller’s exercises in valour and/or evoke calls for action but also has the latent effect of reinforcing the areas’ negative reputation.

Some participants shared stereotypical perceptions of North Central even if they purported that they themselves did not believe in these stereotypes.

Uh, unfortunately most people, identify that area as a crime area, whether it's strictly stereotyping I don't know, I can't say...the first thing comes to people's mind [is that] they don't want to get close to that area, because they are afraid they will get mugged, or [laughs]. (Evelyn)
What I think the stereotype is?...It's just a bunch of natives probably out on parole, you know, living by the shirt tails and nothing but criminals, drinking, smoking, drugs, drug deals, hookerville, prostitutes. If it's illegal it goes on there...you don't go there because you'll be a victim of the crime just because you're there...Garbage, garbage filled gutters, probably lots of alcohol bottles lying around. Needles from drugs, rental and the landlords are slum landlords. It just seems like, it's normal to see broken up windows, doors falling off, boarded up doors, disheveled in need of repairs, both in terms of landscape and the buildings. Everything's just downtrodden. Probably infested with Aids, Hep C. It's just the worst of the worst. If it's bad and can happen it goes on there. No grocery stores, no amenities anyone else would want. Probably the stores and gas stations get robbed regularly and if they're not robbing those they're robbing each other. And maybe they should even move the jail there because people go there from jail. It's kind of like if you're not in jail your cousin is. (Heather)

Well, I don't know if this is a rumour? It sounds kind of ridiculous when I put it out there, but, um, I've heard that they're unsafe to go out at night, especially when you're by yourself, but it could have just been a rumour and I've also heard that quote unquote decent families don't live there, but again, that could just be someone's opinion. (Omera)

Some participants also talked about a particular “street code” that must be adhered to within North Central.

There's a lot of gangs, lots!...you can get hurt for wearing red, especially if you're not in the gang. So, again, it's like, they're telling you what to wear or what not to wear. (Bernice)

I was on my bike at the time so I didn't have a car to hide in and I just continued about my way like I live here or I come here all the time and no problem, and that's my best security. I just act like I know what I'm doing. Stay, keep your nose clean, you don't bother anybody. It was very different. (Heather)

It's an area that you've got to be very careful who you talk to and who you associate with and how to not get involved with different things and how to stay away from the drugs. Keep yourself clean, keep your mouth shut and don't get caught into trouble. (Ivan)

The negative stereotypes and behavioural codes associated with North Central may be based on nuggets of truth; but when blanket generalizations are repeated, negative
representations are reinforced and are then inappropriately applied to the whole area and its residents.

Some participants argued that North Central is not that bad, but they added statements that detracted from attempts to challenge North Central’s negative reputation.

There is a gang problem but not as big as it’s presented but there are gang tags and colors worn. (Anne)

It's just another neighbourhood. It's just that it happens to be, like a locust of criminal activity and all that nonsense. (Dillon)

Participants may add these concessions to show that they are not naive about the existence of problems in the area, but their statements may be taken out of context and used in the media or by others to construct or reinforce negative perceptions.

When asked what, if anything, they would tell a friend who was moving to Regina about North Central, many participants expressed an obligation to warn others away even if they generally resisted the areas’ negative reputation.

I'd tell them that they could probably find affordable housing and all that there, but that because of the rap they'd probably be stigmatized and to be honest they probably should take a little care with property and stuff as well as their personal well-being. Like not, not to the point of paranoia but just so you need to be a little, a little more careful. (Dillon)

Such warnings reinforce negative representations of North Central and likely contribute to lower property values and fewer businesses locating in the area, since the perception is that people should generally avoid the neighbourhood.

Most participants spent a considerable amount of time expressing their beliefs about the root causes of North Central’s problems as well as possible solutions. For some, these conversations turned towards the residents themselves.
What they need is community gardens, which would make a big difference because people could grow their own food and it would build community and make the place look nicer. (Anne)

You know I hate to say that this is a vicious cycle. The psychology so favourably refers to as self-fulfilling prophesy. When the parents are not educated, they don't have the incentive to encourage the kids to get an education and it's an ongoing thing. If the kids are not educated, when they grow up they become uneducated parents to their uneducated kids, so I honestly don't know what the solution is. (Evelyn)

What I see too much of sometimes though is the blame game going on...it's that governments fault, it's this persons fault, and instead of doing something about it, it's easy to be negative...I think that sometimes, some elements drop the ball...they want to make it political in some cases and that doesn't change anything. You gotta get the community to take ownership...and that's why, I don't blame governments and I don't blame lack of this or lack of that. (Ken)

Blaming residents for problems and placing an onus on them to fix North Central is problematic for many reasons, not least of which is it is a neoliberal response. By placing blame on residents without examining the structural issues involved the responsibility is unfairly placed with individuals who may not have the cultural, social, and economic capital to address the root cause of the issues in North Central.

4.3.3 Resisting Representations Interpersonally

Some participants attempted to counter North Central’s negative reputation by emphasizing the positive aspects of the neighbourhood such as the tight-knit community, the resourcefulness of residents, the innovative programming in the area and/or the less materialistic nature of North Central residents.

North Central is also a mixture of poverty and disrepair and on the other hand, valiant efforts by people to create a, a beautiful space with limited resources, which I find admirable...in more affluent areas people are mostly concerned about their own goals and...although a typical North Central person may be equally uninterested in ideas of community and so on, there is a significant proportion of people in North Central that
understand the importance of cooperation and community and having compassion for one another and helping one another. (Frank)

I am very, very quick to praise the actions of a group and do an ‘atta boy’ and I’ve had vibes back from friends and family saying “great team, boy that sounds like a neat agency to belong to, oh wow, I wonder how they did that, tell me more”...if you come in and embrace the work and the play and the friends, you will not want to leave. (Gail)

Some participants emphasized that North Central is a diverse community; that not all aspects of the area are bad or that North Central is not as bad as it is made out to be.

It’s not a pure black scum...there are good people. (Heather)

There's good areas I think and some, some scary areas. (Ken)

North Central really contains a lot of ethnic groups...Caucasian, First Nations or Filipino, I know that there's also a significant amount of African Americans as well. Really, the list goes on...I guess in that way it's such an ethnically diverse neighbourhood...like, we have one neighbour on the other side of the block who has solar powered his garage, like solar powered his house and his water heaters, and like, something that you wouldn't necessarily expect in North Central. (Lesley)

Participants also engaged in discourses that shift focus away from North Central by pointing out that bad things happen elsewhere.

Personally I've never had anything bad happen to me there...somebody attempted to break into my truck here in the south end...all the time that I've had my vehicle parked there, been in North Central, it hasn't been touched once. (Dillon)

I can repeat those stories of neglect and abuse and addictions anywhere and apply it to any city. It's circumstances, it's not geography. (Gail)

I've seen a woman shoot, drive up in front of me and shoot up some drugs into her arm in the middle of the day, you know, but I've seen that in my neighbourhood in the Al Ritchie. (Justina)

It's not as bad as East Hastings [in Vancouver]......the devil lives in East Hastings, if you believe in such things. (Noah)
One participant indicated that they and their friends tend to make a joke out of the way others perceive North Central. Yet joking about the danger acknowledges and communicates to others that the area has a negative reputation.

One of my friends, he mostly jokes around about it…it’s like his thing, he says if you go in it would be, you're going to get into trouble, that sort of thing, but he's not really serious about it. Because he worked with me at the same company and he's been there, so, it's mostly a joke. Um, other, my friends are obviously justice students so, we'll like, crack jokes about how people are terrified of it, like a lot of people we know won't go there. (Dillon)

Those engaged in resistance by emphasizing positives, minimizing the extent of problems, shifting focus away from North Central and/or making light of North Central’s negative reputation may be accused of denying or ignoring the issues for their own benefit or being naive/ignoring the evidence instead of fixing the problems just as was done to those who resisted the negative representations in the *MacLean’s* article in 2007.

As discussed in the previous section, many participants offered explanations as to why certain problems exist within North Central. Some shifted blame onto a particular population within North Central—renters.

There are some nice blocks with mostly older people who have lived there for 40 years where you see a visible difference. Other blocks are all slum properties, rentals. Our neighbours mostly rented, there were house fires on our block and those were renters. (Anne)

Um, sometimes hanging out hearing reports from police, fire, you get to know where the high rentals, uh, properties are, which often translates into heavier crime, uh, density. Um, having heard from those who rent, you hear the horror stories. (Gail)

This type of blame-shifting is problematic as it stigmatizes a subset of residents. Renters may be particularly susceptible to this type of stigmatization. Participants may feel that it is socially tolerable to blame renters for North Central’s problems whereas blaming the
poor or the Aboriginal residents would not be politically correct. However, even though it is problematic, shifting blame to a subset of residents could be seen as a tactic to challenge the perception that North Central, as a whole, is problematic.

Some participants shifted blame away from North Central residents, arguing the problems in the community are largely a result of societal factors.

A lot of those people are natives and being native does not inherently give you a criminal background, but you are discriminated against by the larger society so you're more likely to be downtrodden and that's why they end up there. (Heather)

The crime that you see is not necessarily trying to be hurtful of the people in the community...what the heck are they going to do. I mean a lot of these people are, probably don't have jobs and uh, I, I mean, I guess in the presence, like in those situations you see theft. (Lesley)

Although these participants were engaged in seeking to understand and inform others of the root of the problems, they may be accused of “playing the blame game” rather than taking responsibility and fixing the problems themselves (see Ken’s comments in the previous section).

Many residents and even some non-residents invest their personal time and funds to improve North Central.

I like to be helpful so when, you know, I'm, uh, walking along and they're unloading a truck of, of uh, you know, needles and other types of medical paraphernalia for the needle exchange place, uh, you know, I just, uh, help out, you know I just help them unload the truck or whatever I can do. (Frank)

We'd go to city hall for presentations and we'd speak up, um, for issues that were affecting our neighbourhood, and individually as a good will ambassador. (Gail)

I've taken to uh, shovelling neighbours walks [laughs]. But really other than that, I, like uh, I find I'm a lot more, ah, on that political side of North Central. Being more involved, uh, like, what’s going on in municipal and
provincial levels of government, and even federal I guess. I've participated in a few community clean-ups in North Central. (Lesley)

Working together at the grassroots level to improve the neighbourhood is seen by many people as evidence that the community wants to improve and therefore is not that bad.

I'd say one thing that will, that will help and has probably helped is all the social programming that goes on up there...all that stuff is definitely a positive thing for the neighbourhood, because it kind of shows that, um, the people of North Central are not just there to let it go. (Dillon)

However, this type of positive praise is problematic, as the underlying presumption communicated is that responsibility for solving North Central’s problems rests only on residents rather than society even though many of the areas’ problems are the result of long-standing social structures and social policies.

In summary, the research project revealed just how resilient territorial stigma can be. Evidence from respondents indicates that negative dominant representations of North Central are communicated interpersonally and through the media. These representations may be shared as a matter of interest, as a warning to others, or (perhaps most discouragingly) as a latent effect when advocating for positive change. Those wishing to promote positive events or images of North Central may encounter resistance from individuals who feel these initiatives ignore issues in the community. The media may bank on the area’s negative reputation by sensationalizing stories in order to sell newspapers. However, individuals seem to also attribute negative stories to the area unnecessarily which could be traced back to a story in MacLean’s but also links into longer-standing beliefs about the area and its residents. Since negative messages are
resilient even when positive ones are presented, one might say that any publicity is bad publicity once an area has been stigmatized.

In Chapter four, we examined the themes derived from the data in detail. Chapter five will consider the findings as they might relate to policy responses and areas for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE
Discussion of Findings

It is important to understand how residents and non-residents reproduce and/or challenge dominant representations of North Central because previous research suggests that negative representations of marginalized areas sustain territorial stigmas (see for example Dean & Hastings, 2000) which can produce harmful material effects on the lives of residents (see for example Atkinson & Jacob, 2008). The findings from this research suggest that, as with all social phenomena, processes involved in resisting and/or reinforcing dominant representations are complex. To investigate these processes, I conducted interviews with ten residents and five non-residents in order to increase the understanding of how territorial stigma is reproduced and/or challenged in North Central.

After a process of thematic network analysis, three organizing themes emerged: 1) North Central as a socially constructed location and concept; 2) representations of North Central in the news media; and 3) interpersonal representations of North Central. The global theme - Resilience of Territorial Stigma – reveals the role of media and interpersonal communication alongside personal experience as it relates to socially-constructed understandings of North Central. The following section discusses the significance of the research findings, policy implications and suggested interventions, as well as possible areas for future research.

5.1 Significant Findings or Implications

This research found that identifying who is resisting and who is reproducing dominant representations is not a simple process. All respondents agreed North Central experiences significant problems. Messages received and communicated by participants
about North Central are typically negative rather than positive but some had a few good things to say about the area. However, even positive representations and messages advocating for change typically include negative representations of North Central. People are generally concurrently resisting and reproducing dominant representations of North Central regardless of where they live, emphasizing some negative aspects while downplaying or ignoring others depending on their personal perceptions about the area. This results in considerable variation and disagreement about the cause and the extent of some problems in North Central.

Further complicating our understanding of representations of North Central are the results of the mapping exercise that illustrated North Central as a location and a concept is not fixed because it is a social construction. However, there is a small area within North Central proper where there was a great deal of overlap suggesting that most people would identify that area as part of North Central. Thinking back to the example of Dillon who linked the death of a neglected child to North Central, it is possible that individuals associate negative events with North Central and disassociate positive ones with the area. It is also possible that the reverse is happening if people selectively include or omit evidence that is, or is not, in line with their previously held positive perceptions of North Central. If people are conditioned to consider North Central to be a dangerous or undesirable area, this has the potential to affect any area they understand to be North Central negatively. If numerous people who discriminate against the area and its residents perceive that the areas beyond the official borders are part of North Central, this will have an economic and social impact on a much larger but contiguous inner-area of the city.
The participants in this research consisted of a relatively diverse population of residents and non-residents who spent time both in and out of the area of North Central. These participants were not limited to second-hand information from the media regarding North Central because most had first-hand experience and/or information shared directly from residents of the area. This is not to say that the media did not have an impact on participants’ perceptions of the area and it is not to say that those who are familiar with the area do not produce negative images and expectations of the community; but this is to say that media is not the only influence on non-residents’ perceptions of North Central.

Although participants’ perceptions of North Central were informed by personal experiences, interpersonal communications and education about the area, the media undoubtedly influences perceptions. It is important to encourage the media as well as individuals to be especially aware of the possible impact of their statements when discussing marginalized individuals or areas. Communicators must strive to be tactful and accurate in how they present messages. An important component of this finding was that any publicity is bad publicity once an area is stigmatized. Media messages received regarding stigmatized communities may reflect how participants perceive the neighbourhood, so simply changing the way the media presents the neighbourhood alone is not likely to have a significant long-term impact on the neighbourhoods’ reputation. To try to counter this, media literacy should be discussed earlier in the education system (K-12) so people learn how to critically engage with the media at a younger age which can have impacts on a wide range of areas (for example representations of marginalized groups or criminalizing areas or peoples). Advocates for change in North Central must also develop an ongoing, thoughtful communication strategy promoting the positive
aspects of the community, raising awareness about the root causes of issues affecting the area, alongside a call for action that will not evoke cynicism or further stereotypes.

Although ideological perceptions have material impact, structural changes must be made along with changes in attitudes and beliefs about marginalized areas. Some research suggest that territorial stigma should be addressed through area-based social programs targeting employment, crime, education, skill levels, health and housing to reverse neighbourhood decline and stigma (see for example van Gent, 2009 or Lupton, 2003). However, social programs or other interventions aimed at addressing territorial stigma should target the broader areas that fall within the perceived zone of stigmatization since the area is socially constructed and its impacts, therefore, could permeate the official boundaries. Alternatively, concentrating interventions to the subsection of North Central most commonly included on individual’s maps may be an area where interventions would have the greatest impact thereby benefitting all areas associated with North Central.

5.2 Policy Implications

There are many stereotypes and prejudices associated with North Central that lead to discrimination and blaming residents for the problems experienced in the area. This research illustrates that perception and contact are key factors when thinking about territorial stigma. Non-residents who had positive experiences in North Central and those who had friends and/or family who spoke positively about the area were more likely to challenge aspects of the area’s negative reputation. Some participants indicated their perceptions of North Central changed when they learned more about the issues affecting
the residents. Facilitating positive contact between residents and non-residents would likely benefit the area.

Perceptions and understandings of North Central may be improved by encouraging non-residents and residents to engage in activities within the community such as festivals or picnics. Programs that would encourage residents and non-residents to work side-by-side should be encouraged. Increasing positive contact between these two groups might build trust, mutual understanding and an appreciation of the area—and its challenges. Additionally, educational campaigns that raise awareness about social structures, historic and current events may help foster further understanding about marginalized areas so that residents and non-residents may both empathize and recognize their personal contribution to the negative conditions found in the area.

To improve perceptions of North Central it is necessary to change the way most people view and discuss North Central. This is important since perceptions of the area can lead to negative economic, physical and mental consequences. Education about the issues affecting the area and its residents along with positive experiences within North Central may be the key to improving widely-held perceptions. In addition, increasing the public’s media literacy could encourage thoughtful dialogue that raises awareness of issues in the area. Ways of doing so could be explored through future research.

5.3 Future Research

North Central, as a geographic area, is socially constructed as evidenced by the mapping exercise. The areas that impact, or are impacted by, the stigmatization of North Central are not limited to its official boundaries or immediate surroundings. A wider sample might provide a better understanding of what areas should be targeted if area-
based interventions such as social programs targeting employment, crime, education, skill levels, health and housing are to be used to combat the wide geographic range of a territorial stigma. Also, further research into the material and social impacts of territorial stigma may provide a better understanding of the financial and societal benefits of challenging it. This might help advocates promote the need for programs and resources that address territorial stigma while concurrently identifying effective strategies to combat its effects.

Based on responses from participants in this study, future research into the extent to which status, worldview and personal experiences impact perceptions of stigmatized areas for both residents and non-residents is warranted. Future research might also investigate whether such factors mitigate or aggravate media influence in terms of territorial stigmatization. Also, since many of the participants lived in or near the inner city, repeating this method using a more purposive sample with a more polarized group of residents and non-residents may be warranted since it is possible that doing so would reveal distinct differences or similarities between residents and non-residents when they are demographically similar or distinct.

Lastly, findings suggest that first-hand experience may influence perceptions of stigmatized neighbourhoods, it is also evident that interpersonal and media communications have an impact. As has been discussed, current strategies to overcome territorial stigma are not successful therefore turning to research on other groups experiencing stigmatization might yield new directions and strategies. For example, research regarding the stigma of mental illness might provide new insights into a wide
range of interventions including effective communication strategies used by advocates that are challenging perceptions about mental illness.

5.4 Final Remarks

This research project focused on the social construction of the stigmatized community of North Central, Regina because studies have shown that territorial stigma negatively impacts the wellbeing of marginalized areas and their residents. In order to understand this phenomenon better, this research investigated how residents and non-residents resist and reproduce dominant representations of North Central. The findings of this research indicate that it is not possible to divide reproducers and resisters into two binary groups of territorial stigmatizers and non-stigmatizers based on residency or non-residency in a stigmatized area since members of both groups challenge and sustain dominant representations of North Central—sometimes doing both concurrently. Nevertheless, it is possible that other factors have a greater influence than residency in determining the role people play in the process of constructing stigmatized territories and their perceptions of stigmatized locations. The hope is that this research might help policy planners and program providers develop interventions, such as education and communication strategies alongside material improvements that will help challenge stigmas and improve the wellbeing of marginalized people and locations. However, analyzing the phenomenon of territorial stigma has increased my understanding of its complexity and the elusiveness of simple solutions to this difficult problem.
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APPENDIX A: Research Ethics Board Approval

DATE: October 15, 2012

TO: Angela Carol Miller
    409 Halifax Street
    Regina, SK S4R 1T4

FROM: Dr. Larena Hoeber
       Chair, Research Ethics Board

Re: Territorial Stigmas on the Canadian Prairies: North Central, Regina
    (File # 1851213)

Please be advised that the University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed your
proposal and found it to be:

☐ 1. APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. Only applicants with this designation have ethical
    approval to proceed with their research as described in their applications. For
    research lasting more than one year (Section 1F), ETHICAL APPROVAL MUST
    BE RENEWED BY SUBMITTING A BRIEF STATUS REPORT EVERY
    TWELVE MONTHS. Approval will be revoked unless a satisfactory status report
    is received. Any substantive changes in methodology or instrumentation must
    also be approved prior to their implementation.

☐ 2. ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS (SEE
    ATTACHED). Changes must be submitted to the REB and approved prior to
    beginning research. Please submit a supplementary memo addressing the
    concerns to the Chair of the REB.** Do not submit a new application. Once
    changes are deemed acceptable, ethical approval will be granted.

☐ 3. ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS (SEE
    ATTACHED). Changes must be submitted to the REB and approved prior to
    beginning research. Please submit a supplementary memo addressing the
    concerns to the Chair of the REB.** Do not submit a new application. Once
    changes are deemed acceptable, ethical approval will be granted.

☐ 4. UNACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. The proposal requires substantial additions
    or redesign. Please contact the Chair of the REB for advice on how the project
    proposal might be revised.

Dr. Larena Hoeber

cc: Dr. Michelle Stewart – Justice Studies

** supplementary memo should be forwarded to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at the Office for
Research, Innovation and Partnership (Research and Innovation Centre, Room 169) or by e-mail to
research.ethics@uregina.ca

TEL: (306) 585-4470
Fax: (306) 585-4403
APPENDIX B: Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Territorial Stigma on the Canadian Prairies: Perceptions of North Central, Regina

Researcher: Angela Miller, Graduate Student, Department of Justice Studies, University of Regina, C: 306-537-4189, mille34a@uregina.ca.

Supervisor: Dr. Michelle Stewart, Department of Justice Studies, University of Regina, O: 306-585-4873, michelle.stewart@uregina.ca

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research: To investigate the role of perception as it relates to negative reputations and territorial stigma in the neighbourhood of North Central, Regina.

Procedures:
- You will be asked 20-30 questions during a one-hour interview. There are no right or wrong answers. The interview will be digitally recorded and notes will be taken as accurately as possible.
- Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goal of this study.

Funding: This research has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The results will be compiled into a Masters Thesis; in addition, the research will be shared with North Central community organizations and the North Central community newspaper.

Potential Risks: There are no expected risks associated with participation. However, if you do experience emotional distress please note the following:
- If you feel distressed at any point you may ask to take a break, refuse to answer or withdraw from the research without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- If you feel distressed at any point during or after participating in this research, you are encouraged to contact the Regina Crisis/Suicide Line at 306-525-5333.
- NOTE: Any criminal activity must be reported to police as required by law.

Potential Benefits: This research may assist in devising programs and policies aimed at reversing or preventing the effects of stigmatization in North Central and other marginalized communities.

Compensation: You will be provided with a non-alcoholic beverage for your participation (less than $5 value) depending on the availability of beverages at the interview site and a $5 gift card to a local coffee shop.

Confidentiality: All responses are anonymous through the use of pseudonyms unless you request otherwise. Consent forms will be kept separate from the questionnaires which will not contain information that identifies respondents.

☐ I prefer not to be kept anonymous. Reason: ________________________________
Storage of Data:
- Electronic data will be password protected and the questionnaires and forms will be kept in a locked location by the researcher until the project is complete. The electronic data, questionnaires and forms will be then stored by the research supervisor in a locked location for at least five years.
- When the data is no longer required, the electronic data will be permanently deleted and the questionnaires and forms will be shredded.

Right to Withdraw:
- Your participation is voluntary and you should answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, prior to November 30, 2012 without explanation or penalty of any sort. After this date, research analysis and dissemination will have commenced and withdrawal will no longer be possible.
- Should you wish to withdraw, you may let the researcher know this at any point prior to the analysis of the data by contacting the researcher (see contact information above).

Follow up: To obtain results from the study, please provide your e-mail address. A summary of the research results will be sent to you electronically when the research is completed (in six to twelve months). This e-mail address will be kept in a secure location and will not be sold or shared with others.

Email: ________________________________________________________ OR
Mailing Address: ________________________________________________

Questions or Concerns:
- Contact the researcher using the information at the top of page 1.
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the U of R Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at (585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca). Out of town participants may call collect.

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

__________________________________________________________  ________________________________
Name of Participant (Printed)              Participant’s Signature

______________________________________________  ______________________________
Researcher’s Signature              Date

Two copies of this form must be signed - one copy for the participant and one for the researcher.
APPENDIX C: Outline of Semi-Structured Questions for Interview Representations of Regina Neighbourhoods

1. How long have you lived in Regina (in years)? Where else have you lived?

2. What area of Regina do you live in? Would you please circle or outline that area on this map? What do you like or dislike about living there? What was important to you when you were considering where to live in Regina?

3. Where do you spend most of your time in Regina? Are there other areas of the city that you frequently visit? What do you usually do there? Where do you shop? Where do you go for fun? Would you please mark these places on the map?

4. Where in the city do you feel the most comfortable? Where do you feel the least comfortable? What is different about these places? Why do you feel more comfortable in the one and less comfortable in the other?

5. How familiar are you with the area of North Central? Have you ever lived there? What type of activities, if any, do you take part in there? How much time do you spend in this neighbourhood on a weekly basis?

6. How would you describe North Central? If a friend was moving to the city what, if anything, would you tell them about North Central?

7. How does North Central compare to other areas of the city?

8. Do you watch or listen to the news? What newspaper or station?

9. What do the media say about North Central? Why do they present these views of North Central? How has the media influenced your perception of North Central, if at all? How should the media present North Central?

10. What do you friends or family say about North Central? How do you think they formed these views of North Central? How do their comments influence your perception of North Central, if at all?

11. Do you think that the reputation of North Central is generally worsening, has stayed the same, or is getting better over time? If you believe that the areas reputation has changed, how has it changed? Approximately when did that change start happening? Why did it change?

12. If you think that North Central’s reputation could be improved, how could that be achieved?
13. Can you circle or draw an outline of North Central on this map to indicate where it is located. □ I do not know where North Central is located.
   (Note, map produced with GIS software is located on a separate 11” X 17” page).

14. In what year were you born? ____________

15. What sex or gender do you identify with? ____________

16. What ethnicity do you identify yourself as?
   ________________________________

17. What is the highest level of education that you’ve achieved ____________________

18. Do you consider yourself  □ low income  □ middle income  □ upper income

19. What is your occupation? (If unemployed what was your most recent occupation or for what occupation do you consider yourself most suited?)
APPENDIX D: Customized Map of Regina