

**Thirsting for Access?**

**Public Access to Water for Personal Use in Urban Centres: A Case Study of Victoria,  
British Columbia**

by

Karen Gelb  
B.A.Sc., University of Guelph, 2002

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Michael J. Prince, Supervisor  
(Studies in Policy and Practice)

Dr. Donna Jeffery, Outside Member  
(School of Social Work)

Dr. S. Joan Wharf Higgins, Outside Member  
(School of Physical Education)

**Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Michael J. Prince, Supervisor  
(Studies in Policy and Practice)

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(School of Social Work)

Dr. S. Joan Wharf Higgins, Outside Member  
(School of Physical Education)

**Abstract**

The World Health Organization and the United Nations state that people normally access water through their place of residence. However, in North America people regularly need access to water services, such as toilets, fountains, or bathing facilities, when not in a private residence. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the current situation of access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence as an emergent research topic. To accomplish this, I conducted a literature review and a thematic analysis of nine key-informant interviews with stakeholders in Victoria. Findings from the research reveal that access to water for personal uses is limited in Victoria when outside a place of residence. Furthermore, the consequences and implications of this limitation directly and indirectly influence both individuals and the broader community. Finally, policy recommendations, action responses, and future research directions inform possible responses to address this issue.

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A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.

*Alexander Pope (1688–1744)*

## Chapter One. Introduction

“Water is crucial for sustainable development, including the preservation of our natural environment and the alleviation of poverty and hunger. Water is indispensable for human health and well-being.” (United Nations [UN] Water, 2005, ¶ 1)

Human access to clean water is a universal and undeniable necessity. Without access to water for personal uses such as consumption, cleaning, toileting, and bathing, personal and individual health diminishes, which in turn compromises individual and community health (World Health Organization [WHO], 2003a; 2003b). The WHO and the UN state that people normally access water through their place of residence (UN Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC], 2002; WHO, 2003a). Canadian federal policies and provincial policies in British Columbia (BC) also reflect the premise that water access needs are addressed at a point of residence in both their attention to distribution or at-the-tap concerns, and the absence of attention to water access outside a place of residence (e.g., Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada [AAFC], 2003; British Columbia Ministry of Health, 2001; Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], 2005a; 2005b). In academic literature, the topic of access to water for personal uses in urban centres in North America is most often implicitly imbedded within other discussions of health, poverty, access, or water.

While a place of residence may be the primary place of water access for many Canadians, situations occur regularly in which people need access to water and water services, such as toilets or bathing facilities, when outside a place of residence. For example, someone out for the day may need the use of a public toilet or a water fountain, while an individual living without housing may need regular access to bathing facilities, toilets, and drinking water in order to meet their daily needs. Since a lack of access to water for personal

uses outside a place of residence can result in potentially widespread implications for the health and well-being of both the local community and the individual, I contend that this topic must be researched and examined as a central research theme. Research focusing explicitly and centrally on the topic of access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence is important in order to gain insight into the pertinence and salience of this topic in Canada.

Using a literature review and a thematic analysis of nine key-informant interviews conducted with stakeholders in Victoria, BC, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the current situation of access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence. The goal of the research is to gain a preliminary understanding of the personal use water access situation in the City of Victoria and to assess it as a general topic of interest. In order to accomplish this task, I have asked the following research question: *How do select key-informants in Victoria, BC, understand access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence in this city?* Based on an analysis of the participant responses to this question, as well as the literature review, I examined occurrences of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria. Furthermore, I explored the immediate and trickle-down implications of limited access to water for personal uses, present potential responses to the current limited water access situation in Victoria, and suggest future research directions and policy implications resultant from this research. This research is not a theoretical exploration of water access; rather, I have deliberately chosen to focus on the topic from an empirical perspective in order to stimulate and inform social action.

### *Key Findings*

This research uncovers several key findings concerning the current situation of access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence in Victoria. The first and most critical finding from this research is that *access to water for personal uses when outside a place of residence in Victoria, BC, is limited*. This research also finds that the topic of access to water when outside a place of residence is one of interest and relevance for people in Victoria. Four foundational findings, referred to as research blocks, emerged from the analysis to further the examination of these initial findings and offer insight into the current water access situation in the City of Victoria.

The first three foundational findings reflect the codes and categories that discuss experienced, perceived, or desired occurrences, implications, and responses to limited water access for personal uses. These foundational research blocks have been named to reflect what they describe: *occurrences*, *implications*, and *responses* to limited access to water for personal uses. *Occurrences* reveals a picture of how limited access to water for personal uses currently does, or could, transpire in Victoria. *Implications* describes actual or potential consequences of limited access to water for personal uses, and reveals that the consequences and implications of limited water access are both direct and indirect, as well as far reaching in their impact. *Responses* describes possible action responses suggested by the participants to address limited access to water for personal uses. The discussion of potential responses to limited water access does not end with this research block, however. In the final chapter, ideas from the *responses* block are further examined, and findings from the literature review are brought into the discussion on current and possible responses to limited water access in Victoria, BC. The fourth research block is referred to as *stakeholder understanding* and

offers preliminary insight into how participants perceive, assess, understand, and value the topic of access to water for personal uses in Victoria. Furthermore, findings from this block reflect some of the perceptions and conceptions that inform participants' understanding of the occurrences, implications, and possible responses to limited water access in Victoria. In other words, this block is the environment or context within which the other three blocks are situated.

### *Research Question*

As I will present in the literature review, the topic of access to water for personal uses outside places of residence is currently under-researched in an explicit or intentional way in a North American context. Nor is it currently a publicly discussed social issue of any noted significance.<sup>1</sup> From this emergent research, I therefore hope to gain a preliminary awareness and appreciation of the water access situation for personal uses in the City of Victoria, BC, as presented by the research participants. Furthermore, I aim to assess access to water for personal uses as a general topic of interest. In order to examine this emergent topic, I have asked the following research question: *How do select key-informants in Victoria, BC, understand<sup>2</sup> access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence in this city?*

I have intentionally framed the research question to explore the topic of water access as it relates to any person outside a place of residence, for both housed and homeless, and

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<sup>1</sup> Episodically in Canada issues of water consumption and use in specific communities, usually at places of residences, do arise. When they arise it is due to water shortages and rationing (e.g., Tofino, BC, in 2006), and water quality and safety (e.g., Walkerton, ON, in 2000); often with unfortunate particular relevance to numerous First Nation reserves across the country (e.g., Kashechewan, ON, in 2003-2005). For a recent exception in coverage of water issues in the mass media see Picard's (2007) coverage of water access considerations.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the term *understand* and how it is used in this thesis, refer to the *Terminology* section on page 13.

Victoria residents and visitors alike. Structuring the research question in this manner has thus enabled me to gain insight into how people in Victoria perceive, experience, and respond to the topic of access to water for personal uses without pre-emptively centering the research on how access to water may influence, relate to, or be taken up by any one population group in particular.

### *Water Access: The Central Concept*

In exploring the topic of access to water for personal uses, there are many intersecting and overlapping social variables that affect access to water and that water access might in turn affect. For example, gender, homelessness, poverty, municipal and health economics, tourism, public health, public trust, and public good are all large topic areas intimately connected with access to water for personal uses in Canada. Many discussions surrounding these topics discuss components of the topic of access to water for personal uses, but discuss the issue as an implicit, peripheral, or subsidiary concern. For instance, literature on homelessness often addresses food security, considerations of health needs when living on the street, or the stigma associated with wearing dirty clothing and being “unclean,” topics that all point to the pivotal role water plays in surviving without permanent housing (e.g., Hendrickson, n.d.; Hwang, 2001; Whitbeck, Chen, & Johnson, 2006; Wicks, Revena, & Quine, 2006). Despite the intimate connection between homelessness and water use, these academic discussions do not explicitly or singularly single out the topic of water access as the core research theme.

In this research, I am trying to intentionally pull water access to the foreground and examine it as the core research focus, and more specifically, explore the notion of access to

water for personal uses as a central research topic. By conducting emergent research to examine the current situation of water access for personal uses outside a place of residence in Victoria, I therefore attempt to elucidate a currently unexamined component of daily life, current research, and public policy.

#### *A Note on Homelessness*

Although homelessness is not the primary focus of this research, the implications of living without housing undeniably relate to considerations of water access. Homelessness is pervasive across North America, and although there is no current accurate count on the number of homeless people in Canada, it is recognized by local organizations and the federal government to be a critical problem facing the nation today (Frankish, Hwang, & Quantz, 2005; Human Resources and Social Development Canada [HRSDC], 2007). Moreover, it is known that in a developing context, people living without access to water for personal uses have a reduced capacity to get out of poverty (Centre for Ecology & Hydrology [CEH], n.d.; Frankish et al., 2005; WaterAid, n.d.). Given this fact, and the potential for it to hold true in a Canadian research context, as an attentive researcher I recognize that I must be aware and sensitive to homelessness as a potentially emergent theme, and remain open to examining its role in the interview and analytic process. Although the issue of homelessness did not start out as a primary focus of this research, it emerged as a key consideration to water access in Victoria from the findings and analysis of the interviews and literature review. As a result, homelessness as it relates to water access outside a place of residence in Victoria, BC, is accordingly discussed throughout this thesis as it pertains to the findings and discussion.

### *Motivation for the Research*

It is widely accepted that people in developed regions normally access water through a place of residence (ECOSOC, 2002; WHO, 2003a). While a place of residence may be the primary place of water access for many Canadians, people regularly find themselves in need of access to water and water services, such as toilets or bathing facilities, when outside a place of residence. For example, a local resident out for the day may require the use of a public toilet or a water fountain. Tourists most often do not have a locally available place of residence; tourists travelling through a given location may indeed have a permanent place of residence to access water for personal uses, but it is most often not in the place they are visiting. Moreover, a person living without housing may need regular access to bathing facilities, toilets, or drinking water, and limited access to these services has more severe consequences than those experienced by a local resident or tourist.

Reflecting on the many personal uses for water and all the possible situations requiring water when outside of a residence prompted my initial conception of this research endeavour. At the outset, I wanted to explore current Canadian policies on public water access and had hoped to conduct a policy analysis with an eye toward public access outside of a home. Unfortunately, I soon learned that Canada has no comprehensive water policy addressing point-of-access in addition to other water considerations, a puzzling fact that I discuss in detail in the literature review in chapter three. Due to this setback, I started to track my research topic back to its natural starting point. If I could not examine Canadian water access policies, then I would look at how the issue of limited water access is taken up by formal and informal literature. Discovering that there was limited literature explicitly examining personal water access in North America as the central theme, I realized that I

needed to step back even further, and reframe my research focus and question accordingly. I became curious as to whether access to water for personal uses has ever been considered a relevant topic to people living in urban centres. My instincts led me to believe that this topic was in some way important and overlooked, and I wanted to find out what the current water access situation for personal uses was in Victoria, BC, as a case sample. Pertinent questions to examining this emergent topic centred on whether this topic was a significant concern for the local population; if so, in what ways, and what kind of further research needed to be conducted to understand the nuances of attending to this potential social issue.

### *The Importance of Access to Water for Personal Uses*

Looking beyond the accepted biological importance of water to human survival, there are many potential personal, social, health, and economic consequences that may result from, or be perpetuated by, limited access to water for personal uses. Without water, a person's ability to bathe, toilet, and do laundry is severely limited, and without being able to participate in these basic acts of hygiene, a person will be at greater risk to contract and spread communicable illnesses, or have a limited capacity to obtain or maintain employment (CEH, n.d.; Coppenrath, 2001; Hendrickson, n.d.). Using public health and employability as two examples of current social issues, I briefly review the role that water access plays in these particular contexts in order to highlight the importance of explicitly examining access to water for personal uses in all contexts, and the potential relevance of this research to other current social issues.

### *Public Health: An Example*

Water is a vital component in enabling personal and public overall health and well-being, and it plays a pivotal role in minimizing chronic and infectious disease, regardless of

region (Coppentrath, 2001; ECOSOC, 2002; WHO, 2003b; 2003c). For example, Dr. Jongwook Lee, the Director-General of the WHO, articulated that regular access to clean water is a basic, yet crucial element in ensuring physical health and survival:

Water and Sanitation is one of the primary drivers of public health. I often refer to it as “Health 101,” which means that once we can secure access to clean water and to adequate sanitation facilities for all people, irrespective of the difference in their living conditions, a huge battle against all kinds of diseases will be won. (WHO, 2004)

Although the risk of severe communicable illnesses, such as cholera or typhoid, is far lower in North America than in other regions of the world, the basic considerations and approaches to preventing the contraction and spread of communicable illnesses hold true across any geographic region. Hand washing and basic hygiene, such as bathing, are critical in preventing most communicable illnesses (Mayo clinic, 2005; WHO, 2004), and Canada is not exempt, nor immune, from the dangers posed by preventable communicable illnesses. The common cold, influenza, and hepatitis A, in addition to food borne infections such as salmonella and E.coli are prime examples of communicable illnesses largely preventable through good hygiene practices (BC Ministry of Health, 2006b; Mayo Clinic, 2005).

Without the facilities to bathe and clean, as in the case of a person living without shelter, a person is not only at risk of catching a preventable illness, but s/he is also less able to respond to it by maintaining a clean environment and washing regularly (Frankish et al., 2005). Furthermore, an individual in these circumstances may be more likely to communicate the illness to others within the larger community due to his/her limited capacity to prevent and respond to an illness (Frankish et al., 2005). The benefit of hand washing and other acts of basic hygiene have long been established (BC Ministry of Health, 2006b; Mayo Clinic, 2005; WHO, 2004), and have reappeared as important health issues in recent years in

light of the return of some communicable diseases. Ensuring that all people can easily participate in these activities is vitally important to maintaining and furthering the advances in personal and public health, to decreasing the occurrences of potentially fatal illnesses and infections, and to preventing new communicable illnesses from developing and spreading.

*Employability: An Example*

In addition to the personal and public health risks that may emerge from limited access to clean and safe water for personal uses are concerns regarding employability, the social expectations of appropriate appearances, and the general stigma of being “unclean.” The personal social costs of limited water access can be dramatic, and pivotal in entrenching people in poverty. Personal hygiene is an accepted and expected social norm integral for individuals who choose, and are able, to participate in mainstream society. Consider the person living without shelter: Notwithstanding the effect on one’s sense of self, a person’s ability to obtain and maintain employment would be severely restricted without access to facilities to maintain basic personal hygiene and clean clothing. To obtain even the most rudimentary of employment, there are expectations of meeting certain social norms and standards: a clean body and relatively clean attire are but two examples. In this respect, how can one meet these foundational expectations without a dependable source for regular access to water for personal uses?

In my literature review, I came across a website run by Clyde, a self-identified homeless man currently living in Florida. On his website, Clyde talked about the experience of employment and homelessness from his street-entrenched perspective:

A lot of homeless in this area find work through “day-labor” agencies, largely because they will hire anyone with I.D. (personal appearance is not so important). After being offered a job, it becomes necessary to live up to their expectations of punctuality, attendance, and good personal hygiene, even for the poorest paying jobs.

This involves . . . safe, clean, quiet, sleeping quarters with [a] restroom and shower available.

It has become common for many employers to hire people under temporary contract before deciding to offer them a permanent position. Accepting such a job offer means agreeing to be at work on time (usually 7AM), prepared to work, clean and in proper attire, five or six days a week, and keeping it up. Do you think this would be possible if I'm sleeping in my clothes behind a bush, sometimes in the rain, and the only transportation I have is my feet? ... Awhile back I tried to maintain a full time job while living outside. I didn't last long enough for the first full pay check. (Hendrickson, n.d.)

Clyde's commentary highlights the immediate impacts of limited access to water for personal uses in the context of employment. However, the potential consequences do not end here; the potential impacts of limited access to water for personal uses leads to a gamut of human rights indignities, public health concerns, and financial costs. Taking financial considerations as an example, we can see the potential trickle-down effects of Clyde's situation in that the impact of any one person unable to maintain employment does not necessarily end with that individual. An inability to obtain or maintain employment means that although a person is keen to work, they are unable to do so. This prevents them from earning any sort of regular income, which further entrenches a person in poverty and street life. It also means that social service staff (both non profits and government) will be working to support this person emotionally and financially through the uncertainties and trials of living without shelter. Furthermore, considerable numbers of people would be funding support for this person through volunteerism, personal taxes, and private donations. Although there is no research to date in Canada on the availability of access to water for personal uses and its potential impacts, there could well be a tremendous amount of personal and financial resources directed toward supporting people who would not need support if they only had regular access to clean water. Since knowledge on how water is accessed by people outside a place

of residence is currently minimal, there is a clear need to understand water access in North America since it is critical in developing our collective understandings of barriers to both individual and community health and well-being.

### *Victoria: A Case Study*

Victoria, BC, is a natural and opportune site for this research for several reasons. Victoria is a vibrant mid-sized city of over 300,000 people and an international tourist destination (City of Victoria, n.d.). It has many independent businesses in an active downtown area, and perhaps due to the number of visiting tourists and as its status as the province's capital, Victoria has an urban feel. In terms of suitability as a research location, I felt that the high number of homeless people situated in this city—1,242 homeless and unstably housed people in the city according to the 2007 Homeless Needs Survey—may in fact result in some of the research findings being highly pertinent to other larger urban centres (Homeless Needs Survey, 2007). Furthermore, the great number of tourists passing through Victoria adds an interesting population group to this research topic, since tourists regularly seek access to water without a locally available place of residence.

Although I was initially interested in situating the research in Vancouver, BC, because it is a larger urban centre, my lack of connection to that city made the idea seem unwise. When I initially considered situating my research in Vancouver, I was conscious of the concern that living in a different city (separated by a body of water) would limit my ability to meet participants' interview time requests. Questions of how I would connect with potential research participants, arrange interview times, and accommodate changes in interview schedules far outweighed the need for this research to be located in a larger urban centre. It is challenging enough to conduct a research endeavour in a familiar environment,

and in this respect, an attempt to conduct research in an unfamiliar city that I did not reside in seemed near impossible. Furthermore, the cost of travel alone would have been a barrier to successfully completing this research project. For all of these reasons—demographics, urban feel, familiarity, convenience—I decided that Victoria is an opportune location for a preliminary study.

### *Key Terminology*

The following list of terms—*homelessness, access, understanding, stakeholder*—have not only shaped my research purpose and question, but moreover, they emerge frequently throughout the thesis and hence deserve clarification. These definitions are not extensive in nature; rather, they are working definitions intended to add context and clarity to my use of these words as they appear throughout the thesis.

#### *Homeless*

In this thesis, the term *homeless* is defined as *people who currently live without permanent housing and who self-identify as being homeless*. Initially, I toyed with different language options that would most accurately reflect the situation, and tried to avoid labelling potential participants with stigmatizing and socially loaded descriptors that they may not identify with. In my participant recruitment posters and early work I used the phrase *people who live without permanent housing* to describe the situation of homelessness that I was exploring in this research, and avoided use of the word *homeless*. However, in conducting my interviews with the three participants who responded to the research call for people living without permanent housing, all three participants immediately described themselves as *homeless*. Given the participants' self-descriptions as *homeless*, it only felt right to me to use my participants' language of self-identification, in addition to my own language. As such,

throughout this thesis, the term *homeless* is used in addition to the phrase *people living without shelter*.

### *Access*

For this thesis, the term *access* refers to *the physical, financial, and/or social processes of obtaining water for personal use needs*. In this research project, I seek to explore and examine participants' understanding of access to water for personal uses in general, and more specifically, when outside a place of residence. The definition presented here is in no way meant to minimize or trivialize the many dimensions of access by suggesting that the concept is level or similar for all people in all life contexts. Access is a multi-faceted notion that certainly means different things to different people at different times.

At first glance, access can deceptively be taken as an obvious and unproblematic issue; however, a more careful exploration reveals that it is in fact, a complicated concept comprising many differences and nuances stemming from the layers of meaning surrounding the concept. For instance, theoretically speaking, what does access really mean? Who has access and who controls access? How does access differ for different people at different times? How does access differ in relation to different things, such as access to use public facilities as compared to access to post-secondary education? How do class, gender, and race impact access respectively? All of these questions highlight but a few of the many questions and nuances pertaining to the concept of access. Additionally, access is an often discussed critical issue, idea, and concept in public policy and social programs such as health care, child care, and employment and training programs. However, as discussed on page five, this thesis takes water as its central topic and has a research intention of informing and

stimulating social action with a focus on public policy. Thus, this research is not focused on examining access at a conceptual level or as a theme distinct from water for personal uses.

This research seeks to gain preliminary knowledge on how the research participants take up water access specifically or tangibly rather than conceptually. In order to reach this research goal, I asked how select key-informants understand the current situation of water access for personal uses for people outside a place of residence in Victoria. With the collected data, I then examined any variances and considerations of water access that emerged from different participants' perspectives on this topic. Some of the questions that underlie this research project are as follows: What does water access "look" like? How does water access currently happen? Where does water access take place? What does water access mean to different people?

### *Understanding*

I am speaking to multiple stakeholders in this research in order to hear about their experiences and perspectives on the topic of water for personal uses. In relation to participants and my own use of the word, I define *understanding* in this thesis as *the way that something is thought of, framed, perceived, and spoken about collectively or individually, personally or publicly, implicitly, or explicitly*. I use the term to gain insight into how the topic is taken up by people in Victoria, as well as to assess the salience of this topic in Victoria. How present is this issue in the Victoria community? How much interest is there in this topic? Would further research be beneficial? How are people currently talking about and framing water access? Do people think it is an important and relevant issue? I want to gain a preliminary awareness and appreciation of how people themselves understand access to water for personal uses.

### *Stakeholder*

I use this term, along with *key-informant*, to refer to the research participants. The use of both of these terms is to note that the participants were not randomly selected; they were selected because I wanted to ascertain the perspectives from people within the city whom I thought may have some direct experience or interest in this issue. To be clear, in my use of this word, I do not mean in any way that these participant groups were the only stakeholders in this issue, nor am I suggesting that all stakeholders (research participants and those in the broader community alike) have an equal voice in society as equal stakeholders in a topic. I am using the word as a concise way of noting that participants were not all from one community section or group; rather, they were all participants in this thesis because they had potential interest, insight, or connection to the topic.

### *Thesis Chapter Outline*

In chapter two, I present the method and methodologies that shape this research. I detail the research design for data collection, and present the methodological and ethical considerations factoring into the design and implementation of this research. Finally, I review how the research design took shape once in the field.

In chapter three, I present the literature review. Here, I review the search for relevant literature addressing the topic of access to water for personal uses, and explore the pervasive belief that considerations of access to water for personal uses are unnecessary or irrelevant in Canada. I review the UN position on water access issues and affirm that this assumption of access permeates the current perspective on the topic of water access. A review of Canada's own policies reveals the same erroneous assumption concerning water access. Lastly, a general overview of North American media coverage of water issues illustrates that popular

culture media mirrors the same problematic assumption of water access. However, a recent increase in local newspaper articles reporting on the availability of public toilets in Victoria draws this one aspect of personal use water needs to the foreground.

Chapter four offers a review of the findings that emerged from the data. I review the analytic process used in this research, as well as present the emergent codes, categories, and subsequent blocks that developed from the analysis. I then proceed to explain the four foundational blocks from the research that offer insight into the current water access situation in Victoria

Chapter five is a discussion of how the blocks fit together to illustrate the current water access situation in Victoria. I also examine two secondary research findings: I draw on Mills' (1959) concept of personal troubles and public issues to offer an explanation to an observed perceptual shift between participants' initial statements of water access awareness and their subsequent explanations of personal experiences. Comments on public and private considerations of water access are also raised. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the relevance of this research and a review of the research limitations.

In chapter six, the thesis draws to a close with a review of potential action responses as emergent from the findings. Finally, I present empirical and theoretical future research ideas, as well as examine several policy implications relating to limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria.

## Chapter Two. Methodology, Methods and Data Analysis

“Water is the most basic of all resources. Civilizations grew or withered depending on its availability.” (Dr. Nathan W. Snyder, Ralph M. Parsons Engineering)

Following an explanation of case study research and grounded theory as used in this research, this chapter reviews the feminist influences that characterized my methodological approach to this project, with specific attention to the importance of self-location and power dynamics in the research setting. Subsequently, I detail the overall study methods and process from literature review, to interviews, and to analysis. I also review confidentiality, expectations, and compensation as prominent ethical considerations of this research. The final sections of this chapter review how all the components of the proposed research methods played out in actuality, noting the surprises and adjustments that occurred throughout the research process, in addition to presenting an overview of the data collection and analysis approaches.

### *Research Design*

#### *Case Study Research*

Case study research approaches are ideal for exploratory research questions that examine the occurrences of current phenomena (Creswell, 1994; Yin, 1989, 2003). They allow the researcher to explore unfamiliar terrain in order to gain a deeper understanding of emergent topics. Yin (2003) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). This definition characterizes many of the parameters of this research endeavour: an exploratory research question examining a current situation within the real-life context of Victoria, BC, where a

lack of previous research on the topic renders the boundaries of this topic unexamined and unidentified. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the current situation of access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence.

This research did not use the case study research design detailed by Yin (1989, 2003) as the sole or primary guide to data collection or analysis techniques. Nevertheless, Yin's description of the suitability of case study research to different research queries did guide the initial development of my research focus, site, and question. For instance, Yin stated that case study research is particularly fitting for research questions that explore the *how* or *why* of particular situations. In this case, the research question "*How do select key-informants in Victoria, BC, understand access to water for personal uses for people outside a place of residence in this city?*" is ideally suited to a case study approach. Given the emergent nature of this research topic, as well as my goal to gain a preliminary understanding of the personal use water access situation in the City of Victoria and assess it as a general topic of interest, the case study approach is well suited to this research.

### *Grounded Theory*

Grounded theory is a research method specifically intended for emergent research: Its focus is on making sense of a research setting rather than testing a hypothesis or theory (Action Research Resource, n.d.; Charmaz, 2006). By attending to differences in approaches between emergent research and hypothesis-testing research, grounded theory offers researchers techniques to be responsive to the situation in which the research is conducted. The grounded theory approach outlines a series of methods for staying close to the data while collecting, coding, and analyzing it (Charmaz, 2006; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Methods such as the constant comparative method—

comparing interviews and findings to one another and then projecting emergent findings back onto the interviews to assess and confirm the accuracy of findings—guided a thematic analysis of the participant interviews (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Due to its explicit focus on methods for emergent research, grounded theory is particularly useful in areas where little research has been done, such as access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence. Given my desire to stay close to the data and to see what the research participants would reveal about this topic, grounded theory felt very fitting as a research method for this thesis. While I have drawn from the grounded theory approach of letting themes emerge from data, I did not intend to adhere directly to the specific and extensive methods detailed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their original presentation of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Creswell, 1998). Rather, I have used their techniques as an analytical tool to help guide the themes analysis of the key-informant interviews, to stay attuned to the emergent nature of this research, and to alert readers of potentially related research considerations that may arise over the course of the research process.

Grounded theory also aims to uncover the theory that is implicit in the data. In essence, it calls for researchers to root their analysis in the research data in order to develop new theories “grounded” in the research findings. Given that this research is directed toward stimulating and informing social action with a focus on public policy, the primary use of grounded theory in this context was not to produce theory, but to explore a current situation. While a theoretical perspective, or early components of an explanatory theory, may inevitably emerge from the research, this was not my primary research goal and my use of grounded theory did not extend towards meeting this goal. Rather, the use of grounded

theory in this research was limited to drawing on the analytic tools that guide a themes analysis, and applying them as is fitting in this research.

### *Feminist Practices*

Methodologically, I have drawn mainly from feminist research approaches. Although a feminist methodology did not dominate my data analysis as the interpretive lens in examining the findings, feminist research practices such as attending to self-location and power dynamics within the research setting, did underlie my approach. This section explores the feminist approaches that influenced the research design and practical implementation of this thesis.

### *Locating Self.*

In any research setting, it is important for the researcher to locate themselves, their position, and their biases explicitly before undertaking the research (Becker, 1970; Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006; Kirby & McKenna, 1989). In the mid-1960s and early-1970s, sociologist Howard Becker (1970) wrote about the importance of self-location in qualitative research, and its impact on research process and findings in an article titled "Whose Side Are We On?". His article raised important concepts about the realities of position and bias in the research process. Becker argued that research was not about eliminating bias and personal beliefs; rather, it was important to acknowledge them and acknowledge whose "side" these biases may place the researcher on, as well as what impact biases may have on the research and analysis. Since then, the feminist movement has continued to emphasize the importance of attending to this within any research setting. Kirby and McKenna (1989) specifically referred to this self-awareness, self-location, and self-reflection as conceptual baggage. Like Becker, Kirby and McKenna argued that bias was not something that could or should be

removed, but rather, it was something that needed to be acknowledged. I agree with this stance and feel strongly that it was important for me as a researcher to be explicit to everyone who was involved in the research process about my research intentions, project goals, and my personal biases as best as I could understand and communicate them. In this way, participants could have made a more informed decision about whether they wanted to participate.

In addition to self-location within the interview component of the research, I have done my best to be open and transparent throughout the thesis process. I have worked to communicate clearly my research interest, motivations for the research, and thesis focus, in addition to detailing the research process. I hope that this transparency in process will help to foreground any previous or unconscious biases influencing this work for myself and/or for the reader. It is also my intention that this transparency in process will enable readers of this thesis to assess and comment on my research approach in order to improve upon it for future research endeavours.

#### *Power Dynamics.*

As I continued to explore methodological and general research considerations, I was particularly aware of the issue of power in the research setting. I did not, nor do I now, believe it to be possible to develop a concrete or prescriptive set of actions to address all the subtleties and mechanisms of power that occur in a research dynamic. However, as I approached this research, I was aware that I needed to be attuned to the ways in which power may influence my collected information, the experiences of research participants, and my own experience as interviewer (Johnson Young, 1993; Kirby et al., 2006; Reinhartz, 1992). In terms of power-over dynamics, in this research project, there were no previous existing

relationships between myself and any of the participants. But, given that my research involved the participation of people (including myself) ranging in social location, class, and positions of authority within the city, there were issues of power and perception that need to be considered and discussed.

Participant knowledge and perception about my class, educational level, gender, age, race, and student status may have influenced disclosure of information and affected honest discussion in the research setting (Johnson Young, 1993). Although no formal power-over relationships pre-existed, my student status, age or gender, for example, may have generated a power-under relationship with city officials or business owners/operators. The inverse may have held true for the interviews with participants living without shelter: My perceived class, education level, and race may have resulted in a power-over situation. Of course, the fact that this is ultimately *my* research project—I am the one analyzing the data and presenting the results—allowed me to have the *final* power-over, although the opportunities for continued participant involvement throughout the thesis development were intended to keep this component of power-over in check. In many ways, the power dynamics in any research setting are circular and highly unpredictable. At different stages and given each participant's different world views, a whole host of power dynamics may emerge in the interview setting.

I do not believe that it is either realistic or desirable to suggest that I might remove power from the research setting or neutralize participant perceptions of myself. However, I strongly value an open and respectful research environment, and I strove to create this with every opportunity. Through honesty and forthright communication, I aimed to create an open atmosphere of mutual safety and respect. In order to foster this safe environment, it was important for me to be continually critical of my own role in the research and the responses

that I might have elicited. Through this self-awareness, I intended to nurture a safe research space where participants felt respected and comfortable engaging in the research process.

### *Literature Review*

The first component of the research process was a review of current literature that addressed the topic of access to water for personal uses. This was intended so as to gain a general knowledge on how the current situation of water access for personal uses for people outside a place of residence has been taken up across various literatures. I conducted a literature review of academic literature, a selection of current Canadian policies, reports on water in general published by the UN, and a general review of local and North American media coverage on the topic of water.

### *Local Newspaper Scan.*

Initially, examining local newspapers in search of relevant articles for the literature review was not at the front of my mind, but my method was flexible and responsive due to the emergent nature of the topic. I incorporated a newspaper scan into the literature review in response to a perceived increase in media coverage on the topic of public toilets; a topic that is merely one component of access to water for personal uses. The newspaper scan served to verify whether there was in fact an increase in local media coverage on this topic, as well as examine how this topic was taken up in local newspapers. Since the increase in media coverage that prompted the newspaper scan occurred after I conducted participant interviews, the media coverage did not factor into the interview questions or discussion.

### *Key-Informant Interviews*

#### *Sample and Population: Criteria for Inclusion.*

I decided to use a multi-stakeholder approach in this research because I hoped to gather multiple perspectives on the current personal use water access situation within the city without centering on one population in particular. I was interested in a mixed sample of up to 12 individual participants in total, with a maximum of three participants coming from each of following four community sectors: people living without shelter, social service workers, public officials, and local downtown business owner or operators. This array of participants was intended to provide a range of data relating to the topic of water access for personal uses without focusing on one group of users or providers. The actual composition of the sample was largely determined by participants who were interested, agreeable, and available to participate in the interviews at the time of participant recruitment.

Participants were invited to participate in the research because of their specific roles in the city (e.g., city council representative, downtown business owner/operator). However, in order for participants to feel safe to talk about the topic at hand without feeling the pressure or need to toe the political line, they were not recruited to serve as an institutional representative or community ambassador. Nevertheless, I intentionally encouraged participants to bring to the interview not only their personal opinions on the topic, but also their thoughts and experiences gleaned from the perspectives of their positions within the city. For this reason, I deliberately invited participants who may not necessarily have been informed on this issue, but may have had a certain level of interaction with the issue. Furthermore, I invited participants from different sectors of the community where I thought that water access for personal uses may be a relevant topic. However, I did not invite

participants from every area that may have been affected by personal use water access since that would have broadened the scope of research well beyond my Master's level capacities.

*Interview Structure.*

Semi-structured key-informant interviews with a range of representatives from the Victoria community (i.e., a mixed sample of up to 12 individual participants from different city sectors) were used to collect participant data. My choice to select key-informant interviews as the technique most suitable for this research reflected my desire to maximize the comfort level of potential participants. Given the range of potential participants in this research, confidential one-on-one interviews seemed most appropriate and plausible. The individual interview setup provided a private setting to discuss current water access in the city, which hopefully enabled participant confidentiality and aimed to increase participant comfort. As such, key-informant interviews were the most suitable data collection technique when considering the comfort of the array of people I included in the study.

Semi-structured in nature, the interviews started with a loose explanation of what I meant by access to water for personal uses in order to manoeuvre the interview towards a general direction (for the interview guide, refer to Appendix A). I then walked participants through 12 open-ended questions. The questions were worded so as to guide the participant to share their thoughts and opinions on the topic of water access for personal uses, as well as encourage personal reflection. Naturally, the exact wording of the questions varied slightly in each interview context, but the content of the general queries remained the same. Beyond the listed questions, I invited participants to share their ideas and opinions on the topic in general, and encouraged them to discuss material not covered in the interview questions.

Interviews transpired in a quiet and uninterrupted location mutually agreed upon in order to maximize the comfort levels for both the participant and the researcher.

*Recruitment.*

All participants were recruited with an invitation letter written and sent directly by myself. In the invitation letter, I presented my request for participation, additional information about the research project, and contact information (email and telephone) so that invited participants could easily contact me should they want more information or decide to participate in the research. The contact information for city officials, downtown businesses, and social service organizations were all publicly available through organization and business listings on the internet, and in the Victoria telephone directory. The plan to recruit participants living without shelter was also to contact them with an invitation letter passed on by a willing third party, in this case, staff members at local outreach organizations. The staff members at these organizations were to pass along the research invitation letter to familiar and known clients whom they believed would be potentially interested in participating in such a research endeavour. If a person was interested in participating in the research, they were invited to respond directly to me by telephone or email. Recruitment was organized in this way to ensure that potential participants did not feel obliged to participate in the study in fear of losing the services of the participating agencies.

When I initially contacted a local housing service agency<sup>3</sup> to ask if they would be a willing third party, they suggested a more direct approach to contacting potential participants. The organization generously offered me the use of their physical space and

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<sup>3</sup> The agency's name has been withheld due to confidentiality.

suggested that I would have more success accessing participants if I could cut down on the number of back-and-forth communications required for participation. They suggested that I pick certain times to situate myself at the organization and tell any interested individuals to come by during the allotted times I had already committed to. I gratefully accepted the offer of space and adjusted the recruitment strategy accordingly. Thus, in order to recruit participants living without shelter, I distributed posters in downtown housing, outreach and crisis services. The poster presented a brief overview of the research, listed the three days I would be situated at the housing service office, and contact information for participants interested in more information. When potential participants came to the housing service office, they had an opportunity to review the consent forms and ask me any questions about the research before deciding to participate.

*Interview follow-up.*

I conducted one interview session with each participant and asked each participant if they would be interested in reviewing the transcript of their interview for accuracy once it was completed. This way, participants who were interested and available beyond the interview session had the option to continue to participate, and uninterested participants could end their involvement at this point if they so desired. I additionally asked participants whether they would like to see a completed copy of my thesis, or the section of my thesis in which they are quoted (if they are quoted), so that they could see how they were presented or framed within the thesis context. Both of these options for continued participant involvement afforded participants several opportunities to withdraw any content with which they were uncomfortable with, as well as maintain a certain level of input on how their contribution had been taken up within the research and analytic process. I deliberately created and offered

these opportunities for participant involvement in hopes that the option of reviewing interview content in the future would help to increase participant comfort and foster a sense of safety to speak more freely during the interview.

### *Data Analysis*

I digitally recorded the key-informant interviews and then transcribed the interview content. Drawing on a grounded theory approach, I coded the transcripts using the electronic data management program, Atlas.ti v.5.1. The coding began with an initial inductive labelling process that identified emergent ideas and themes as they appeared in the transcripts on a line-by-line and question-by-question basis. The coding was considered complete once all of the interviews were coded. The emergent themes that reached saturation were included in the primary analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theme saturation is generally defined as the point in the coding process at which more data can or is added to the analysis and the existing description of categories and themes remains consistent (Kirby et al., 2006). In this research, there were a few possible emergent themes that appeared in coding the interviews that did not reach theme saturation; two of these secondary findings are discussed in chapter five. Following the initial coding, the analytic process looked for any emerging themes and categories, and the connections between emergent categories. In chapter four the data analysis process is further discussed and the details of the research findings are presented. In chapter five, the data analysis is expanded into a broader discussion that implicates the findings from the literature review with those from the interviews.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Beyond seeking and obtaining ethics approval for my research from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, there were further ethical considerations that I took into account as I approached my interview participants and the interview process. Participant confidentiality, expectations, and the ethics of compensation were three ethical considerations that held my attention in designing and conducting this research.

#### *Confidentiality*

Due to the city setting, the recruitment process, and the limited pool of potential participants, there were possible limits to confidentiality for research participants. For instance, although names and identifying information would be removed from the transcripts, it may be possible for others to identify participants through the opinions they express, the experiences they recount, or the positions from which they speak. It was personally important that these limits in maintaining confidentiality be extremely clear to potential participants. In the consent form (see Appendix B), participants were made aware that their identities may be revealed despite all efforts to ensure confidentiality due to the nature of the recruitment process, the small pool of participants, and the potentially publicly recognizable nature of some participants. It was further explained that if participants chose to conduct their interview at a place of employment, confidentiality could not be ensured since co-workers and other staff or volunteers may become aware of their participation in the research.

#### *Participant Expectations*

The topic of water access for personal uses outside a place of residence has the potential to be a relevant and important issue for participants. This reality may have resulted in a strong participant desire for something to be done about the topic, perhaps with some

immediacy. While I would love to use this research for action, the timeline and realities of any action may not have aligned with the timeline and needs of participants. As part of the informed consent procedure, participants were made aware of the ultimate research goal for this project, as well as the reality that this is a Master's thesis: For better or worse, no immediate and overwhelming societal change would likely result from participation in this study. In order for everyone to understand this research goal and to obtain informed consent, I was as open and forthright as possible with any potential participants. Participants were informed of the research goals and procedures, and there was time and space set aside in the interview setting for an open two-way discussion about any of these issues, as well as the opportunity to discuss participants' interests, hopes, questions, or concerns regarding the research (Johnson Young, 1993; Kirby & McKenna, 1989).

### *Compensation*

For their participation in the research, all participants were offered to choose between the following three options: an honorarium of \$30.00, a food voucher of \$30.00, or a donation to a local charity for \$30.00. Participants were told in the recruitment letters that they would be offered an honorarium, as it was important that participants were aware that they would receive some compensation for the time they invested in the research project. However, prior to the interviews, potential participants were not made aware of the actual amount of the honorarium they would receive following their participation. In accordance with the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, the practice of not disclosing the amount of the honorarium prior to participation serves to prevent individuals from feeling coerced or enticed into research participation based on the amount of the honorarium. Although I understand and agree with the intention of not revealing the amount of the

honorarium, I believe that this poses some practical frustrations and ethical considerations. Since we live in a culture that functions on financial compensation—the majority of people go to work for financial gains, not exclusively due to a belief in the intrinsic value of any given task—it seems odd to me to suggest that research is somehow removed from this fiscal system.

Many people have to consider the financial benefit of participating in a research project because they may need to take time out of their paid work schedule in order to participate. This means that they may need to know the financial losses and gains of participating in a research project. As a result, I found it frustrating to be unable to advertise an amount of the honorarium to potential participants because I felt it diminished the appeal of participating in the research project. Furthermore, I found nothing ethically inappropriate with compensating people financially for spending their time on this research. Although I understand the goal of avoiding coercion, the lack of explicit compensation could have been an influencing factor in its own right. For instance, why would an individual be motivated to lose paid work time to volunteer for a research project unless they had a specific agenda in mind? Although I could not advertise the amount of compensation for participation in this project, I struggled throughout the thesis, with no resolution, on the ethical necessity and impracticality of not disclosing this information.

#### *Research in Action: How the Research “Played Out”*

How did the proposed research design actually take shape once in the field? In this section, I review adjustments that were made to the initial literature review and key-informant interview techniques, and discuss the general experience of conducting key-informant interviews. I touch on the surprise opportunity of conducting an interview in a

second language, and describe the challenges and strengths of that experience. Finally, I explain the interview transcription experience that marked the start of the findings and analysis stage of the research, and briefly touch on the participant follow-up process.

### *Literature Review Challenges and Approaches*

The literature review began with a broad review of literature on the topic of water. My intention with this general review was to gain a greater understanding of how water issues are currently being framed across the literature and assess how water access relates to other key water topics. In this initial literature search, I established familiarity with current water topics. At this point, I honed my attention on the topic of access to water for personal uses and began the literature review with a keyword search.

#### *Keyword Searches: A first approach.*

I began my search for literature specific to access to water for personal uses with a traditional keyword search. I started the search with obvious keywords and keyword pairings such as *water + access*, *water + personal use*, *homelessness + water access*, *urban + water access*. I searched these types of word pairings in general databases such as FindArticles and Google Scholar, as well as field specific ones such as the SAGE collections and the Social Sciences Index. While some searches turned up no results (e.g., *water + personal use*), others returned quite decent numbers (e.g., *urban + water access*). Unfortunately, a review of the searches that did render results revealed no articles directly addressing the topic in a developed context. The lack of literature looking at water access as its core issue seemed so implausible that I felt I needed to structure a more intensive and quantifiable literature review process to be certain that it was in fact, an overlooked topic.

*The Quantified Review: A second approach.*

To document this absence of literature and ensure that I was not overlooking anything in reviewing this emergent topic, I developed a spreadsheet based tracking system to log my literature searches. I developed several Excel spreadsheets to try to include depth and breadth in the literature review: One sheet tracked my initial keyword searches, along with the major themes of the search results; a second sheet tracked an extensive look at five journals over the past five years; and a third sheet tracked the popular culture literature on water issues. All sheets also included a log of the major themes appearing in the documents.

Not too far along in this endeavour, several things happened that led me to abandon this literature review approach. First, I was finding the same thing that I had uncovered in my initial keyword searches: that the topic of water access for personal uses outside a place of residence in a North American context has not been written about as the central research theme as of yet. Although logging the searches reinforced this finding and clarified that it was in no way a reflection on my searching skills, it was not changing that reality. Perhaps more important in my decision to abandon this approach was the realization that this type of review was in fact leading me down an entirely different research path. I was beginning to focus my attention on tracking the themes discussed in the literature, how these themes were discussed, and how this varied in different contexts (formal literature compared to grey literature). However interesting all this information might have been, it strayed too far from my actual research question and treaded too closely to a discourse analysis. Overall, I realized that logging all of this information would be very time consuming, and only minimally related to my own research question of how people in Victoria understand access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence. As such, I abandoned this technique,

leaving it for others researching the discourses of water issues to take up and explore. Findings from the literature review are discussed in greater depth in chapter three.<sup>4</sup>

### *Key Informant Interviews*

#### *Recruitment.*

The initial recruitment strategy of cold contacting potential participants with letters of invitation was not a resounding success. I received a few polite declines from potential participants, but for the most part, I received absolutely no response at all. For the second round of cold contacting potential participants, I decided to deliver the letters in person (when possible) in order to make a connection with potential participants and create an opportunity for discussion about the research. Unfortunately, this also was not successful. At this point, I became frustrated with the lack of response to the call for participants, disheartened by the amount of time recruitment was taking, and uncertain as to how my thesis would proceed with the lack of participant response. Fortunately, two student colleagues offered to distribute the invitation letters to potential participants on my behalf. Since this was not in conflict with the practice outlined in the ethics approval, I eagerly accepted their offers of assistance. This third approach was met with several positive responses and resulted in the involvement of six participants. Ultimately, it was through this

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<sup>4</sup> At various points throughout my literature search, I did find the occasional article that seemed interesting, if not directly relevant. Unfortunately, a great many of the articles and journals I wanted to access (e.g., *Urban Water*, *Water Policy*) were not available to me through conventional means. I could neither obtain them through the University of Victoria library or interlibrary loans, nor locate them through the public library system or other universities in North America. Although there were a few times I came across an unavailable article that seemed interesting and potentially relevant, I never found an abstract suggesting an unavailable article to be directly related to this topic.

Given that this work is at a Master's level, I felt that I had exhausted all of my natural options for obtaining this type of material. However, I feel that I need to acknowledge the limited availability of potentially associated materials, as it is possible that this topic has been explored in some capacity before, and I do not want to discount that work simply due to an inability to access it.

technique that all the participants—other than those living without shelter—were recruited. No participants were declined involvement in this study, although there were two individuals who expressed interest, but were ultimately unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts.

I suspect that the appeal of participating in a research project from an unknown student, on an unknown topic, for an unidentified honorarium, can be quite low. However, when the same request is passed through a friend or colleague, an element of validity or credibility may be brought to the project in the eyes of potential participants. This situation has both strengths and weaknesses. In some ways, it certainly limits the potential participants based on an indirect line of personal connections. Yet in other ways, it opens the door to many different participants that may not have been interested or contacted to participate through cold contacting techniques. At the Master's level, not all students will have the personal connections that are often needed to successfully recruit potential participants. As was the case in my research, had it not been for the generous assistance of colleagues who supported this research and helped in the recruitment strategy through their personal and professional networks, I may not have procured any participant interest. I think there is value in sharing this experience since it highlights the very real challenges of participant recruitment.

As I mentioned in my initial overview of the recruitment strategy, early on in the recruitment practice, I was offered an alternative recruitment strategy for contacting participants living without shelter. I was presented with, and accepted, the opportunity to situate myself at a local housing organization for certain afternoons over the course of a week. Interested people could come to the organization during those times for further information and as a point of contact. To recruit participants living without shelter, I

distributed information posters that presented a brief overview of the research, the three days that I would be situated at the organization's office, and contact information for participants interested in more information. When potential participants came to the organization, they had an opportunity to review the consent forms and ask me any questions about the research before deciding to participate. Participants could have stayed to be interviewed on-site that day, or could have chosen to come back and participate on another day if they were still interested. This method was an excellent suggestion and as a result, I successfully conducted interviews with three participants who self-identified as homeless.

*Interview Process.*

I conducted nine interviews in total and approached all interviews with the same 12-question semi-structured interview schedule (for a list of the interview questions, refer to Appendix A). Of the nine participants, three were people living without shelter, three were social service workers, two were public officials, and one was the manager of a local downtown business/social enterprise. The three participants who identified themselves as homeless were all male. Although all three were currently situated in Victoria, one was passing through town in an attempt to make his way to his family's home on the BC mainland. The three social service workers interviewed were all female and all Victoria residents. Both of the public officials, as well as the downtown business manager, were female and all living in Victoria. Interviews with participants currently living without shelter were conducted in a private office at the housing agency where I was situated. The rest of the participants were given the choice as to where they wanted to conduct the interviews, the only condition was that it be a space mutually agreed upon by both parties. Participants all

chose to meet at either their place of employment, an accessible coffee shop, or at their own private residence.

Throughout the interviews, I maintained a casual and respectful tone in order to encourage participants to lead the discussion and focus on relevant areas of focus. Initially, I actively held myself back from speaking too often in the interview setting, and limited my involvement primarily to general statements of acknowledgement and encouragement. However, during the first interview, I quickly realized that this was not the type of research where participants came to the interview with a story or experience already in mind to share. For most participants, likely due to the emergent nature of the research, the interview raised questions about a topic that they had not thought of before. As such, I found a more conversational approach to the interviews to be helpful. Participants responded well to my probing their initial responses and were comfortable talking through their early thoughts on the topic. Through this conversational interview style, I tried gently to push participants to think about their responses to each question, to provide examples, and to clarify their thoughts by talking through an idea. Acknowledging the fact that each interview question may have potentially been a completely new idea and an entirely new way of thinking about a topic for many of the participants, I left time and space for them to reflect on the question and formulate their responses. Despite this, I found the interviews to be more straightforward and shorter in duration than anticipated. I had estimated an hour to an hour-and-a-half for each interview when in fact, the shortest interview (the first interview) was 20 minutes long and the longest one lasted only 50 minutes (the last interview). The average length of the interviews was 35 minutes.

*Et Maintenant En Francais.* The third homeless person interested in participating in an interview spoke limited English and asked if I allowed people to participate in French. Given that my elementary and early high school education was exclusively in French, and having to make an immediate decision, I agreed to his request. We successfully worked our way through the interview using a combination of English and French. I feel that I was in a fortunate position to be able to offer an opportunity for participation to a French speaker. Indeed, given that Canada is a bilingual country, it did not seem appropriate to limit participation to one language. I really value the opportunity that my bilingualism afforded me to hear a perspective that otherwise would have gone unheard. I must however, note some of the challenges that arose from this endeavour.

I took a great deal of time developing the interview questions in English, attending to persuasive language, or biases in the structure of a question. During this particular interview, I was translating into a second language extemporaneously, so my ability to assess potentially biased language or sentence structures was compromised. Furthermore, my French vocabulary is not as expansive as my English one, a shortcoming which was exacerbated under the stress of conducting the interview with little forewarning. My ability to clarify answers or delicately structure questions was consequently less adept in this bilingual interview in comparison to the English language interviews. It must be noted that this language difference may have altered the clarity of the interview questions, hindered my ability to probe interesting responses subtly, and potentially impacted the depth of the interview. Despite these obstacles, I found no notable differences in the questions asked, types of answers offered, or content covered when attending to this detail in the transcription and data analysis process.

*A Note on Gender.* I had hoped for greater variety in the gender of participants in order to gain insight into some of the ways gender plays a role in shaping an individual's need and access to water for personal uses. However, as with any research project, participant involvement can be unpredictable, external to the control or desires of the researcher, and largely determined by the willingness and interest of people to participate. As previously mentioned, no individuals were turned away from participating in the research. In the end, participants rendered the following gender ratio: The three participants who identified themselves as homeless were all male, while the remaining participants—the three social service workers, the two public officials, and the downtown business manager—were all female. In voluntary participant-based research, an equal representation of gender (or any other participant social marker or practice) is never guaranteed, nor is it always desired. While a balanced gender distribution is in no way critical to this particular research, the unequal distribution of gender across participants creates an opportunity to reflect on the role of gender differences in the experiences of accessing water for personal uses when outside a place of residence.

Basic physiological differences between the male and female body, and the consequent differences in how men and women relieve their bladders, draw immediate attention to the gendered nature of this topic. However, the difference in how women and men urinate is not the only gendered element of this topic. Other gender considerations could include how biological sex influences the need and use of access to water for personal uses when outside a place of residence, or how gendered social practices intersect with current limitations to water access. For instance, within a homeless and street-entrenched population, how do women manage menstruation and sanitation without access to water for hand

washing and bathing? Or, how do socially and culturally ascribed gender roles such as child-minding or child-rearing influence the experience of limited access to water for personal uses? These are but two examples of the undoubtedly many gender considerations to be explored in the topic of access to water for personal uses. In the context of this research, gender did not arise as a key research finding or emergent theme. As such, although these considerations of gender are both interesting and potentially relevant, my analysis and discussion do not extend to further an examination into the role of gender as it pertains to access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence.

*Transcription.*

All of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Subsequent to conducting the majority of the interviews, I began the transcription process using a free computer program that allowed for speed control in the digital playback. However, in order to speed up the transcription time, I recruited help in the transcription for about half of the interviews. I also hired someone to both transcribe and translate the interview I conducted in French. Despite the fact that I can understand written French, I believed it would be more appropriate to have all the transcripts in English for the coding and analysis. Overall, I found transcribing to be a slow, but interesting process. In many ways, the coding and analysis were well under way through listening and re-listening to each interview. General themes in the data started to emerge and patterns in the interview structure were made readily apparent. At this point in the research, I did not deliberately attempt to follow the constant comparative method of grounded theory that requires the researcher to compare interviews to one another and then project findings back onto the interviews, though this was in essence what was beginning to take shape (Charmaz, 2006). Through reflection on the interviews and the

transcription process, I actively stayed aware of the data, looked for similarities, discrepancies, and general points of interest as they emerged. These practices were reflective of a grounded theory approach where analysis begins by staying present in the interviews, and coding is based on the topics and ideas raised by participants. As the coding developed from codes to categories and potential themes, I continually referred back to the interview transcripts, connecting and re-connecting to the data. Although not formally a part of the analysis process, the analysis was in its early stages of development during the transcription process.

*Follow-Up.*

As outlined in the study design, once transcription was complete, I contacted each participant and offered him or her the chance to review his or her transcript. Since all participants expressed interest in reviewing their transcripts when asked at the time of their interviews, I emailed or delivered hard copies as requested. The one participant who did not have the opportunity to review his transcript was one who self-identified as homeless. He had given me a street intersection where he regularly panhandled, but despite several attempts to find him at the given point of contact, I was ultimately unable to locate him. As such, he definitely did not review his transcript. However, since he did have my contact information when he left the interview and was made aware of an estimated timeline for completion of transcription, my hope is that he would have contacted me via phone or email if it was important for him to review the transcript.

Overall, I received very little follow-up from participants. Aside from the occasional correction of a few transcription typos and a few emails I received from several of the participants confirming that they were fine with the transcript, I received no major feedback

from any participant based on a review of the transcripts. I did attempt to follow-up with participants to ensure that their lack of response meant they were comfortable with their transcripts; however, as this was a voluntary and extra component of the research, I did not want to pursue participants too aggressively. All participants were given my contact information and an estimated timeline for completion of transcription, so I was not overly concerned about not receiving feedback from all participants.

### *Coding.*

Once the interviews were transcribed, I began the coding process. I decided to code the interviews using Atlis.ti, an electronic program designed for qualitative analysis. I began the coding using an open coding technique (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), citing descriptive words as initial codes. Through this initial coding process, I was attentive to both concrete and conceptual codes that might emerge from participants' perspectives. Soon after I started coding the data, I found myself using a process very similar in intention to axial coding, a technique that pulls the fragmented codes into larger, emergent categories (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although I did not set out to use an axial coding technique, and did not conduct this method using the frame outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990), almost immediately after starting to code the transcripts, larger categories linking the codes together began to emerge. The category *access point*, for example, emerged as a category encompassing all of the individual places where people described accessing water (e.g., school, work, home, shelter). Through continued coding, I developed an extensive list of initial codes, pulled together by the emergence and development of linking categories. Once the categories were established, I reviewed them and actively reflected on them to uncover the more specific linking themes, concepts, or overarching categories. I refer to these

overarching categories as conceptual blocks and further review the research findings in chapter four.

### *Chapter Summary*

Using a multi-stakeholder approach, I conducted semi-structured interviews with nine participants from four different city sectors: people living without shelter, social service workers, public officials, and local downtown business owners or operators. The interview practice and overall research setting were both founded in feminist research practices to help ensure a mutually respectful research environment. Attending to my own self-location, power dynamics, and transparency in the research setting were all part of the feminist research practices underlying this research. As I proceeded with the research, I was also aware of other ethical considerations such as participant confidentiality, expectations of action, and the inability to disclose compensation. Although I came to no resolution on these ethical considerations, I tried to attend to them with integrity and respect throughout the research. Finally, an overview of how the research played out in the field shed light on the actualities of practicing research. Fine-tuning the recruitment approach and conducting an interview in a second language were but two examples of the surprises that occurred in the research. Both experiences added depth and texture to the research process, and opened the door for unexpected research findings.

### Chapter Three. Literature Review

“Residential indoor water use in Canada is as follows: toilet – 30%; bathing and showering – 35%; laundry – 20%; drinking and cooking – 10%; cleaning – 5%.” (WaterCan, 2004)

I began my research and literature review with a general exploration of available literature on the topic of water. I was looking to gain a broad understanding of what key current water issues were and how they were framed. I also wanted to explore how access to water for personal uses was situated within the larger body of water literature and how water access in North America in particular, was presented within this literature. Through this early review process, I noted a clear distinction in the topics that were taken up in water literature as they related to developing and developed contexts. While there was plenty of literature devoted to the topic of access to water for personal uses in developing regions, I did not come across literature that explicitly addressed this topic in a North American context as an independent or central research topic. It appears that there is a widespread belief or assumption<sup>5</sup> that considerations of access to water for personal uses are unnecessary or irrelevant in developed contexts.

This review focuses on illustrating the gap in the literature that spurred this research and the assumption that seems to underlie this gap. To begin, I review my exploration of the topic of water access. I set about to concisely present my initial findings about what is written on the subject of water in general in order to highlight what is not being discussed. I detail how water can be perceived as an embedded consideration within other research themes, and then present an overview of how the current literature on the topic of water

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<sup>5</sup> I use the term *assumption* here to suggest that there is a premise that is taken as true, without any available research or literature explaining the acceptance of such a premise.

access has focused on developing regions. I take a closer look at the assumption underlying this lack of consideration to the topic by reviewing the UN position and some of Canada's own policies, as two case examples of how the assumption of access to water in developed regions has manifested. Finally, I review current local and North American media coverage to reveal how water access considerations have been framed by popular culture sources.

*Exploring the Topic of Water Access: Initial Literature Findings*

In the initial component of the literature review, I found various themes dominating the current literary landscape. In addition to a host of agricultural and biological sciences themes, conservation, types of use, sanitation, privatization, and human rights were the major social and environmental themes that consistently reappeared in the field of water research. Overall, the general literature on the topic of water was fairly evenly distributed in its coverage of developing and developed regions, with a tremendous amount of literature covering issues for both contexts. However, there was a clear divide regarding which themes appeared in connection with each development context. Conservation and use tended to be the focus of water discussions in developed regions (e.g., Wilk, 2006), while sanitation and human rights were the pervasive themes in literature on developing regions (e.g., Hardoy, Hardoy, Pandiella, & Urquiza, 2005; Nilsson, 2006; WHO 2003a).

Although I ultimately abandoned the quantified literature review technique as not entirely suited to my work, it did reveal preliminary findings of the most prevalent research themes that appeared in the journal database searches. The themes and associated development context in which water issues were most frequently framed and listed are as follows: sanitation/cleanliness ~ developing (e.g., UN Water, n.d.; WHO, 2004), distribution ~ developing (e.g., Maksimovic & Tejada-Guibert, 2001; UNESCO, 2006),

conservation/climate change ~ developed (e.g., Vicuna, Maurer, Joyce, Dracup, & Purkey, 2007), conflict ~ both, especially with a focus on the intersection of developing and developed (e.g., Shiva, 2002), and human rights ~ developing (e.g., ECOSOC, 2002; WHO, 2003a). This list is in no way comprehensive since it is based only on my early literature searches into water as a research topic. However, it does reflect the host of ways that water issues have been framed, and highlights the distinction in topic coverage between developing and developed contexts.

*Water Within Other Topics: The Embedded Consideration*

As the initial literature search revealed, water has been taken up in many different contexts as it pertains to various different topics. For example, sanitation and cleanliness, distribution, conservation, climate change, conflict, and human rights were but a few of the more prevalent research themes that examined aspects of water. While water was explicitly discussed in these literatures, in other cases, water was implicitly presented in the discussion and appeared as a peripheral element subsumed within a larger research focus. For instance, although papers on the topic of homelessness addressed the importance of trying to meet one's daily needs, the nutritional perils of food insecurity, and health care practices as they related to homelessness, these research discussions did not present water in itself as a critical component of the research (e.g., Hwang, 2001; Kawash, 1998; Montauk, 2006; Whitbeck et al., 2006; Wicks et al., 2006). Certainly, one can infer that an important part of health care practices or nutritional well-being pivots in some way around water access, but this was rarely stated explicitly. This lack of explicit attention on the topic of access to water for personal uses extended beyond academic discussions. UN reports and Canadian public policies also bypassed an examination of access to water for personal uses outside a place of

residence. In this research I have tried to pull water access to the foreground in order to examine it as the core research theme. I argue that there can be intrinsic value in looking at the importance of water access as the central research topic.

### *The Assumption of Access in Developed Regions*

In the context of current literature on access to water for personal uses, there appeared to be a core belief underlying discussions of access to water in a developed context. That core belief was that *the consideration of access to water for personal uses is unnecessary or irrelevant in developed regions such as North America*. This belief suggests that all people in developed regions have access to water if they so desire. Although I found no source explicitly stating that access to water for personal uses was considered irrelevant to developed regions, the topic has seemingly not been taken up in academic literature as a central research theme. This absence of discussion on the topic was the first of two key indicators suggesting that the topic is currently considered unnecessary or irrelevant. The second indicator was the clear divide across the literature regarding which water related issues were pertinent to which regions. Issues of water access were consistently presented, either explicitly or implicitly, to pertain to developing regions while other issues, such as conservation or pollution, were relevant for the developed context.

This primary assumption of access was exemplified by a very common occurrence in the literature: the presumption that discussions of access to water for personal uses pertain only to developing regions and as such, need not be contextualized. As a result, journal articles addressing the issue of water for personal uses assumed a developing region context. This belief was furthermore apparent in that authors rarely or explicitly stated the regional or developmental context for their research. While some authors identified the geographic site

of their research, many authors spoke in terms of conditions that were most often related to developing regions (such as child mortality, cholera, or water scarcity), and only mentioned a specific region when outlining their research design (e.g., Galiani, Gertler, & Schargrodsky, 2005; Sullivan, 2002). But most importantly, the majority of authors did not explicitly state that they were exclusively focusing on developing regions, despite the fact that their work truly focused within this context (e.g., Allen, Davila, & Hofmann, 2006; Sullivan, 2002). This lack of contextualization that appeared in academic discussions of water considerations was the most blatant way that the assumption that discussions of access to water for personal uses pertain only to developing regions manifested throughout the literature. The subsequent sections, *A Look at the UN Position* and *A Look at Canadian Policies*, examine the more subtle ways that this assumption of water access revealed itself in each area respectively.

Despite the pervasiveness of the assumption that water access has been considered an unnecessary consideration in developed contexts such as North America, I was unable to locate a place where this assumption originated or was first validated. The assumption of access in a developed context may well have an element of validity to it, or a “common sense” feel since issues of conservation can clearly be more relevant in developed regions such as North America where waste and overuse are pervasive. Regardless, any so-called common sense assumption can be dangerous. This seemed particularly the case when this assumption underpins the local and global perspective on water issues that guides the actions of countless government and social agencies in responding to a host of social issues. When we question the premise that access to water has not been considered a concern in developed regions, questions and challenges arise over the appropriateness of so many social policy actions in Canadian society such as public health initiatives and needle exchanges. Consider

for a moment how effective any one of those initiatives would be without access to water: Of what use are clean needles with no place to clean the hands or skin using them? How effective is it to instruct people to wash their hands frequently throughout the day to prevent communicable illnesses when there is no place to accomplish this task? Regardless of the common sense feel of this assumption, it is just an assumption, an unproven premise taken as fact and reproduced throughout the literature and discourse surrounding access to water for personal uses.

### *A Look at the UN Position*

The United Nations does not shy away from the topic of water; on the contrary, it plunges into the socio-political and health issues of needs and benefits of providing water access. The mass of UN documents I came across addressed different aspects of water such as sanitation, conservation and scarcity, urbanization, gender, conflict, and resource management ranging in focus from policy recommendations to formal learning materials. In fact, UN Water ([www.unwater.org](http://www.unwater.org)) is an entire unit wholly devoted to monitoring and acting on water related issues within the UN. The UN also presents health related materials prepared by the WHO and hosts documents prepared by the World Bank, in addition to other organizations, thus adding to the wealth of content available on water issues.

The context or development focus was rarely explicitly stated in all of this work on water issues by the UN and related international agencies. Occasionally, a public health document mentioned that water quality concerns and the issue of communicable illnesses applied, regardless of development (e.g., WHO, 2003c). For the most part, UN documentation relating to the general topic of water access focused almost exclusively and implicitly on a developing context. More specifically, documents on water access and

sanitation, gender, urbanization, and health exclusively pertained to developing regions (e.g., UN Water, n.d.; UNESCO, 2006; UNICEF & WHO, 2005). This singular focus and problematic non-contextualization illustrates the pervasive assumption that the topic only relates to developing regions.

In my review of UN literature, I located one document that explicitly stated that access to water is less of a problem in developed regions. The UNESCO document “Urban Water Management” (2006) stated the following:

Water-related environmental problems that cities are facing can be grouped broadly into four overlapping and interacting categories: (i) access to water and sanitation infrastructure and services; (ii) urban wastewater pollution; (iii) resource degradation; and (iv) water-related hazards. In developed countries, categories (i) and (iv) are either under control or less prevalent categories. (p.5)

This document cited the book, *Frontiers in Urban Water Management* (Maksimovic & Tejada-Guibert, 2001) as the source for these statements. In tracking down this document, I hoped that it would have offered insight into the origin of this assumption, or perhaps validate it with sources that focused on access to water in developed contexts. Unfortunately, while the book itself does make these claims, the authors did not cite any sources to verify and clarify these statements, nor did they contextualize whether their claims were rooted in existing research findings or were simply accepted common sense assumptions. Note also that this statement was made in the context of water related environmental problems and not in terms of water access considerations. More importantly though, “under control or less prevalent” does not mean that the problems are resolved. In comparison with a developing region context, many issues can be considered “under control,” such as preventable communicable illnesses, which are far less threatening in developed regions. However, that does not mean that there is a complete absence of communicable illnesses in developed regions; rather, it only suggests that in comparison to developing regions, there is an absence

of a communicable illness crisis in developed regions. This may also be the case for water access outside a place of residence in that the issue of access may still exist, but is not at a crisis level as in developing regions. The UN was one example illustrating the way in which this assumption of water access can manifest, and it is indicative of the type and nature of assumptions that run through the literature on the topic.

### *A Look at Canadian Policies*

As with the UN example, the absence of consideration to water access in Canada is best exemplified through a review of what is present; indeed, it is through an examination of what is discussed that we can clearly see what is currently being overlooked. Reviewing three federal and provincial policy areas—drinking water, health measure (social determinants of health), and food security—as examples of areas where water access considerations may be relevant, I explore how the assumption of access have manifested here in Canada.

### *Drinking Water Guidelines*

Federal policies addressing water considerations have focused on general topics such as cleanliness and safety of drinking water, natural resources, and trade.<sup>6</sup> The federal policy seemingly most relevant to individual water access would be Health Canada's Drinking Water policy. Upon review, it was abundantly clear that this policy focused entirely on the cleanliness and quality of water, without considering or addressing where consumers access the water (Health Canada, 2005). The policy seemed to take for granted that all people have access to water from a place of residence. This was notably emphasized in the Drinking

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<sup>6</sup> See Environment Canada, Water Policy and Legislation for an overview of Canadian water related policies.

Water introductory paragraph and regularly repeated tag line: “Managing drinking water supplies properly, from the source water to the consumer’s tap” (Health Canada, 2005, ¶ 1). Within this context, the water policy addressed the quality of water once accessed, but assumed a point-of-access already in place. This policy neglected the possibility that people may not have a tap permanently or locally available as a point-of-access. Consequently, I would argue that this particular policy has been based upon an assumption of access and as such, focuses only on considerations that may arise subsequent to gaining access to water from a tap. However questionable this oversight, we can hardly hold Health Canada’s policy accountable as the cause of this oversight. The policy in question explicitly focused on the quality and safety of water for consumption, and has chosen to ignore the location of the point-of-access (Health Canada, 2005).

The same assumption of access was mirrored at a provincial and municipal level, where the majority of responsibility for water access lies. The BC Ministry of Health (2007, ¶ 2) has a Drinking Water Program administered municipally by local “Drinking Water Officers, Public Health Engineers and Medical Health Officers, who are responsible for direct service delivery in BC's Health Authorities.” The BC Ministry of Health’s Drinking Water Program, much like Health Canada’s, has also assumed the availability of a point-of-access for local residents. Nevertheless, a preliminary look at the general description of this program offered initial hope about attending to the topic of access to water. For instance, the Drinking Water Program’s description was worded as “[e]nsuring safe, reliable and *accessible* [emphasis added] drinking water for all British Columbians” (BC Ministry of Health, 2007). However, as one continued to read through to the purpose of the program, it

quickly became apparent that access was not on the agenda; rather, water quality, assessment, monitoring, and reporting were the primary foci of the Drinking Water Program.

Similar to Health Canada's Drinking Water Guidelines, the BC Ministry of Health (2001) Drinking Water Protection Act under the aforementioned BC Health Act and the Drinking Water Program, focused on ensuring the quality of public water through regulations on assessments, testing, and reporting for water suppliers. The Drinking Water Protection Regulation, a component of the Drinking Water Protection Act, further attended to water quality issues such as treatment, public reporting, and notification of any arising quality issues. Throughout the acts, as well as the information and educational materials presented on the Ministry of Health Drinking Water Program website, access to water has been completely overlooked.

Moreover, in the Action Plan for Safe Drinking Water in British Columbia, the BC government stated its action goal as "safe drinking water for *all* British Columbians" (BC Ministry of Health, n.d., p. 1). The document went on to explain that "for *most* [emphasis added] British Columbians, accessing safe drinking water is as simple as turning on the tap. But many have health concerns about the quality of their water" (p. 2). The stated goal is to ensure safe drinking water for all British Columbians, while the document only accounted for the fact that for *most* British Columbians access is simply a matter of turning on the tap. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the discrepancy between *all* and *most*, nor was there any information on access points, implications, or further information for the people for whom access was not as simple as turning on the tap. Within the first two pages of this action plan, the provincial Ministry of Health has managed to gloss over questions and considerations of access to water for personal uses. The assumption that considerations of

water access are unnecessary or irrelevant in BC was clearly demonstrated through this disregard in examining the discrepancy between *all* and *most*. Furthermore, the focus on questions of quality, with no mention of considerations of access, revealed that similar to the Health Canada Drinking Water Guidelines, the provincial perspective on access to water for personal uses appears to be rife with the assumption that access is an unnecessary consideration.

### *Social Determinants of Health*

The social determinants of health are socioeconomic and environmental factors recognized as influences on individual and community health. A review of the social determinants of health according to PHAC revealed that a great many issues are considered in Canada's social determinants of health. Issues such as food security, housing, employment, physical environment, and personal health practices were all listed as determinants of health, but the first and most basic consideration—access to water—seems to have been completely ignored (PHAC, 2005a, 2005b). Access to water was not mentioned in any way in these general health guidelines, which is particularly interesting given that many of the determinants of health, such as personal health practices or employment, are in some way intimately connected to water access.

Looking at information and documentation from the BC Ministry of Health, the assumption that water access is an unnecessary consideration was most evident by its distinct absence from Ministry content. The Provincial Ministry of Health website listed a slew of health information and initiatives addressing topics such as getting and staying healthy, managing disability and disease, and end of life concerns.<sup>7</sup> Although some of the actions

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/navigation/yourhealth.html>

detailed in these programs require access to water such as hand washing with soap and water (BC Ministry of Health, 2006a), no mention was made as to where water can be accessed. Access to water appears to be unrecognized as a component in the social determinants of health influencing personal and community well-being, and has been overlooked as a relevant consideration in health information. In this respect, the national and provincial health measures have supported the premise that access to water for personal uses is not a necessary or relevant consideration in the health of Canadians.

### *Food Security*

Canada has an action plan for food security. Developed in 1996 and most recently updated in May of 2002 (AAFC, 2003), the policy itself is little known and often forgotten. However, since the topic of food security in general is currently gaining notoriety as an issue worthy of attention, more attention has been paid to this fledgling policy. Regardless, this policy is relevant to review given the intimate connection of food (production, consumption, and importance to survival) and water. Although touching on issues such as poverty reduction, the right to food, fair trade, and sustainability, this policy unfortunately came nowhere near broaching the issue of water access in developed regions (AAFC, 2003). This is particularly striking given the necessity of water for many food-security considerations such as food preparation, food safety, cooking, and of course, agricultural production. Water, more so than food, is a basic necessity for sustaining life (WHO, 2003a). Indeed, when a policy geared to address such a critical issue as food insecurity makes no mention of water access, this suggests the social pervasiveness of the assumption that access to water is currently an irrelevant consideration in Canada.

While various topics pertaining to water did emerge indirectly in discussions of health, food security, and drinking water, these references were vague at best. Given that Canada does not have a comprehensive water policy that considers water access in addition to water quality, the assumption of access to water for personal uses has been maintained largely through policies and practices, such as the aforementioned. Although I acknowledge that these are merely a few examples of Canadian policies, my intention here is to highlight the invisibility of access to water for personal uses in a Canadian policy setting.

#### *A Look at Local and National Media Coverage*

A review of popular culture media sources, such as newspapers and magazine articles, revealed that the majority of these materials currently look at water issues with a focus on conservation, shortage, pollution, flooding, climate crisis, and contamination. For example, a search the term *water* in the Canadian Newsstand database rendered a mass of articles discussing local and international droughts, floods, pollution, and usage. Although the topic of usage held the promise of addressing personal use access, it actually focused on different types of uses (agricultural, personal use in a developing context, etc.), and did not include access to water for personal uses in North America. Most recent magazine coverage of water issues have similarly focused on conservation, pollution, and privatization (e.g., Harris, 2007). A review of essays and stories relating to water in *Time Magazine* and *Maclean's Magazine* over the past few years revealed that although some articles focused on the issue of water in a North American context (e.g., Kingston, 2007; Maich, 2005), point-of-access has never emerged as a relevant or related theme.

Although a newspaper scan of current articles addressing the topic of access to water for personal uses in Canada was not initially planned as a key component of my literature

review, current headlines regarding public toilets and the problem of public urination caused me to adjust my research approach responsively. Since starting to research this topic in January 2006, there has been a steady increase in local and national media coverage focusing on one aspect of access to water for personal use: public toilets. Newspapers, magazines, and even the radio have started to talk about the limited access of public toilets in Canada's urban centres (e.g., Lavigne, 2007; Picard, 2007; Purdon, 2007; Stanford, 2007).

*Hidden City* (Purdon, 2007), a CBC National Radio series that explores the unexamined and unfamiliar components of Canadian cities, chose the topic of the availability of toilets in Vancouver as the focus of an entire segment. The episode included an interview with Clara Greed, a UK Professor of Inclusive Urban Planning at the University of the West of England. Greed has devoted considerable research attention to the social aspects of urban planning, focusing specifically on public toilet design and provisioning. The fact that a national and major radio program devoted an entire episode to discuss the issue of public toilets highlights the social relevance and public interest surrounding considerations of access to water for personal uses. However, the fact that this segment focused only on public toilets and not the broader topic of access to water for personal uses is in itself problematic. In chapter five, I will further reflect on this finding from the literature review and discuss the implications of splintering the topic of water access for personal uses.

Looking more specifically at local media coverage, we can see both the singular and recent attention that the media has placed on the topic of public toilets as distinct from other water access considerations. In 2004, the *Times Colonist* ran just three articles that broached some aspect of public toilets, and in 2005, the *Times Colonist* was down to only two articles. Although coverage on the topic waned in early 2006, the City of Victoria began to test out

the benefit of putting portable urinals in the downtown area by the autumn of 2006. From October to December 2006, this decision by the municipal government garnered attention and produced a mass of 16 articles discussing the situation. In the first seven months of 2007, the *Times Colonist* published 11 articles directly discussing public toilets in the City, with an increase in media coverage over the month of July when the City announced their plan to install pop-up urinals in the downtown area. Based on the trend of increased media coverage, I would conjecture that on the heels of this announcement, the number of articles on the topic is sure to continue to rise in the months to come.

On the whole, the articles in the *Times Colonist* framed the problem of public urination as an inconvenience to the local business owners and the broader community. These public discussions raised questions about the availability of toilets in Canada and broached some of the major implications of limited access to public toilets. However, the increase in discussion was in no way comprehensive. None of the articles in the *Times Colonist* explored public urination as it related to the homeless population, nor did any of the articles broach the larger topic of access to water for personal uses in Victoria. Although recent media attention on public toilets has opened a dialogue about the topic, in many ways, it appears that the exclusive focus on toilets continues to perpetuate the assumption that considerations of access to water for personal uses are not relevant in a Canadian context. By examining one situation where access to water facilities may be limited, the current media reports do not intentionally challenge the assumption that access to water for personal uses is widely available when outside a place of residence. Attention to other types of water access needs, such as showering, laundry, or even public fountains, have not emerged in any of the discussions about public toilets. The increase in attention to public facilities is welcome, but

the silence on the broader assumption of access indicates that the pervasive belief of widespread access is in many ways, still unchallenged.

It is interesting to note that the problem of public urination has pushed the topic into the foreground and spurred some media coverage. Whether this will result in larger social bodies such as the federal government or the UN to examine their own assumptions of access is presently unknown. Nevertheless, it is certainly an interesting dynamic in reviewing the topic of access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence.

#### *Chapter Summary*

A thorough review of water literature in general, using several different literature review tracking techniques, resulted in the initial literature review detailing the key ways that water has been examined in the academic literature. A brief discussion of water as an embedded consideration contextualized the finding from the initial search. I then proceeded to explore the underlying and problematic assumption permeating the current literature on water that has labelled water access for personal uses as an unnecessary or irrelevant topic for discussion in developed regions such as North America. This supposition was exemplified through a closer look at how the topic was notably absent from UN reports and rendered irrelevant Canadian policies. A review of the UN position and certain Canadian policies shed light on the pervasiveness of the unproblematized belief of access that quietly lurks beneath the surface of these documents. Finally, a look at current media coverage of water issues noted the increase in interest concerning the topic of public toilets, and a count of local newspaper coverage of the topic revealed a striking increase over 2006 and 2007.

## Chapter Four. Interview Findings

“We have the ability to provide clean water for every man, woman and child on the Earth. What has been lacking is the collective will to accomplish this. What are we waiting for? This is the commitment we need to make to the world, now.” (Jean-Michel Cousteau, award winning filmmaker, architect, and environmentalist)

Methodologically and substantively, this chapter details the key findings from the participant interviews. The chapter begins with an introduction to the nine interview participants through a summary descriptive paragraph of each participant and their respective interview. I then briefly review the analytic process that resulted in the emergent codes, categories, and blocks<sup>8</sup> respectively, and present a summary of the emergent data. I move on to present the four key research blocks drawn from the codes and categories: *occurrences*, *implications*, *responses*, and *stakeholder understanding*. The initial three blocks illuminate the *occurrences* and *implications* of limited access to water for personal uses, as well as potential *responses* to this problem. The fourth block, termed *stakeholder understanding*, is a preliminary perspective on the context in which the other three blocks are situated within. Following a description of these foundational blocks, I finally examine the perspective of the single participant who explicitly stated that access to water was not limited, although a careful review of his experiences as stated in his interview suggested otherwise.

### *Participant Introductions*

The following is a brief overview of the nine interview participants and a summary of their perspectives or insights on this research topic. The information presented here was derived from self-descriptions, personal observations, and participant responses to the

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<sup>8</sup> I called these larger themes *blocks* mainly because I worked through my analytic ideas with drawn pictures. In these images, each major finding was visually represented as a block, and I shifted these blocks around in relation to one another in order to construct an analysis of the emergent data.

interview questions. All participants' names have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Jerome, a 45-year-old man, self-identified as “officially homeless, without a place to stay” for nine months. He attributed his homeless status to a job loss and subsequent problems in finding stable employment. Originally from Montreal, Jerome has been living in BC for some time now. At the time of the interview, he had just started a new job and was feeling optimistic that he was starting to rebuild his life. Jerome was the only participant to state from the start of the interview that he was familiar with the topic of water access for personal uses outside a place of residence.

George, a 61-year-old man, has been on-and-off the street for approximately 10 years. During the interview, he self-disclosed as having HIV and hepatitis C, and being a habitual user of injection drugs. Due to his tenuous health status, George does not work. At the time of the interview, he had no place of residence and was currently staying in the back of a friend's place. George commented that he disliked and avoided staying in shelters, but will use shelters as a final recourse during “really bad times.” George panhandled to get by. Throughout the interview, George repeatedly stated that access to water in Victoria was not limited at all. Although he said that he never thought about where he will access water, he nevertheless revealed a tremendous amount of community knowledge about the informal places to access water on a regular basis. I examine George's perspective in greater depth in the section of this chapter entitled, *George's Perspective: Water on the Street*.

Francois, a 41-year-old man, recently came to Victoria looking for work. Unfortunately, he was not able to find employment in Victoria before using up his reserve money. Due to this predicament, Francois stayed at local shelters while attempting to save

money in order to go to his parents' place on the BC interior. On the day of the interview, Francois stated that he faced his first night completely without shelter since he had used up his allotment of days for staying in shelters, and was rather anxious about this pending experience. Francois self-identified as having HIV and hepatitis C. He felt that access to water was limited for people outside a place of residence, and mentioned his own concerns about the quality and appeal of water from the few publicly available facilities in Victoria.

Scarlett, Ann, and Julie all worked in different capacities in a local housing agency in Victoria that helps to house homeless and people at risk. These women were the three participants from the social service sector. At the time of their interviews, discussion and complaints were starting to surface in the agency's neighbourhood concerning public urination and defecation littering the streets. However, this discussion was not formalized as of yet, and the media was not covering the topic at that time. Complaints were instead being directed at their agency, along with one other social service agency in the area, since residents assumed that the local homeless population was the cause of the problem. To note, the housing agency has a toilet available for public use.

In her interview, Scarlett stated that she was somewhat familiar with the topic of access to water in so much as it related to the availability of a public toilet at her workplace. Over the course of the interview, Scarlett established that in her opinion, access to water for personal uses was indeed limited in Victoria, and these limitations had notable impacts on clients of the housing agency and the local community in general.

Like Scarlett, Ann began the interview by saying that she was generally familiar with the topic of water access. Ann's opinions about water access in Victoria were based in her own personal experiences, her perspective as a social worker, as well as her clients'

experiences. She felt strongly that access to water was limited in Victoria, and clearly stated that water access limitations were highly problematic and necessitated a response.

Julie began her interview by recounting her initial reaction to the participant invitation:—“wow, what does that [a water access study] mean?”—and further elaborated on the way in which water access can potentially be overlooked:

Access to water, that’s something we don’t think about a lot. You know, we think about access to shelter, having a place to sleep, access to food, or being able to go to the doctor, yet water is not something that you think about right off the top.

When asked whether there was readily available access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence, Julie took some time to reflect and responded with a resounding “no.”

Upon further reflection, Julie shared that she felt that this topic was an important one, moreover one that undoubtedly has significantly impacted the people she works with who live without housing. However, Julie did not feel that she had been personally impacted by limited water access.

As the manager of a downtown social enterprise, Kate was the single participant from the local downtown business sector. She began the interview explaining that she was not familiar with the topic of water access in any way in a Canadian context, although it did make her think of “third world countries, mainly Africa, and them not having access to clean drinking water” Over the course of the interview, Kate went on to describe how the business she managed had a toilet for customers, which forced her to regularly deal with non-customer’s requests to use this toilet. She also explained that she believed access to water for personal uses was limited in Victoria, and that this limitation was problematic for the city as a whole since it has affected downtown businesses, the homeless population, tourism, and local residents in various ways.

As public officials, Alli and Beth were the two key informants gleaned from the public sector. Alli connected immediately with topic of access to water for personal uses and revealed her incentive in participating in my research:

The reason I agreed to do this interview is because the question or the focus topic actually had me considering things I hadn't considered before even given my quite extended experience working with the street community. Access to water is something that . . . I think we all take for granted.

Alli discussed many of the potential implications of limited access to water for personal uses on individuals and the city, and she reflected on several different possible action responses to counter these limitations.

Beth was well-versed in current water issues and initially contextualized the topic of water access with discussions on Canadian water conservation and privatization. At the start of the interview, Beth frequently redirected the conversation from water access to water conservation. Initially, Beth reflected that access to water was not limited at all in Victoria, and as such, was not a necessary or relevant consideration. As Beth started to engage with the topic, however, she began to discuss the limitations of water access that people who were homeless might experience. Ultimately, Beth's take on the topic pivoted largely around water conservation and privatization, and although she felt that water could at times be limited and action on this topic may be needed, she did not explicitly prioritize it as a key social issue.

### *Analytic Process*

#### *Emergent Codes*

Upon completion of coding the transcripts, I had a total list of 112 distinct codes. Of those codes, 94 were tangible or concrete in nature that referred to types of uses, access points, specific concerns about access points, and impacts or consequences of limited access to water. The other 18 emergent codes were conceptual in nature; they reflected participants'

understanding, perceptions, and beliefs about the topic. The following quotation from an interview with Kate, a manager of a local downtown business, can serve as a sample to illustrate the coding approach I performed on the data. The in-text markings identify examples of the codes comprising one of the main categories emergent from the analysis.

Karen: The washrooms at work, are they public washrooms?

Kate: We have a public and a private washroom. So the staff and volunteers don't share the washroom facilities with customers.

K: OK. Is there a history behind that?

Kate: Mmm. I'm not too sure. It's something that I haven't really asked. But I think it more has to do with safety and um, due to the size of the building, we are regulated to have a public washroom. So I know a lot of businesses downtown aren't, but somehow we fall into the category that does need to provide one. So, in the area that we're in we really need to have a separate one just due to being close to the needle exchange and the drug activity on the street . . .

K: . . . So are people using the washrooms not necessarily to go to the toilet?

Kate: Correct. Yeah—we have a lot of people, especially in the summer time, that are coming through and almost bathing in the washrooms and then we have to refer them to Street Link.

K: Interesting.

Kate: So we kind of have to, we have to screen the people who want to use the washroom before we allow them access because when you come into the store, not everybody can use the washroom, you have to get a key from us in order to use the public washroom.

K: OK, so a lot of people are going to the trouble of accessing the key and then—

Kate: —Mm hm. And then have no qualms about using it as a bird bath. Yeah.

Codes such as *use-bathing*, *ap-work* and *ap-private business not purchase* reflect the description of where the water is being accessed (i.e., access point), while the use code reflects the type of use that is being discussed. This section was also coded with several access point troubles (i.e., ap tr-) to indicate concerns or general troubles surrounding an available access point. Finally, it was marked with the general theme of public-private as a

section of text that broached on the distinctions among public facilities, private facilities, and private facilities used as public. The layering of codes in this manner reflects the process of moving from open-coding to the clustering of larger categories. For a complete list of the emergent codes, categories, and research blocks, refer to Appendix C.

### *Emergent Categories*

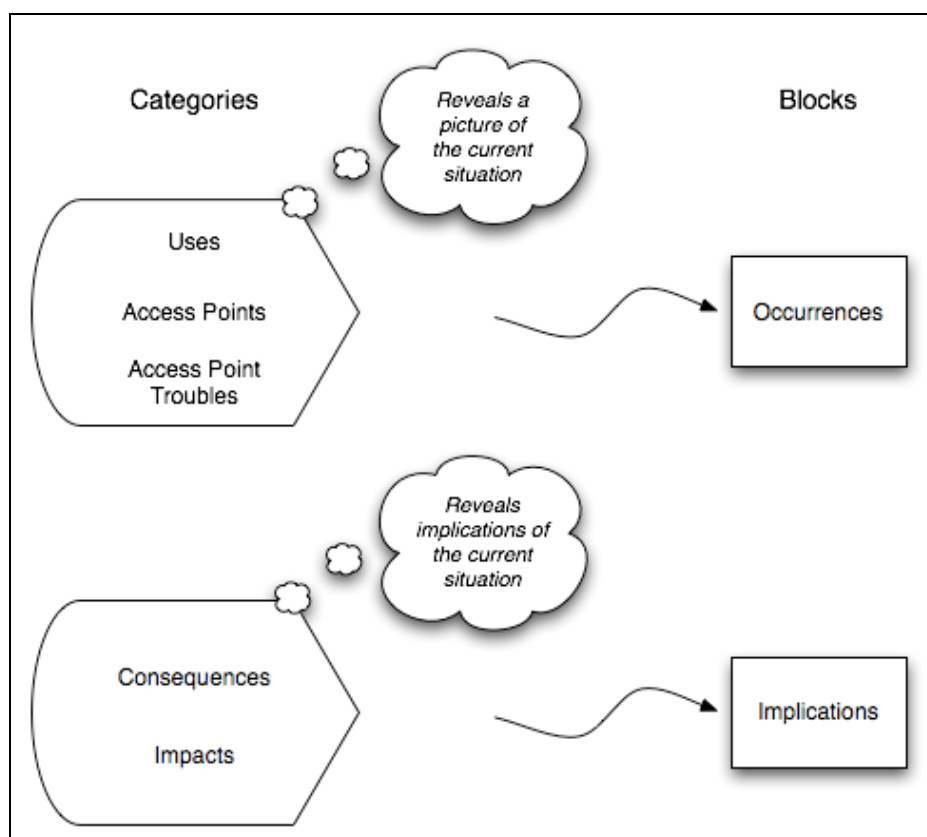
The grouping of the 112 codes resulted in 11 initial categories. The 11 emergent categories from this research were as follows: *uses*, *access points*, *access point troubles*, *consequences*, *impacts*, *themes*, *responses*, *response responsibility*, *awareness*, *importance*, and *why is the topic not talked about?* To view the sketched note and image of how I started to understand and piece together emergent codes and categories, please see Appendix D. In reviewing the 11 categories that framed the emergent codes, it became apparent that the category called *themes* did not accurately reflect the codes within it. Breaking the category down revealed that the seven codes within it were in fact, early codes for undefined categories. Placing them together in a distinct category no longer made sense, so I pulled the category apart and the codes were resituated within their appropriate category. Although these ten categories were fairly descriptive and seemingly related, there appeared to be further groupings that could hone in on more encompassing categories or blocks that would be more descriptive and representative of the interconnection between the categories.

### *Categories to Blocks*

I began to explore how the 10 categories fit together and what insight they could reveal on the topic of access to water for personal uses in Victoria. As I reviewed the categories called *uses*, *access points*, and *access point troubles*, I discovered that when linked together, the combination of these categories illustrated *occurrences* of water access

problems in Victoria. From this first discovery, I realized that further linking certain categories together would result in other large overarching themes or findings. Figure 1 below, as well as the sketch presented as Appendix E, illustrates how I began to identify the blocks by linking together the component categories.

*Figure 1. Migration from categories to blocks.*



The four emergent blocks resulting from this data are as follows: *occurrences*, *implications*, *responses*, and *stakeholder understanding*. The first three of these blocks are tangible in nature since they comprise categories that deal with concrete or visible actions and concerns such as type of use, location of access, or effects of limited water access. The fourth block is conceptual in nature in that it comprises the three categories pertaining to participants' perceptions and thoughts on the topic. These four blocks, in grounded theory

language, are my *theoretical codes*. These are the overarching codes that brought the initial codes and categories together into a unified larger meaning, thus illustrating the interaction of the individual codes (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1978). I review these four major blocks as foundational research findings that illuminate the problem of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria in the following section.

*Findings: Four Key Blocks*

“Karen: In Victoria, would you say that there’s access to personal use water?  
Jerome: Not exactly. You are limited, and on certain days, there is none.”

The most fundamental finding from this research is that *access to water for personal uses in Victoria, BC, is limited*. This primary finding was revealed through the participant interviews and the emergent codes and categories on uses of water for personal uses outside of a home, points-of-access for this water, and the associated troubles with these access points. Although the codes comprising each category and subsequent block cannot claim to be comprehensive in their coverage of influencing considerations, they are reflective of the considerations that participants raised in their interviews, and thus offer insight into the current water access situation in Victoria. Although the information that some of these blocks (and component categories) address can seem quite simple—for example, *occurrences* can be presented as simply illuminating where people use the toilet—from another perspective, they offer tremendous insight into the nuances of use and general considerations about water for personal uses in Victoria. The following sections review each of these blocks in more depth.

*Occurrences.*

By bringing together the categories *use*, *access points*, and *access point troubles*, the block *occurrences* was established. When one or more codes from each of the three categories that comprise this block was pulled forward, it revealed a picture of how limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria currently occurs. For example, Ann's following comment in recounting what she witnesses working at the housing agency highlights an occurrence of limited access to water for bathing:

Often times if someone walks in they can spend half an hour in the washroom here having a bird bath [bathing in the sink] because there is no other place to bathe, *and* there could be no other place to be that's safe.

In this case, the codes *bathing* (use) combined with *community support services* (access point), and *safety/fear* and *unable to locate public facilities* (access point trouble) clearly illustrate one occurrence of limited access to water for bathing when outside a place of residence. Ann's comment illustrates that for people without a private place of water access, there is limited availability of public bathing facilities where people can bathe, and do so free of concerns about personal safety. In Ann's remark, considerations about access to facilities, as well as concerns about personal safety, limit a person's capacity to bathe.

Kate also mentioned the practice of *bird bathing*—washing one's full body through the use of a sink—when she talked about one of the major maintenance issues with providing a publicly available toilet in a downtown business. In the quote used previously to illustrate the coding approach I performed on the data, Kate said:

K: So are people using the washrooms not necessarily to go to the toilet?

Kate: Correct. Yeah—we have a lot of people, especially in the summer time, that are coming through and almost bathing in the washrooms . . . [they] have no qualms about using it as a bird bath.

Francois also reinforces the occurrence of limited access to water for bathing for people who are homeless when he discussed the availability of bathing facilities in Victoria in relation to a scene he recently witnessed:

Last week I saw a guy with a bar of soap wash himself in a puddle in front of Streetlink. Right on the side of the street there, there was a big puddle of water. With his bar of soap y’know, he was washing his hands in the puddle of water. On the shore it happens often too. From Monday to Friday, from nine to five, at the marina it [the shower] is open. But after five, and on the weekends, I don’t know anywhere where there’s a facility to take a shower.

Ann, Kate, and Francois’ accounts clearly highlight the access point trouble of an unavailability of facilities or the inability to locate public facilities.

This block of findings also reveals where most participants currently access their water, and where participants thought most people access water in the city. In response to the question “how do you think most people are accessing their water for personal uses when outside a place of residence,” Beth revealed the following:

If they’re at work, my guess is that they have adequate access to water. Lots of places have staff rooms where they could have sinks and things like that, and toilet facilities. Some employers have showers if a person say rides a bike to work. Um. That would be guess about the main places.

Like Beth, Alli also consistently identified work and home as the key points-of-access:

Well most people are probably accessing at their points of engagement . . . Most people would access at home and then points throughout the day where they’re engaging in a likely private or private situation . . . So if they are in an employment capacity at their place of employment. And those that don’t have homes and that aren’t engaged in those business activities or private activities are accessing by the seat of their pants.

The finding that participants perceived access to water to occur most often at home or at a place of employment offers preliminary insight into why access to water outside these venues has been limited. If the pervasive community belief is that water for personal uses is sufficiently accessible within the home or at a place of work, priority will not be placed on

ensuring access outside of these locations, rendering access to water outside a place of residence limited.

The *occurrences* block also sheds light on some of the nuances of water access for consumption in an urban centre when outside a place of residence. The topic of water bottles and the pervasiveness of people carrying water in refillable bottles came up in several of the interviews. For instance, Scarlett reflected on the decline in the availability of public fountains and the change in public perception about them, which has forced people to carry water in bottles:

I don't even know if there are any public drinking fountains any more. Maybe one? But I think people don't take to public drinking fountains anymore. So they either bring their own water from home, or fill up a bottle wherever they can.

Kate shared that “most people that I see that come in here that are regular shoppers are carrying water bottles with them, like the refillable kind.” Kate also commented that she often refilled bottles for people from the staff room, suggesting that this social enterprise was in itself an access point for water for consumption. From a different perspective, Jerome highlights the nuances of water access and the challenge of drinking water portability when living without a regular point-of-access throughout the day:

Jerome: They [the shelter] have a washroom, except they don't have a water fountain. They use small Dixie cups and that's it. That's a pain in the [whistle]. You have to find a bottle, wash it, and use it for water, so I keep always a bottle in my [points to bag] . . . .

K: Do they provide water at any of the places where you get a free meal?

Jerome: No, not exactly, you can get a glass of water if you're eating a meal. But no water to go.

K: So you can't take any with you. Do you find that a lot of people are carrying water bottles with them?

Jerome: A lot. Normally I always carry one with me, even if it's cold outside I'll just carry a bottle of water at least to have something to drink during the day.

Jerome's experiences with limited access to drinking water and the subsequent need to use water bottles highlight several points about practical challenges to access water for consumption for people who are homeless. Jerome clearly illustrates the challenges of finding a bottle or container to carry potable water throughout the day, locating a place to wash the container, and the necessity to carry water during daily activities.

Findings from the *occurrences* block also suggest that the main sources of water for consumption for people who are homeless have been the community social support agencies in town. George stated that he gets most of his water from "places like here [the housing agency], the drop-in places." Jerome reiterated George's statement with the following comment:

The person who's homeless, you have to rely on the agency to give you the water, and you have to rely on the shelter and those kinds of things. So if the person doesn't have access to the shelter, for whatever reason, he cannot access water easily.

Many of the other participants shared this same perspective. For instance, when I asked Ann "how do you think that people who are homeless are accessing their water for personal use, in a Victoria context?" she replied:

Through community support services, the shelters, or wherever they choose to or are able to stay. And the community supports are here [the housing agency]—some people come and fill up their water bottles here from a tap, or a number of drop in centres like Our Place. I mean right off the top of my head I can't think of any other places, and soup kitchens too.

Echoing Ann's statement, Julie also believed that most people who are homeless access water at "at the shelters downtown, like at Our Place, and at the Salvation Army, and at places like that." Jerome, Ann, and Julie's quotes highlight that for a person living without shelter in Victoria, the main source of water for consumption may well be the community social support agencies in town. This nuance of water provision draws attention to who is currently bearing the responsibility of providing this basic human need to local Victoria

residents, and arguably begs the following question: Why is the local government not playing a larger and more direct role in meeting this water access need?

### *Implications*

Similar to *occurrences*, when we pull one code out of each category *impacts* and *consequences*, a picture of an actual or potential consequence of limited access to water for personal use emerges. *Impacts* refer to the people and places that experience the consequences of limited access to water for personal uses. *Consequences* refer to any potential individual or community fall-out from limited access to water for personal uses, such as poor health, limited capacity to maintain employment, or a decrease in customers at certain stores due to public urination in front of the entrance. Following on the first example in the *occurrences* block of limited access to public facilities for bathing, the *implications* block offers insight into the real or possible ramifications of this limited access. For instance, for a person who is homeless, limited access to facilities for bathing may have hygiene consequences such as a decreased ability to maintain personally desired or socially expected standards of bodily cleanliness. On the other hand, for the business and social service agencies, the practice of bird baths causes maintenance concerns, increases maintenance costs, and even raises public health and safety considerations. Some of the many implications raised by participants are presented below to illustrate a few of the possible implications of limited access to water for personal uses.

Health and hygiene were the two most prevalent consequences raised in the participant interviews. These two categories of consequences included a vast range of potential physical and physiological concerns that could be related to limited access to water for personal uses. In Julie's interview, she raised the issue of nutrition and physical health

concerns stemming from the critical role that water plays in physical well-being: “access to water is so important to health, a lot of these people are so dehydrated, and they drink nothing but coffee all day, which is even worse really.” In discussing limited access to water facilities in town, Francois raised his personal concerns about minimizing his risk of catching an infection. Due to his HIV and Hepatitis C positive status, and the limited availability of places for him to wash his hands, Francois admitted that “[He’s] always scared of catching an infection.” Francois also detailed his observation of the unsettling and dangerous practice of using puddles of rain water for injecting drugs: “[L]ast year, I went to visit Vancouver for the first time. I saw people use water like this: [pause] It rained, it [the rain] was falling on the ground . . . people were using it for their syringes.” Julie and Francois’ statements highlight three of the direct implications of limited access to water for consumption and water in respect to cleaning and bathing. In so doing, they illustrate the importance of this topic as it relates to other social issues such as infection prevention and nutritional status.

Although many of the implications of limited access to water are direct (like those that Julie and Francois mentioned), many are indirect or could be described as secondary implications. Scarlett explained that she thought that limited access to water can be a worry for the homeless population not only for immediate hygiene concerns, but also because when “looking for housing, that’s a barrier if your personal hygiene isn’t up, and you have a body odour.” Alli also talked about the potential trickle-down consequences of limited access to water as she reflected on the implications she observed with people she worked with:

At work we have lots of people who are [homeless or street entrenched], they just don’t have access [water], so they’re clearly not able to wash their hands, they’re not drinking water, they’re not showering—or they’re doing it, like I said, in a public washroom, in a substandard way . . . I do think that they feel the consequences of it. They feel the weight of looking unshowered, or they suffer the consequences of being dehydrated or under hydrated, or their dental care is so substandard that they’re

suffering major abscess. So, those are all from a nursing perspective, very water related, you know, hygiene related.

. . . It certainly concerns us because we see the consequences. We're lucky that we're in the building that the floor above us there's a drop in clinic that has showers and laundry facilities for the youth that we work with.

We see the value of people coming in and being able, if they have a job interview, being able to go in and wash their one sweat shirt and their one pair of jeans so that they can go feeling somewhat put together.

If you're under-hydrated and you've got an oral abscess and you haven't showered and you end up with a, you know, a vaginal infection then you've got all of those pieces. And then on top of that you're feeling grungy, your clothes aren't washed, you're being stared at everywhere you go, and then people say, "why don't you have a job?", it's pretty clear, to us anyways, that if those barriers were removed, employability would increase, tremendously.

Alli's quote illustrates that limited access to bathing facilities for a person who is homeless has consequences that extend well beyond basic hygiene. Her reflections reveal some of the many secondary and tertiary consequences for a person experiencing limited access to water. Moreover, she clearly detailed an example of how occurrences of limited access to water can lead to direct personal consequences such as dehydration or substandard dental health, as well as how these direct personal consequences transition into indirect or secondary consequences such as barriers to employment. In this respect, Alli's commentary clearly delineates the multi-layered and compounding implications of limited access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence.

Individual consequences both direct and indirect are not the only consequences of limited access to water for personal use that emerged from the data. There are also secondary or trickle-down consequences that extend beyond the individual experiences of limited access to water within the broader community. For example, Kate discussed the implications that providing a public washroom has had on her business, and voiced her frustrations about being regulated to provide this service:

It bothers me when I walk down the street and I see feces and smell urine all over the place . . . and I don't mind providing a washroom for our customers who come in, but when homeless people are coming in and they want to use it, I just wish that they just had a place that they could go and use it [a washroom]. Because this affects our customers, and they're [homeless people] not even coming in here to shop, they're just coming in here to use the washroom. So yeah, if they have their own facilities that would be great so that it doesn't affect the local businesses.

Alli also discussed some of the implications on local businesses when she commented on the increasing trend of businesses locking their washrooms to non-customers:

I do think that right now, given the climate, downtown businesses are really frustrated . . . there's this tension building, so I can see where businesses are just saying, forget it, I can't cope with having 15 people walk through my door a day using my facilities for everything from bathing to drinking water to shooting up.

By exploring the impacts and consequences of limited access to water for personal uses, we see the different range of consequences spanning from personal direct consequences such as health and hygiene implications, trickle-down consequences such as barriers to housing and employment, as well as broader community trickle-down implications. All of these types of implications of limited access to water for personal uses reveal the ways in which access to water interconnects with so many other current social issues such as unemployment, individual and community health, or the availability of housing. In illustrating these layers of consequences, we thus begin to see the relevance of this research topic and understand the ways in which water access can underscore the gamut of current social considerations.

### *Responses*

Similar to both *occurrences* and *implications*, the *responses* block was made up by linking together codes from its component categories. In this case, a code from the category *responses (action)*, and a code from *response responsibility (actor)*, combined to create a picture of a proposed or enacted response to limited access to water, and further identified who participants felt was responsible for enacting a response. In this context, the category

*response* is interpreted as any potential or current type of responses to the *occurrences* of limited access to water for personal uses. Response responsibility is defined as the party participants identified for being responsible to implement some sort of action on the issue of limited access to water for personal uses.

In discussing what sort of responses would be appropriate to the current situation of limited access to water in Victoria, Ann, and Kate described some of the practical considerations of possible responses. Both participants raised considerations about the influence of location and aesthetics, such as lighting, as barriers or facilitators in using a public washroom. For instance, Ann described how the physical location of public toilets can position them as an ideal location for uses other than toileting:

I think one important piece to the public washroom would be the location, and by location I don't mean on a specific street, or where there is more or less traffic, but that it is out in the open, that people actually see it. That it's not hidden around a corner—like for example, I keep thinking of the one at market square, because that's really the only one that I know of, aside from maybe centennial square—these places are always put in such a place, and in such a way that, you know, they're dark, and they're in a corner and to me, it's like it is setting somebody up who is looking for a place to, for example, if they were using, or if they were engaging in other activity, this is a great place to do it. And to me this is a setup. And just as it is a setup for a person that wants to hide, it is creating more of an issue for those people . . . who are saying “well, we're never safe anywhere” and stuff like that. Well, if you want to feel safe, create an open space where everybody can see people coming and going.

Kate talked about many similar features brought up by Ann, but also stressed that access to such facilities needed to be free of charge:

I think that if there were some public washrooms available 24 hours a day that were both toilets and possibly showers, and that homeless people would be able to access without being judged, that would be really good. But also, if there were public washrooms that like, a family would feel safe to go in and use too. If there was a facility that existed like that, open 24 hours, for the homeless people to use and to shower and toilets and all that, that would be great.

While some of the participant responses (such as Ann and Kate's) centred on physical considerations in potential responses, other participants deliberated more about the

complexities in addressing a topic so interconnected to other social issues. As Beth reflected on how best to respond to limited access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence, she began by suggesting direct point-of-access responses. However, as she further considered possible responses, Beth grappled with the question of whether solutions should address immediate water access needs, or target the overarching issue of poverty:

I think that if we have street-entrenched people that we should have publicly available facilities for them to access water and take care of their own personal hygiene needs and their drinking needs and maybe even their cooking needs. Community kitchens could be a solution to that. But on the other hand I don't want that to be the solution. It seems to me that if we have to solve the problem . . . the bigger problem is how do we deal with the overriding issue of poverty and substance abuse and lack of supports, things like that.

By contemplating whether a response should directly address limited water access, or whether it should target a broader issue such as poverty, Beth's comments highlight the complexity of responding to limited access to water for personal uses.

The question of what form a response takes is intimately connected to who is responsible for enacting this response. All of the participants felt that the City was partially or primarily responsible for responding to the current situation of limited access to water for personal uses. When asked whose responsibility it was to address this situation, Kate responded without hesitation that "it is the city's responsibility, a municipal issue." Francois similarly replied that it was the city's responsibility to address limited access to water for personal uses. George clearly responded in a similar fashion:

In other words, who do I want to blame if there isn't any [water]? Well, I mean, who is responsible for the city? The Mayor. It's the city, the municipality, and I mean they all have departments pertaining to this stuff.

Although, a few participants did raise other municipal authorities that they felt could be involved in developing or implementing responses, the overriding opinion of the participants was that the city should be responsible in some capacity for responding to this issue. For

instance, when I asked Ann who she thought should be involved in implementing responses, Ann revealed the following: “I think that somehow the health authority could be involved. I mean, the health authority could be involved in implementing some sort of water access program because it is, next to air, it is the fundamental health requirement.” In all, however, the municipal government was cited by participants as being the responsible body for addressing limited access to water for personal uses.

As a public official, Beth shared that although people may feel it should be the municipal government’s responsibility to address this issue, the likely reality is that a response will not be initiated by the government:

My sense is that, if the dialogue is going to happen, it would probably come from some activist quarter, not from government. [pause] My sense is that municipal governments are so focused on other things that it’s unlikely, you know, to come from that quarter unless it’s an individual council that raises it.

Beth’s comment speaks to the role that public awareness, action, and interest has in gaining responses to any given issue. Alli touched on a similar theme when she commented on what sort of actions could be taken immediately to engage with this topic: “right now, my feeling is that there’s such a big educational piece that still has to happen.” She also referred to herself as an example of someone who regularly interacted with water access considerations through her work as a health care professional, but had never thought about where people accessed water prior to her involvement in the research. Alli astutely commented that if people who interact with these implications on a regular basis are not conscious of the role that water access has on these implications, then the rest of the community is likely to be even more unaware, or even ignorant of the issue. Thus, Alli suggested education and awareness-raising would be effective and key initial responses. Participants’ suggested action

responses are further explored and presented in conjunction with my own recommendations in chapter six.

### *Stakeholder Understanding*

The fourth foundational research block is *stakeholder understanding*. Like the other blocks, this one was also composed by pulling together the categories *awareness*, *importance*, and *why is the topic not talked about?* All of the categories situated in this block, individually and when combined, offer preliminary insight into how participants perceived, assessed, understood, and valued the topic of access to water for personal uses in Victoria. However, unlike the other three blocks, this one is not as comprehensive in the picture it creates since there were far fewer codes that resulted in the formation of this block. As I will explore further in chapter five, this block is the context for the other three blocks, as the categories that comprise this block informed participants' perceptions of the occurrences, implications, and possible responses to limited water access in Victoria.

The *awareness* category emerged from codes that noted the source context from which participants referenced their general awareness about water issues, and water access in particular. Participants rarely explicitly identified a social context, such as work or home, as the source of their perspective. Instead, the sources of each participants awareness on the issue was gleaned from the context they offered in response to interview questions. For example, when I asked Beth whether she had come across the issue of water access before, she replied with the following comment:

We get lots of stuff from the Water Watch Coalition, and I'm a member of the Council of Canadians so I get lots of information about concerns about water. Um, I sat on the water commission for a year, and, paradoxically my concern was that we have too much access to water, we don't treat it with enough um, reverence, for the limited resource that it is and we don't encourage conservation adequately. Umm, so locally I don't think people are denied access to water, it's not my experience that

that would be a concern. There is a concern, I think a legitimate concern about the privatization of water and what that might do to access . . . in the long term. Typically what's happened in the south where water privatization has happened a lot is that it has then restricted water access by income. But our democracy, I think, is still strong enough that we would not likely [pause] but I don't think privatized water would lead to conservation which is a continuing concern. And we've got lots of CUPE members on our municipal staff and they're of course very concerned about keeping water public.

In Beth's response, we can see many of sources contributing to her initial conception of the topic. The Council of Canadians, the local Water Watch Coalition, and her work environment all converged to inform her initial understanding of the topic of access to water for personal uses. In contrast with Beth's answer, Jerome's response to the same question highlights the role that personal experiences have on informing participant awareness of this topic. Jerome said:

Yeah, I've heard of it, back east, the water access back east, getting to a place where you can get free water, or access to water, during summer or winter or whenever you needed it . . . it came up when I was a kid, in the park in Montreal.

In Jerome's case, the primary context informing his initial perception of the topic was his personal frame of reference. Using his past life experiences as context, Jerome was aware of access to water as a topic

When I asked Julie, a social service worker, if she was familiar with the topic of access to water for personal uses, she responded with an immediate "no" and embellished her answer with the following explanation:

When you said it was a water access survey, I thought "wow, what does that mean?" Access to water, that's something we don't think about a lot. You know, we think about access to shelter, having a place to sleep or access to food, or being able to go to the doctor, yet water is not something that you think about right off the top.

The perspective that her work in a housing agency positions her to see likely influenced Julie's answer; working in a housing agency positions Julie to keep housing, accommodation, and shelter front of mind, leaving considerations of water access further

down the priority list. However, Julie's comment may also be reflective of how water is an embedded consideration in many people's mind, similar to what was the case in the academic literature I reviewed in chapter three. Although I did not have enough data on this type of awareness to develop a more thorough insight on participant awareness, these preliminary findings nevertheless are interesting as they offer some perspective into how people arrive at their personal conceptions about water access. Moreover, further research uncovering greater detail specifically on how people come to understand and conceptualize the water access situation in Victoria could help to inform and tailor responses to limited access to water for personal uses.

Another component of *stakeholder understanding* was how participants perceived the importance of this topic. I asked participants if they thought that access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence was an important topic in Victoria that should be further examined and discussed. All but one of the participants stated outright that limited access to water for personal uses was an important topic that should be addressed or explored in varying degrees of priority. Alli presented the role that tourism in Victoria has on the need for accessible public facilities. She shared her own experience of accessing water for personal use while travelling, and related that experience to a Victoria context:

It certainly is and it certainly is something that I think is not just for those that are street involved or homeless. I mean you think about tourists or, you know, when I was backpacking through South America and I was with my husband and we had money in our pocket and we were, you know, tourists. We were there to tour the community but we didn't speak the language and I'd have to go to the bathroom and it's like, there are no public washroom signs that say anything. So thinking about that in the context of us being a tourist community, I think it's really important that we're thinking about it. I think a lot of people perceive that if you open public washrooms that it's just going to be a bunch of homeless people running in there and taking advantage of god forbid, clean water.

Like Alli, Francois framed the importance of addressing this topic in Victoria based on his own experiences and observations. Francois' experiences led him to contextualize the importance of further examining and responding to this issue in terms of health and hygiene considerations:

Francois: How can I say it, if we look here, like I saw last week, the other guy that was washing his hands [in a puddle]. I was sitting outside and I was smoking a cigarette and I was watching him, I said to myself "Huh, is this possible?! It's not hygienic, it's not safe." Especially in the place where he was, he was where some people sleep outside, where they pee outside, they shoot up outside, and some of them are sick . . . And, it's right in front at the parking lot . . . gas, car oil leaking. For me, what I myself have seen, and what I see, it's clear that it's a problem.

K: Would you like the city to do something about it?

F: Yeah. Well of course, of course. It's for hygiene, it's for safety.

Scarlett shared that this was an important issue to her and she "believe[d] that we need more facilities where people can shower." Ann also thought that limited access to water was an important issue—"absolutely, definitely"—and believed that attention needed to focus on the range of access needs:

Ann: I think we should be thinking about more public access to drinking water. . . . and, I also think too that there are many many places that I've been to, that are along the coast, that have public access showers, public access toilets that are large, and they are convenient, and they are free at the best, to reasonably affordable at the very least . . . and then you can stop and have a shower, you can bathe, you can do your laundry, um, that kind of thing

K: So in Victoria, is that something that you would like to see created? Public, not just drinking fountains, but a public water places? With toilets, showers, laundry, etc.

Ann: Yeah. Absolutely, absolutely, I think that would be wonderful.

The comments made by Alli, Francois, Scarlett, and Ann illustrate some of the different ways people understand the importance and salience of the topic at hand. All of these participants agreed that this topic was important; yet they all highlighted different

reasons or experiences for valuing the topic. The fact that the participants all wanted to see a response enacted, but came to this conclusion from very different perspectives and priorities highlights the depth and complexity of this area of understanding. Since this was the first time most of the participants reflected on the importance of the topic, their responses tended to be less organized and articulate, and more a reflection of preliminary interpretations on the issue. Despite agreement on the importance of the topic, one participant, George, stated that he did not think that water access for personal uses in Victoria was important in any way. However, contrary to his explicit statement of the topic's unimportance, his accounts and experiences suggested otherwise. It is for this reason that I examine George's perspective in more depth in the following section.

Finally, this block contained participants' thoughts on the reasons why this topic has not been explicitly discussed or researched. Julie suggested the following possibilities:

I guess it goes along with treating marginalized people like it doesn't matter. It doesn't affect me in my elitist life, so why would I want to read about that, or look into that? If it doesn't affect me, if it doesn't keep me up at night, then it doesn't matter. I suppose, but I don't know.

I guess, when you don't have a home and you have to stay up all night, or you are strung out that's not the first thing that comes to mind. And a lot of the homeless population are male, and men can go a little easier than women, you know, they can just sort of do it. So, maybe it's not a problem in some ways. It's only when society says that "I don't want them peeing on my bushes" that you go "oh yeah, there are no washrooms" where do people go? What do they do?

Like Julie, Ann also thought that this topic had not been explored more critically because it was in many ways, assumed to be associated with a minority population. Kate articulated her nuanced perspective with the following statement: "Because most information and research that's done has to do with the general public who fits into the stereotype of living in housing. I think that's why." Julie, Ann, and Kate, explicitly stated that they felt this topic had not been explored because of its particular relevance to a marginalized population group.

Interestingly though, despite their comments explicitly citing this topic as pertinent to people who were homeless, and citing this as the reason for it being unexamined, throughout their interviews, Julie, Ann, and Kate consistently referred to the implications and occurrences of limited water access as it impacted all types of people in the city—homeless, housed, and tourists. Although the findings from this research are highly preliminary in nature, they do however help to inform the development of the action responses and future research recommendations that are presented in chapter six.

### *George's Perspective: Water on the Street*

One interview stood out as distinct and superficially in opposition to all the other participants' understanding of access to water being limited and problematic outside a place of residence in Victoria. George, an older homeless man who has been street-entrenched for about the past 10 years, was the only participant who explicitly stated that access to water was not an issue of local relevance. He repeatedly identified the ways in which he found water to be readily accessible in Victoria. However, in so doing, George actually exemplified many of the occurrences and critical health implications of limited access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence.

George initially and explicitly declared that access to water for personal uses was neither a topic that he thought about, nor one that was of any importance to explore:

Water taps, and things that are available, it's not a big issue. It's not a problem. So if someone was coming up "where do I get a drink of water?" Go away kid, you're bothering me. You know, he'll be standing in a puddle for Christ's sake, like shut up. Of course there's water here, go get it.

In contrast to his initial proclamation, he interestingly demonstrated a huge amount of latent (yet accessible) knowledge on where to access water through semi-conventional means throughout the Victoria area:

George: You can go down to the gorge and if you got a little mirror you can shave in there. But, I don't—you know, large water bodies like are just, I don't really look at that for drinking . . . apartment buildings for example, are very good at having outlets, electrical outlets on the outside of a building, and sometimes close by there is a water hose connection. They will take the handles off the tap, but a good street person has a pair of pliers, and you know, the usual utilities. You're best to let it run for a bit, because it's just been hanging in there

K: Would you use that for drinking?

George: Yeah.

K: For having a shave?

George: Yeah. Yeah. Even injecting for that matter.

While this participant stated that he did not think about water access, nor think that it was an important topic, he has arguably devoted a fair amount of attention to the availability and appropriateness of non-conventional access points. Moreover, while George has accumulated passive knowledge about informal points-of-access to water in the city, he has likely become acclimatized to life with limited access to water. For example, George half-jokingly made the telling comment that “its only March, so, uh, I'm not due for a shower.” This comment highlights what Julie, the social service worker, raised in her interview: “Its almost like, depending how street-entrenched you are, the propensity to use water goes down.” Julie suggested that the frequency of cleaning and maintaining personal hygiene declines in association with the realities of how challenging it is to regularly access water without a place of residence.

George's comments further support the key findings from this research in his exemplification of some of the health concerns raised in the *implications* finding block: "There are a lot of water places in and around . . . mud puddles are good, if they're not disturbed. Umm, I've even used mud puddles for injecting. You know." Although George claimed that access to water was not limited, I contend that when a person uses mud puddles as a personal water source for injecting or otherwise, there must be some limit to the accessibility of safer or other more desirable water sources. Also, George's extensive time living homeless and street-entrenched, as well as his use of injection drugs, are likely factors that have influenced his understanding and prioritization of this topic.

One of the other homeless participants, Jerome, discussed whether people on the street consciously thought about access to water. He responded to this question with the following observation:

I would say maybe 50 percent of the people on the street [think about it]. The other 50 percent they are more interested in their alcohol and their drug addiction and anything else so that makes them not, they don't care.

George's explanation of using mud puddles for injecting and Jerome's opinion on whether access to water was a critical concern for street-entrenched people illustrate that there are possible implications even when an individual does not personally recognize or acknowledge them as such. Furthermore, it suggests that attending to and accounting for occurrences and implications that people themselves may not report on could be critical to future examination and responses to this issue. Looking at George's explicit statements in devaluing the relevance of water access in Victoria alongside his narrative of all the non-conventional access points in the city speaks to the relevance and importance of this research focus.

### *Analytic Conclusions*

Linking specific categories together resulted in the formation of four blocks that are the basis of the research findings and discussion in the remainder of this thesis. These emergent blocks are *occurrences*, *implications*, *responses*, and *stakeholder understanding*. The convergence of categories that resulted in each block respectively offers insight into the components that currently make up the current water access situation in Victoria. In reviewing the major findings and research blocks from this research, three clear analytic conclusions are evident. These conclusions summarize the research findings and analysis, and are presented below in sequential order of development.

1. There is an issue of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria, BC, when outside a place of residence.

2. The implications of limited access to water for personal uses directly and indirectly influence both individuals and the general community, and are far reaching in their consequences.

3. A host of potential action, research, and policy responses emerged from participants' perception of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria as a relevant and problematic issue.

In respect to the first conclusion, participants confirmed that access to water for personal uses is currently a problem in Victoria through the codes that led to the development of the *occurrences* block. The combination of different types of water uses with different points-of-access and associated barriers to access clearly demonstrate the nature of the problem of limited access. The second conclusion illustrates the ways in which the consequences of limited access to water for personal uses extend beyond simple

considerations of personal inconveniences and highlights the broader social relevance of this topic to the local environment. The *implications* block illustrates that the consequences of limited access to water are both direct and indirect, and do not end with the individual. The third conclusion reflects the findings from the *responses* block. As participants began to understand the topic of access to water outside a place of residence in Victoria, they began to explore and suggest potential responses to address this issue. *Occurrences*, *implications*, and *responses* were all informed from participants' awareness, perception, and valuing of the topic as explored in the *stakeholder understanding* block. The relationship among these blocks, and the position of *stakeholder understanding* as the environment the other three blocks are situated within, is explored in more detail in chapter five.

## Chapter Five. Discussion

“It says a lot about society's priorities when you can fit a thousand songs into something the size of a quarter, but you can't drink the fucking water.” (Street graffiti in downtown Victoria, 2007)

This chapter begins with an examination of how the key research blocks interrelate to offer insight into the current water access situation in Victoria. Two secondary findings from the participant interviews are then explored as relevant research findings that emerged, but were not robust enough to stand as independent themes. The first of these secondary findings is a perceptual shift between participants' initial perspectives and subsequent opinions expressed in the interviews. This perceptual shift is a component of *stakeholder understanding*, but notable enough in its own right to require further examination. Public/private considerations also came up in the participant interviews and in the literature review, and although my data did not allow me to extend the analysis of this area, I present it here as a relevant topic in understanding access to water for personal uses.

In light of the increase in media coverage on public toilets over the past year, this chapter examines public toilets as one component of the discussion of water access. More specifically, I explore the strengths and weaknesses of splintering public toilets as a distinct topic from other considerations of water access uses and needs. I then examine the connection between public transit and public toilets that emerged in the media review and participant interviews. Following, I review the ways in which the City of Victoria's proposed response to the need for more public toilets reveals a problematic prioritization of different residents' needs within the city. The local relevance of limited access to water for personal uses is then examined before I briefly review the research limitations of this study.

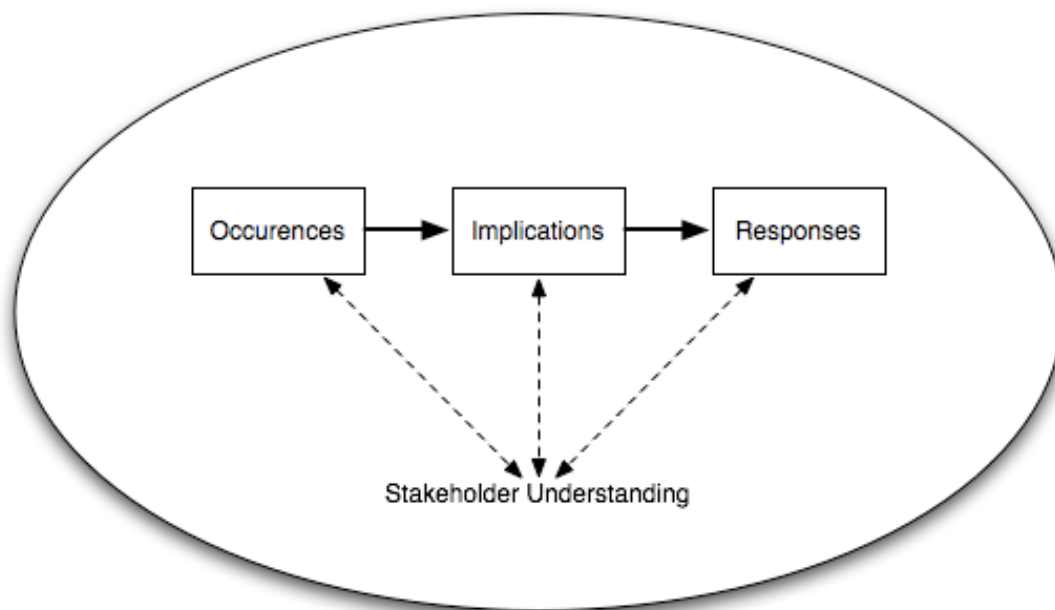
### *Examining the Interconnection of the Blocks*

Having established the foundational research blocks, I subsequently needed to sort out the more complex question of how these blocks related to one another. As I tried to determine how the components fit together, I used working diagrams to visualize the interconnection of the blocks. To consult the two main diagrams I used to help interpret how these blocks fit together, please see Appendix F and Appendix G. In the first attempt at my analysis, I tried to put *stakeholder understanding* (then called *awareness*) as one of two input-output points for the blocks *occurrences* and *implications*, the other input-output being *responses* (see Appendix F). In this model, I tried to use *awareness* and *action responses* as the blocks that both inform and emerge from the *occurrences* and *implications* of limited access. Although the interplay of variables was appealing in this model, after some consideration, this did not seem an accurate reflection of what the participant data revealed.

In my second restructuring of the blocks, as illustrated in Figure 2 on the following page (preliminary constructions of this model can be viewed in Appendix G), I constructed a linear model of the blocks with *occurrences*, *implications*, and *responses* following one from the other. In this model, the final foundational research block of *stakeholder understanding* is situated as the broader environment in which the other blocks fit within. In this model, the first two blocks are descriptive of current *occurrences* and *implications* of limited water access, and the third block represents potential responses to the situation. The conceptual block *stakeholder understanding* bi-directionally interacts with each of the three blocks in a linear relationship. Although I was initially resistant to this linear connection of the three blocks (situated within the larger environment of *stakeholder understanding*), it is the most

reflective of the current situation of access to water for personal uses as emergent from the interviews.

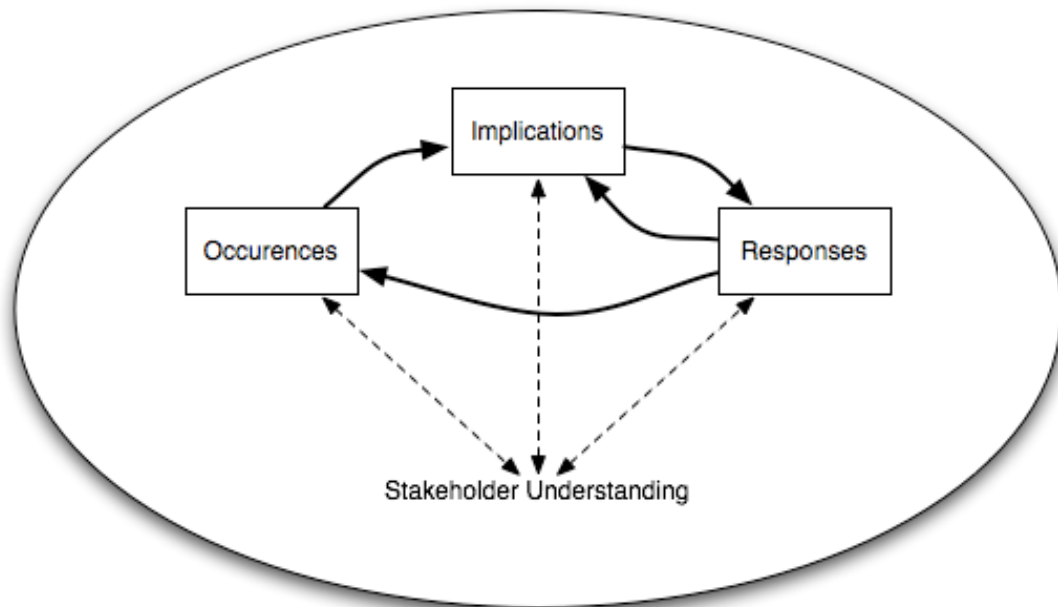
*Figure 2.* Linear model of the relationship between blocks.



In its current form, the model shown in Figure 2 may appear to be static and unidirectional in that it reflects a one-way connection between the blocks. This is not entirely as I understand it to be. In order to demonstrate a natural cycle of interaction between the blocks, I played with the notion of setting the blocks up in a circular manner with responses feeding back in to *occurrences*. However, this setup would not be an accurate reflection of the current situation as reflected in the data. The current linear setup of the blocks in Figure 2 is a *descriptive* model illustrating how the blocks fit together to reflect the current water access situation in Victoria; it is not a *prescriptive* model of how these blocks should fit together. Presently, responses are still potential actions and approaches, so they have not yet affected the *occurrences* or *implications* of limited water for personal uses. In time, if

responses move from conceptual to actual practice, then this block would begin to inform the *occurrences* and *implications* blocks as well. At this point, the model would shift in structure to appear more like a circle (see Figure 3 below), with all three components influencing the others.

Figure 3. Circular model of the relationship between blocks.



In both models, *stakeholder understanding* informs and is informed by the *occurrences*, *implications*, and *responses* of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria. As the personal and public perception, valuing, and framing of access to water for personal uses shifts, so too will perceptions, interpretations, and actions on the *occurrences*, *implications*, and proposed *responses* to this issue.

### *Secondary Findings*

The following two sections examine two themes that emerged from the interviews, but did not have enough content to be singled out as key independent findings. Despite the analytic restrictions resulting from limited data, these findings are too interesting and relevant to leave completely unacknowledged, and consequently merit some discussion. The section on a perceptual shift in participants' perspectives explores my observation that participants transitioned from being consciously unaware or unfamiliar with the topic at the start of the interviews, but moved to demonstrate awareness and familiarity with the topic mid-way through the interview. The section *Public and Private Considerations* explores the elements of public and private points-of-access and water provisions as factors in the current water access situation in Victoria raised by both participants and the media.

#### *Examining a Perceptual Shift*

When looking closely at the category of stakeholder understanding, I noted an inconsistency, or perceptual shift, between participants' initial responses when asked explicitly whether they were aware of the issue of water access in general, and the stories, experiences, and perspectives that emerged as the interview progressed. Initially, most of the participants expressed their unfamiliarity with this topic, saying they were unaware of the issue in any way; however, as the interviews progressed, participants shared stories relating first-hand experiences or observations of limited access to water for personal uses. Further of note is the fact that by mid-to-late in the interviews, all but one participant (George) stated that they felt this topic to be an important issue to address and should rank high in the priority list of current urban social issues. For example, the beginning of my interview with Kate typified the start of most of the interviews:

Karen: In general, when I say water access, if that's a topic that you're familiar with at all, in any capacity . . . ?

Kate: Mm no. I would say no.

However, only a few minutes later, Kate began to revise her position when we discussed her work environment:

Kate: We have a public and a private washroom. So the staff and volunteers don't share the washroom facilities with customers.

K: OK. Is there a history behind that?

Kate: Mmm. I'm not too sure. It's something that I haven't really asked. But I think it more has to do with safety and um, due to the size of the building we are regulated to have a public washroom. I know a lot of businesses downtown aren't, but somehow we fall into the category that does need to provide one. So, in the area that we're in we really need to have a separate one just due to being close to the needle exchange and the drug activity on the street . . . We have a lot of people, especially in the summer time, that are coming through and almost bathing in the washrooms and then we have to refer them to Street Link.

Kate clearly articulated a problem stemming from a lack of available public bathing facilities that she witnessed and dealt with on a regular basis. Kate's telling statement suggests that her initial positioning as being unfamiliar with the topic can be interpreted as the result of not previously conceptualizing this washroom issue at her workplace as a water access issue.

Beth, one of the public officials, started her interview by referring to her familiarity with general water issues such as conservation and privatization, and continued on to explain that "locally I don't think people are denied access to water, it's not my experience that that would be a concern." Similar to Kate and most of the other interview participants, Beth's perspective shifted as the interview progressed, specifically when discussing and reflecting on the difficulties of accessing water for people who are homeless:

Beth: Umm. Well, they probably uh, are getting some from places like Street Link and the Open Door and some of the um, shelters. Wet weather shelters. Those are probably pretty close to be closing for now. I would think that they probably use washrooms at places like the Bay centre . . . Um. [pause] I think that, it could be that, you know if they panhandle that they can buy bottled water, in limited amounts. And,

um, then the, uh, the washrooms down underneath Milestones are generally open. But for things like showers and stuff like that I have no idea.

K: Do you think access for water for personal use is a concern for that population group?

Beth: I would think so. I think everybody likes to feel like they have some control over their own hygiene so I would think that even the street entrenched people would want some access to water.

As the interview progressed further, Beth began to explore whether access to water for personal uses was a publicly discussed issue in Victoria. In response to this, Beth reflected that in her experience, it was not a discussed topic. When asked if she felt it should be, she however responded with a resounding “yes.” I found this apparent perceptual shift in the responses of the participants notable and intriguing. I wanted to understand how and why participants proclaimed that they were not familiar with the topic at the start of the interviews, but revealed quite the opposite when they grew increasingly engaged with the topic as the interview progressed. More specifically, participants illustrated the salience of the topic of water access by relating observations and personal experiences.

To explore and try to explain what was underlying this perceptual shift, I reviewed several literatures that addressed different aspects of human awareness, consciousness, cognitive dissonance theory, and issue identification (Baron, Byrnm, & Watson, 1998; Festinger, 1957; Henshel & Henshel, 1983; Plato, trans. 1945; Shragge, 2003). After evaluating and discarding many of these perspectives as valid explanations of the perceptual shift I had observed, I ultimately found illumination in C. Wright Mills’ (1959) discussion of personal troubles and public issues in *The Sociological Imagination* (Aptheker, 1960). Mills explained that personal troubles “occur[ed] within the character of the individual and within the range of his immediate relations with others; they have to do with his self and with

limited areas of social life of which he is directly and personally aware” (p.8). Mills suggested that public issues in contrast to personal troubles

have to do with the matters that transcend these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner life. They have to do . . . with the ways in which various milieux overlap and interpenetrate to form the larger structure of social and historical life. (p. 8)

Mills’ explanation of personal troubles and public issues sheds light on the perceptual shift I noted in participants’ responses, and offers a context for how participants may have been framing the topic initially.

Initially, it would seem that participants came to the interview thinking of limited access to water as a personal trouble rooted in the individual experience, a personal inconvenience, or an unsettling situation to witness in others. Participants passively observed or experienced limited water access, but had not yet begun to realize that limited access to water for personal uses was a critical issue in their own lives rather than a distant problem concerning a minority of people within the larger community. Over the course of the interview, participants’ understanding of the topic appeared to shift from conceptualizing limited access to water for personal uses as a personal trouble. These shifts or transitions enabled participants to begin to think about how access to water for personal uses is currently being limited, what the implications of these limitations are, as well as how the occurrences and implications of limited access might be responded to at both a personal and a public level.

I believe that Mills’ explanation of personal troubles and public issues (1959) sheds a tremendous amount of insight on to the block of *stakeholder understanding*. However, I must also address the more tangible possible explanation that the shifts in participants’ responses were influenced by the interview survey techniques. As other social scientists have noted,

different survey techniques, question structures, and interviewer attitudes elicit different or varying participant responses (Babbie, 1999; Kirby et al., 2006). These interviews are no exception to this fact. In this respect, both the timing and the nature of the interview questions could well have created or exaggerated the participant perceptual shift I observed. For instance, the first question I asked participants was very abstract, generally inquiring about familiarity with the topic. As the interviews progressed, I was able to probe for more responses, enabling participants to correspondingly answer questions with stories of their own experiences. This question-and-response dynamic during more complex questions not only illustrates the interactive nature of face-to-face interaction, but moreover, it highlights the way in which the timing of the question within the interview could have played a role in influencing participant awareness.

Since the influence of the type and timing of the questions cannot be disaggregated from this particular data set, there is no way to know for certain whether the observed perceptual shift was a product of Mills' transition from personal trouble to public issue, or simply a result of technique. However, I contend that this perceptual shift was more than simply an aggregate of technique. As the interviews progressed, participants not only became more articulate about their experiences (something that may occur as a result of technique), but they also began to shift their perspectives from access to water as an untapped topic previously not thought about, to that of a highly relevant social issue. This shift in how participants perceived the topic indicates that they shifted from conceptualizing this topic as trivial personal trouble to a relevant public issue. At this point in the development of the issue of access to water for personal uses, *stakeholder understanding* and the perceptual shift

offers an interesting perspective on how participants may be on the cusp of conceptualizing this topic as one of broad social relevance.

*Public and Private Considerations*

The topic of public and private points-of-access was a common thread weaving through occasional components of the participant interviews and the media coverage of public toilets. This theme ran through all four findings blocks and had the potential to affect the occurrences, implications, and responses of limited access to water for personal uses. It also affected and reflected some of the ways that participants' framed the topic. In her interview, Beth discussed the accessibility of water in the Victoria community and in so doing, illustrates several considerations of public and private points-of-access. In addition to these considerations, Beth also raised the notion of legitimacy in intention as a determinant of access to water:

I think if you have a legitimate purpose where you are there's lots of access to water. For instance, if I go to the Rec centre there's drinking fountains and there's toilets and there's showers. . . . I think if you are homeless, you have way different access to water. I think the City of Victoria opens their washrooms down by the Milestones restaurant for the homeless people and they may be able to go to places like the Bay centre, but I think that access to water would be not be readily available—not convenient—and they probably would not be welcome at a lot of places.

Beth's statement illustrates that points-of-access are very intimately related to a particular use or purpose. For instance, as Beth noted, water is provided by many facilities, such as a recreation centres, based on where people may need it. However, a private facility has no obligation to provide access to water to people who are not using the private facility for its intended purpose, nor accessing it as a recognized customer or member. This ties in with Beth's comment that many people who are homeless may not be welcome at publicly available private or commercial facilities, such as the Bay. Moreover, this comment touches on the problem of expecting private businesses or organizations to provide public services,

such as access to water, and ignores the fact that despite these expectations, private organization can limit access to whomever they so choose.

Julie also talked about the challenges of water access being provided by private businesses:

There are certain segments of society that aren't even allowed to go in to the mall downtown right. So you think, oh yeah, there are public washrooms all over. But just because I have access to the washrooms does not mean that other people have access to the washrooms.

Julie's comments speak to the reality that many of the washrooms or other public services that people believe to be public are in fact not. In this case, Julie referred to the washrooms in the Bay Centre mall downtown Victoria. Clearly, none of the facilities in the Bay Centre are public since the building is not managed by the City. So although many of these private facilities are publicly available to those deemed "appropriate," or in Beth's words, "legitimate," they are not a guaranteed point-of-access for all individuals since this type of access can be denied at the owner's whim.

A recent article in *The Globe and Mail* (Stanford, 2007) emphasized the widespread availability of public facilities across Melbourne, Australia. These facilities were described as clean, free, accessible, and socially acceptable. The article detailed how many health concerns have been minimized by providing regular and easy access to public toilets, and emphasized the minimal cost of providing these facilities. The article further describes that these public facilities have cultivated enjoyable public spaces where businesses prosper from customers who are comfortable staying downtown longer. The article posed the following question: if Melbourne can provide accessible and safe public facilities, why is Canada fixated on the notion that water access is unnecessary, undesirable, or available only for those who purchase it?

Stanford's recent article (2007) and participant comments about access to toilets through publicly accessible private facilities opens the door to further research and discussion examining the definition, availability, and accessibility of public water facilities. I believe this topic to be extremely relevant to the discussion of access to water for personal uses, and as such, I did not feel that I could ignore this relevant material. This theme however, did not emerge as a major and distinct research category; as such, my data did not allow me to extend to a more in depth analysis or discussion of the topic. Despite these limitations, this topic would benefit from further research by specifically focusing on the public/private considerations of water access outside a place of residence.

*The Centre of Attention: Toilet Talk*

In discussions of access to water for personal uses, public toilets have regularly cropped up as the central focus in the North American media (e.g., Clarke, 2007a, 2007b; Purdon, 2007; Stanford, 2007). Attention to other types of water access needs such as showering, laundry, or even public fountains, have not emerged in any of the media discussions about access to public toilets. While not as exclusive in focus, interview participants also tended to direct their attention to toilets as an example of water access needs. The City of Victoria has recently announced plans to address the problem of public urination in the downtown core with the installation of public urinals.<sup>9</sup> For all of these reasons, as well as desiring to stay close to the data, I believe it is necessary to examine some of the implications and considerations emergent from discussions centering on toilets as its central theme.

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<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, the City's proposed response to this issue was not reported at the time of the key-informant interviews, so I was unable to discuss this topic with participants to gain their perspective on the topic.

The topic of public toilets may be gaining in public interest because it is perceived to affect the widest scope of local residents rather than exclusively affecting those who live without shelter. In other words, there is cross population interest in addressing the need for public toilets: acting on this situation may address the comfort and convenience needs of the general population, the maintenance and management concerns of the local businesses, and increase facilities to support people living without shelter. While the need for public toilets is an issue that undoubtedly requires attention, honing in on it as the central issue does raise questions about what will happen to the remainder of water access needs. Exclusively focusing on and taking up only one aspect of water access renders other considerations—such as showers, fountains, and laundry—largely invisible. If these considerations remain invisible, then we have not succeeded in overturning or breaking the underlying assumption of access that pervades water discourse in North America. Despite these concerns, given the attention by both media and participants to the topic of toilets as distinct from other water considerations, I focus my attention on considerations pertaining specifically to toilets in the subsequent sections.

#### *Toilets and Transportation: Access and Sustainability*

When it comes to toilets, Ottawa and Montreal have decent reputations for accessibility. Several research participants cited the difference between these cities with Vancouver and Victoria, noting that toilets and fountains are widely available in Ottawa and Montreal. Jerome for example, stated at the beginning of his interview that “Montreal, that’s one of the things they do, anybody can have access to water fountains anywhere in the island of Montreal, through the park, through a shopping center. In Ottawa too.” Kate collaborated Jerome’s comment with the following assertion:

Ottawa just ha[s] a lot more public facilities. It's just, like they have a whole transit system there . . . [It's] like, it's in the minds of the people who have constructed their huge transit system. So when you get off a bus, there's washrooms really close by . . . There's a lot of public washrooms. I mean, some of them have security guards working at them, but yeah. There's a lot more shopping centres too which are attached to this transit [system].

Kate suggested that one component in the differences in access between these aforementioned cities has to do with the provisioning of toilets at public transit stations. Kate is not alone in this perspective. The CBC radio segment of *Hidden City* (Purdon, 2007) included interviews with Vancouver residents reflecting on the topic of public toilet access. The conversation rapidly centred on the lack of any toilets as part of the Vancouver Sky Train system.

In the *Hidden City* radio segment (Purdon, 2007), one business commuter using the sky train service admitted that he has on more than one occasion, used the nearest alley to the sky train station as a toilet because there is nowhere else accessible for him to urinate. Another woman explained the problem of travelling with her young daughter: On an hour long commute, she recalled how she often has to disembark, run in to the nearby A&W, and purchase something in order for her two-year-old daughter to use a washroom. In a modern, metropolitan centre like Vancouver—hub of *the best place on earth* as the BC government slogan claims—it is rather surprising to find out that a businessman has to urinate in a local alley on the way to the office because of limited availability to public toilets. Similarly, the fact that a mother has to buy fries so her daughter can use a toilet mid-way through her commute is disconcerting and unnecessary. These two situations are highly disruptive and undesirable practices that influence the functionality and appeal of public transit. Moreover, if two people have experienced this limited access to public toilets, we can deduce that many

more people across Victoria and Vancouver have found themselves to be in similar unfortunate situations.

In an interview on the CBC radio series *Hidden City* (Purdon, 2007), Clara Greed referred to the concept of a “bladder leash.” Greed suggested that people can only stray as far from home as their bladder contents will allow; hence, if there is no access to desirable public facilities, people will only participate in the public sphere for as long as they can contain their bladder. The experiences of limited access to toilets on the public transit system pertain to Greed’s bladder leash. Greed explained that much like the appeal of a public spaces, the availability (or lack) of public toilets has an affect on people’s interest in using public transit. If a person has the choice between using a private vehicle or public transit with the latter option associated with the inconvenience of exiting the transit system to purchase access to a toilet through a local business mid-way through a commute, the private vehicle rapidly becomes the mode of choice. In so doing, this choice has a negative influence on support for the public transit system, decreases individual interaction with public city spaces, and of course, negatively affects pollution control and city sustainability.

As the local and global community is becoming increasingly conscious of the need to *go green*, uncovering ways to increase the usability and appeal of public transportation is a vital opportunity for improvement. Public transit could be an ideal venue to start to increase public access to water for personal uses and at the same time, foster an appreciation for the usability and ease of public travel accommodations. Supervision of the main transit terminal could be combined with toilet supervision and locating the facilities in a high traffic flow environment would increase feelings of user safety. In cities where larger public transit networks exist, providing public toilets at major stations could be an optimal solution to

increase access to toilets across the city. This would help increase access to a necessary public facility, while encouraging city *greening* through the local commuting and transportation practices.

*A Skewed Response: The City of Victoria's Response to Public Urination*

During the week of July 13 to July 20 in 2007, several articles were published in *The Victoria News* concerning limited access to toilet facilities in Victoria. Two articles, published side by side on July 13 titled “Drug Chaos Spurs Suit” and “Party time on Cormorant” (Clarke, 2007a; 2007b) focused on the complaints of residents on Cormorant Street where the local Needle Exchange is situated. These articles brought attention to the problem of public urination and defecation on Cormorant Street as associated with people who are homeless, street-entrenched, and/or living with addiction. One article (Clarke, 2007a) focused on the local businesses and residents of Cormorant Street who have recently filed a law suit about the problem, frustrated by a lack of response from the city government. The lawyer for the plaintiffs, Stewart Johnston, explained in the article that ideally, the needle exchange should have toilets, showers, and a private place for people to congregate other than the public street. Johnston’s statement highlights that the issue of access to water, not just toilets, for the homeless and street-entrenched population is a topic that some people within the general community are aware of and want a response to. Unfortunately, the Needle Exchange points to the reality that they themselves cannot do anything about the situation without more adequate funding and support.

Not five days later, the same newspaper presented an article on the city’s decision approving the installation of two pop-up urinals in downtown Victoria to emerge on the streets during specific late-night periods (Lavigne, 2007; Westad, 2007). The decision aims

to help reduce and prevent the barrage of public urination around downtown Victoria caused by drunken men after leaving local bars. Each urinal was priced at approximately \$300,000 to install and operate (Heiman, 2006; Lavigne, 2007; Westad, 2007). It seems that by choosing to urinate on the street and on local businesses, ill-mannered men are being rewarded with a brand new toilet catering entirely to their convenience: It is available only during the late night hours, and as the word urinal implies, this facility is intended only for men. On the other hand, those who might need access to a toilet during the day—people who are homeless, local commuters, tourists, seniors, and women who cannot use urinals—are simply out of luck.

To address the issue of limited access to public toilets, the City of Vancouver has chosen to install eight self-cleaning toilets around the city for 24-hour access. Much like transit shelters and downtown benches, these toilets will incur no cost to local residents since the maintenance costs are covered by advertising space on the side of the structure. Victoria on the other hand, has chosen to focus its response exclusively on urinals available late at night. Despite the ongoing need for access, as well as the requests and complaints of local residents to provide this access to the local homeless population on Cormorant Street, the City of Victoria has prioritized the needs of young men. What does this situation and response reveal about how the City perceives and values this problem? Since the basic necessity of access to water for people who are homeless, the comfort of local residents, and the desire to increase the appeal and usability of the downtown core are continually ignored, it would appear that the City does not take the provision of public facilities as an issue of social importance. Rather, it seems that the City has addressed this issue in order to pamper and convenience local inebriated men lacking self-control.

The City of Victoria does acknowledge that homeless people and tourists will still require increased access to public facilities (no mention of women though), and have consequently announced that they will continue to staff the public washrooms at Centennial Hall. These are the washrooms where “you have a two minute limit” (Clarke, 2007b, p.A3), which are avoided by many of the research participants due to safety fears in and around the location of these washrooms. Scarlett, for example, discussed the usefulness of more public washrooms in Victoria with the following reflection:

[A] few more public washrooms would probably be okay in this town, ones that you are not scared to go into. There’s one over in Centennial square, but apparently that’s pretty scary, so I’ve never gone into it . . . I stay away from it.

So it appears the City of Victoria is keen to reward the needs of drunk men and eager to ignore the needs of people who are homeless, women who may also need to urinate at night, tourists, local aging population, and residents affected by the lack of facilities for those who are homeless. This surprising and disheartening response from the City highlights the lack of understanding about this topic and reflects the necessity for more research, discussion, and education on the need for access to water for personal uses for all residents.

#### *Gender, Urban Planning, and Public Toilets*

In *Women and Planning: Creating Gendered Realities* (1994), Greed argued that city planning is a male-dominated field, resulting in city developments rife with gender blind constructions reflecting the gender bias of the field. On the topic of access to public toilets, she suggested that the issue is marked by themes of social class, differential access, and democracy (Purdon, 2007). In examining this issue and the themes that characterize it, Greed asked “what facilities does the average person have access to, and does it meet their needs?” As my research reveals, when it comes to public toilets, the average person does not always

have ready access to water facilities and thus, their needs are currently not being met. For these two reasons, gender blindness in construction and planning, as well as limited access for the average citizen, Greed has framed this topic as part of the new Marxism and the new feminism.<sup>10</sup>

Greed (1994) expanded on the feminist relevance of this topic by highlighting the gendered needs and uses of toilet facilities currently overlooked. As the City of Victoria has so aptly illustrated with their decision to install accessible urinals during the night, the issue of class and gender blindness is in no way excluded from the local discussion about the issue. Use of water for personal uses is linked not only with gender and age, but also with physical ability and class. The simplistic and male-focused response to the problem in Victoria illustrates that although people across the board may experience limited access to water for personal uses, the needs of some population groups have been highly prioritized, while needs of other social groups or identities have continued to be overlooked.

#### *Research Relevance and Implications*

As this research reveals, people in Victoria experience situations of limited access to water for personal uses. While the topic of access to water has broader implications for the entire community, it is marked by a multitude of immediate consequences specifically associated with people who are homeless and street-entrenched. In their interviews, Alli and Scarlett illustrated this pervasive perspective when they discussed secondary implications of limited access to water such as health concerns, barriers to obtaining housing, and barriers to maintaining employment. It is widely understood that in a developing context, people living

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<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing this section, I have not yet been able to obtain a copy of Greed's book in its entirety, which limited the possibility of further expanding on her ideas as she presented them in the radio interview.

without access to water for personal uses have a reduced capacity to get out of poverty (CEH, n.d.; Frankish et al., 2005). The *implications* block suggests that trickle-down consequences of limited water access render similar results in Victoria. Alli's comment first presented in the *implications* block detailed the compounding nature of consequences to limited access to water for personal uses. Her statement illustrates how consequences of limited access to water can accumulate and transition from direct or primary, to secondary implications:

If you're under hydrated and you've got an oral abscess and you haven't showered and you end up with a, you know, a vaginal infection then you've got all of those pieces. And then on top of that you're feeling grungy, your clothes aren't washed, you're being stared at everywhere you go, and then people say, "why don't you have a job?", it's pretty clear, to us anyways, that if those barriers were removed, employability would increase, tremendously.

Without regular engagement in personal hygiene activities such as hand washing, dental care, and personal grooming, personal health diminishes. This diminished capacity for personal hygiene not only puts people at greater health risk for otherwise preventable illnesses, but limited water access, in particular showers, lessens a person's capacity to obtain and maintain employment.

The barriers to water access as it relates to and impacts personal hygiene also create difficulties in obtaining housing since property owners are often sceptical to rent out units to people who appear unkempt. In so much that water access plays a pivotal role in producing barriers to gaining and maintaining both housing and employment, it consequently has the capacity to entrench people in poverty. The capacity to entrench people in poverty is a critical implication of limited access to water for personal uses, and a finding that highlights the relevance of this research to people in Victoria: people living without shelter, service providers, and policy makers alike.

Beyond the health and social repercussions of limited access to water for personal uses that emerged from the data, there are several other potential implications to consider, such as how limited access to public facilities might limit various forms of community involvement in the public sphere. When considering how to create and foster a vibrant and engaging downtown environment, city planners must address the basic human needs of their population. In this regard, Greed's notion of the bladder leash (Purdon, 2007) suggests that if there is limited access to desirable public facilities, people will only participate in the public sphere for as long as they can contain their bladder. When considering the diverse population of any city—children, adults, and seniors to name just a few—this notion of the bladder leash becomes quite pertinent in determining how long people would be interested in staying downtown or in other public spaces.

Given the aging population of Victoria, Greed's theory of a bladder leash raises a particularly interesting notion that a recent newspaper article picked up on. In *The Globe and Mail*, "Nature Calls for Public Potties" (Picard, 2007) drew attention to the range of medical conditions, such as diabetes and various types of cancers that may require regular access to washroom facilities. Picard (2007) commented that despite these real concerns, it is hard to find accessible washrooms in public spaces in Canada. In addition to medical conditions is the consideration of urinary incontinence that affects so many aging people. Indeed, Victoria has a significantly large number of seniors in its local population. In the 2006 Canadian Census, when compared to all Canadian cities counted in the census, Victoria was the city with the third highest percentage of the population being seniors (Statistics Canada, 2007). Considering the age distribution of the local population, as well as the known medical

conditions associated with aging that intensify the need for regular access to toilets facilities, the accessibility of facilities in conjunction with the notion of the bladder leash are particularly relevant in Victoria.

I recognize that for some, this topic may seem somewhat trivial or even humorous, especially in comparison with other social and health concerns such as communicable illnesses, housing, and employability. However, since the need to urinate affects all segments of the population, I would argue that the accessibility, usability, and vibrancy of public spaces can have a tremendous influence on the well-being of the local community. In reflecting upon the composition and needs of the local population, the nature of tourism in this city, and the desire to make Victoria an attractive and enjoyable location, publicly available facilities to access water for personal uses is a critical component to consider.

#### *Research Limitations*

Given the emergent nature of this research endeavour, one of the largest research limitations of this study is its exploratory scope: I studied one city with nine key informant interviews at one point in time for a brief period. The size and situation of this research was adequate given the context in which it was done, but the concrete findings regarding current occurrences and subsequent implications of limited access to water cannot be generalized across locations. In all likelihood, there will be variation in occurrences of limited water access across cities in Canada due to city-specific consequences and implications emergent from locally relevant bylaws, the geographic construction of each city, and the general population's views on the topic. Now that preliminary findings can guide the type of questions to ask, future research could use survey techniques to assess the widespread need

for water access facilities within different cities and across cities. Participants representing the gamut of the local population, and not only those people within the city who are suspected to have some interaction with water access considerations, need to be included in future research in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current water access situation in cities across Canada.

## Chapter Six. The Un-conclusion

“In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference.” (Rachel Carson, 1962, p.39)

This is not the conclusion. Rather, it is only just a beginning. Although the topic of access to water for personal uses outside a place of residence has largely been overlooked as a central research focus in academic circles, policy initiatives, and general media coverage, this thesis demonstrates that this topic is an important and salient consideration in Victoria, British Columbia. While my research may provide valuable insight into the situation in Victoria, BC, in many ways, it barely ripples the surface of the issue. Nonetheless, this research has hopefully opened the gates to myriad possible action responses and future research endeavours to further examine and address this issue. In this final chapter, I present a brief review of potential action responses emergent from the research. I also suggest empirical and theoretical future research ideas that draw from the findings of this research, and then examine associated potential policy considerations as they relate to the findings. A general review of the thesis presents an overview of the research from initial idea through to implementation, analysis, and discussion. The “un-conclusion” then comes to a close with parting thoughts on the topic of limited access to water for personal uses.

### *Action Responses*

Possible action responses in addressing the issue of limited access to water for personal uses in Victoria follow on the findings from the *responses* block and further considerations of the findings from the local media review. Presented in no particular order, as they are interconnected, these action responses are as follows: public discussion, education

campaign, cost-benefit analysis, and making water access a foundational consideration in all civic development projects.

1. *Public Discussion.* An exploration into the perceptual shift noted in *stakeholder understanding* reveals that explicit discussion about the topic of access to water for personal uses transitions participants from conceptualizing limited access to water as a personal trouble to thinking about the topic as a public issue. This transition enabled the participants to begin to think about and examine how limited water access occurs, what the implications are, as well as how it might be responded to at both a personal and a public level. As such, engaging the public in an open dialogue about the topic would also likely help the broader public to reflect, consider, evaluate, and develop their own conceptions on this topic. People interested in this topic should encourage and foster public discussion about access to water in all settings. Respond to newspaper articles on the topic, call in to radio programs discussing toilet access, or start a conversation at the neighbourhood meeting. Any type of discussion is productive since it encourages people to think consciously about the topic at hand.

2. *Education campaign.* One of the research participants pointed out that she had never thought of water access for personal uses as an issue before, which was surprising to her given the fact that she dealt with the topic in her daily work as a public official and a health professional. This participant stresses the value and importance of general education in order to start enabling people to think about this largely ignored topic. Education campaigns could link with other current social issues to help minimize start-up work in developing a widespread program, as well as help people see the interconnection of different social issues. For example, local water quality testing could be linked with a water access education program. The City could provide free water testing to local residents for a set period of time

to demonstrate the safety and high quality of local water, explain the superfluous nature of bottled water, and let participants know about safe and public water fountains available throughout town.

3. *Cost-Benefit Analysis*. A cost-benefit analysis assessing the costs of limited access to water for personal uses as it relates to all immediate (cleaning urine from the walls downtown) and trickle-down effects (entrenching people in poverty) needs to be conducted. Upfront costs of increasing access have to be related to the longer-term financial and societal benefits of increasing public access to water for personal uses. By using a feminist economic perspective to inform a holistic cost-benefit analysis, we could gain information on the financial and social costs and benefits of addressing or ignoring the issue of limited access to water for personal uses. This analysis (or analyses) would serve not to determine *whether* the issue is responded to; rather, cost-benefit analysis would serve as one of many tools that help to inform *what* is and can be done, and what the different social and financial costs of action and inaction may be. In other words, the findings from a cost-benefit analysis should not be used as the only reason to value this issue, but should serve as one of many ways to understand the implications of the social costs that pivot around limited water access (Waring, 1988). Equipped with a cost-benefit analysis overview of the situation, city council, local businesses, and taxpayers could have a greater understanding of the financial implications of addressing or ignoring this issue. In this respect, such concrete analysis would certainly be an influential factor in developing and implementing local responses to limited access to water for personal uses.

4. *Make it a foundational question.* In addition to education and public discussion, attention should be directed on making water access a foundational question asked at the start or continuance of any project. How does water access fit into this new development project? Do we build in access points? Is this proposed development going to remove current access points? Does this social service agency have a point-of-access for its clients? Would a point-of-access increase the success of their services? Will a lack of public facilities influence local attendance at festivals? Questions such as these need to underpin social and policy actions, and although in many cases there may be no effect on the design of a current plan, there will be times when there is a tremendous effect, making these questions worthwhile asking.

#### *Future Research*

Since this research is preliminary in its scope, future research could more fully establish the nature of this issue. I have divided future research ideas into two sections. The first section addresses the need for more findings on the current situation and experience of limited access to water for personal uses, findings that could inform appropriate responses from local, national, and international organizations. The second section focuses on the opportunity for more theoretical research exploring the concept of *stakeholder understanding*, gaining insight into how people conceptualize this issue, and examining frameworks that reveal how the current situation is being constructed and reproduced.

#### *Empirical Research*

1. Pairing up with local quantitative surveys can be a way of obtaining information concerning a larger sample of people. For example, pairing up with the Homeless Needs Survey here in Victoria and adding several questions to the survey regarding current points-of-access, as well as addressing the need or desire for access, would result in a wealth of

information about a considerably larger scope of participants. This type of survey would allow for disaggregating the data which could shed light on the different water access needs for different members of the local population. A wide-scale survey would also offer greater insight into the scope of the situation, as well as desired responses.

2. In-depth research by social group would allow researchers to focus in on specific populations, such as people who are homeless or the local tourist population. This would foster a more in-depth exploration and understanding of limited water access as it occurs and implicates different population groups within the city. In this way, purposeful sampling could enable a greater insight into of some of the co-occurring or interlocking variables to limited water access such as age, gender, or race.

3. A gender-based analysis would help to inform, explain, and tease out the gender differences in experiences of access, as well as help inform different needs and impacts that must be addressed in future action responses. A gender-based analysis would also help to uncover which segments of the population are attended to in current social responses (e.g., young affluent men in the case of Victoria) and groups that are disregarded (e.g., homeless people, women, differently-abled people) (Status of Women Canada, 1998/2006).

4. In order to gain a perspective of how access to water in Victoria compares to other communities, a comparative study relating Victoria to another city of comparable size would be highly beneficial. Indeed, a comparison of a U.S. city of comparable size, as well as a comparison to cities outside of North America, perhaps looking at some European cities, would allow for a broader comparison and assessment of the situation of water access in other regions.

5. A community mapping project that tracks current points of access throughout Victoria, the functionality of these access points (are they actually working/open), use of the facilities, as well as use over time, would add tremendous depth of knowledge to the actual and perceived availability of access points in the city. As well, a mapping project could highlight who is currently providing and maintaining each access point (city maintained or privately supported), and further examine the role of providing water access within the city.

6. A study working with the United Nations researching how they think and understand this topic would offer tremendous insight into how this large international organization conceptualizes the topic. Is the historic lack of attention intentional? Does it reflect a prioritization of focus on developing regions? Do they feel it is problematic? This future research idea bridges empirical research into the history of the assumption of water access with the theoretical research in order to shed light on *stakeholder understanding* and the perpetuation of the assumption of access.

### *Theoretical Research*

1. Further research on this topic could significantly expand on the *stakeholder understanding* block by allowing for greater insight into the nuances of people's understandings of this topic, and how these understandings shift from the unconscious or peripheral to the explicit. Conversation seems to help promote this shift, but how does this perceptual shift between personal experience and perception occur in the first place? How can this shift be reproduced?

2. Finally, further research can expand on the neo-Marxist feminist perspective framing this topic that Greed alluded to in her interview on CBC's *Hidden City* (Purdon, 2007). This research could examine how class consciousness and false consciousness explain

and perpetuate the current perspective on access to water. Furthermore, this research could be useful to explore how a gender blind approach to the implementation of responses ignores the different water access needs of women and men, in addition to the needs across different ages and abilities.

### *Policy Implications*

This research was preliminary in nature, and the depth of understanding about the current personal use water access situation in Victoria is not robust enough to inform specific policy actions. However, research into the occurrences and implications of, and potential responses to, limited access to water for personal uses does offer insight into a host of potential policy implications. Below are a few considerations for both future research on the policy implications of limited water access, as well as the development of any preliminary policy responses. These policy implications are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather serve as a starting point to develop the emergent state of this issue further.

Health policy needs to prioritize accounting for where people access their water for personal uses, specifically as it relates to practicing recommended health actions. For example, many public health policies emphasize the need for regular hand washing, yet health policies have not taken up *where* people can conduct this hand washing. New policies and policy amendments need to address the point-of-access as it plays into the plausibility of participating in public health practices. The issue of limited access to water for personal uses need also be incorporated as an initial consideration in the development of future health-related policies.

As increased attention to the need for public toilets gains in notoriety, municipalities must develop policies to guide the ongoing provision of not only toilets, but also public water

access facilities. Municipalities also need to attentively consider to whom they are targeting their responses to, as well as develop long-term strategies detailing how to support and maintain any new services implemented. Bearing in mind the provision of social services within the city, funding policies need to account for the cost and implications of limited access to water as it relates to the success of these services. Presently, many service agencies are limited in their capacity to address holistically a social need since the basic water service facilities needed to address components of these existing concerns are not available.

Although the provisioning and management of public water facilities does not necessarily fit within the capabilities of each distinct social agency, the funding of these services should account for how access to water for personal uses can be attained in order to render these services more successful.

### *Onward*

In a country where we literally flush potable water down the toilet, why is it that we do not make public water services for personal uses widely available? Understanding that access to water is limited in Victoria to all people, to some degree, and quite restricted for others is a first step in addressing this issue. This research offers invaluable preliminary insight into the needs and perceptions of Victoria locals on the topic of access to water for personal uses. However, this research is one small attempt in comprehending and responding to the water access needs of people in developed urban centres. More research is justified on understanding how and why this oversight in access has occurred, thereby informing adequately tailored responses to this issue. In addition, widespread public discussion and general education about the topic must occur in order to start an open dialogue on the needs and responses suitable to each community.

Overall, this research illuminates the need to be attentive to the assumptions that underlie day-to-day actions. Research into the assumption of access to water for personal uses in a North American context reveals that access is not only limited where it was assumed to be accessible, but that this limitation results in a host of consequences for local residents. Whether people feel that this is an important issue to address, shedding light on the assumption of access creates an opportunity for exploration and discussion into the nature and consequences of this assumption. Findings from this research also demonstrate the need to keep a critical eye on other hidden beliefs that silently or unconsciously influence people's daily lives and the nature of our culture.

It is important that we look critically at our own behaviours and beliefs, and explore the underlying assumptions that guide our policies and practices. In this case, access to water for personal uses was sorely unexamined as a pertinent or relevant topic in a North American context. Despite the assumption that considerations of access to water for personal uses are unnecessary or irrelevant in Canada, upon careful examination, this research illustrates that access to water for personal uses is in fact, not so readily available when outside a place of residence. In this respect, it is important that we look critically at our own behaviours and beliefs and explore the underlying assumptions that guide our policies and practices. A society that does not look at the nature of its own pervasive practices can only develop so far and is bound to overlook critical components in ensuring a liveable, if not thriving, community.

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## Appendix A. Interview Guide

### Interview Questions with Prompts

1. I'm curious, generally speaking is the issue of access to water for personal-use a topic that you are familiar with at all? ... or one that you've heard of in any way before?

**If yes – where have you heard of it before? In what context?**

And what about in your capacity as (public official, business owner...)?

**If no – have you ever come across the topic of water for personal-use before?**

Maybe

being called something else? Seen it on TV? Or, come across it in the newspaper?

And, what about in your capacity as (public official, business owner...)?

**Give participant cue card with my definition of water for personal use**

2. Think back to yesterday, and walk me through all the points and places in which you accessed water for personal-use.

Prompts: "at work" with "oh, so you work, and where do you work?"

3. a) In Victoria, is there readily available access to water for personal-use outside of a home?

b) How do you think most people access personal-use water outside a place of residence?

Prompts: for drinking? going to the toilet? for bathing?

4. a) How do you think people in Victoria who are homeless access water for personal-use?

b) Do you think that access to water for personal-use is a worry for this population group?

5. Is access to personal-use water a publicly discussed topic in Victoria? How so?

Prompt: do you think the topic is out in the general public as a public or social issue?

6. Do you think that access to water for personal-use is something we need to think about here in Victoria? Why or why not?

- whether they think it's relevant and why

- trying to get at their personal take on the importance of personal-use water access

7. Does this issue concern you?

8. In what ways does this issue impact your life?

9. How important is this issue to you, relative to other current urban issues?

10. How would you like to see this issue addressed in Victoria, if at all?
  - What sort of policies do you think would address this issue?
  - Do you see these as policies that might be developed and implemented in the near future?
  - What problems do you see to developing and implementing these policies?
11. Would you like to see this addressed at a municipal? provincial? or federal level?
12. In researching this topic, I have found very little information or discussion about it at all. Why do you think this issue isn't talked about?
  - this is my root research question, so I figured I may as well ask it and see what participants say

**Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this research.**

Would you be interested in reviewing a copy of the transcripts of this session to ensure accuracy? How would you like me to send you the transcript (email, paper)?

Would you be interested in seeing the thesis in its completed form? a summary of the thesis? or, the section of thesis that you are presented in? How would you like me to send you the transcript (email, paper)?

## Appendix B. Participant Consent Form



PO Box 1700 STN CSC  
 Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada  
 Tel (250) 271-8050, Fax (250) 721-7067  
 Web www.hsd.uvic.ca

**Faculty of Human and  
 Social Development**

## *Participant Consent Form*

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### **Thirsting for Access Understanding personal-use water access in a Canadian urban centre**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “Thirsting for Access: Understanding personal-use water access in a Canadian urban centre” that is being conducted by Karen Gelb, under the supervision of Michael J. Prince, Ph.D.

Karen Gelb is a Graduate Student in the department of Studies of Policy and Practice at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have any questions by email at kgelb at uvic.ca or by telephone at 250.XXX.XXXX.

As a Graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Studies in Policy and Practice, a Master’s of Arts in Human and Social Development. It is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Michael J. Prince. You may contact my supervisor at mprince at uvic.ca or 721-8043.

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this exploratory research project is to understand the current personal-use water—water for drinking, cooking, going to the washroom, personal hygiene, and bathing—access situation in Victoria, British Columbia, for people outside of a place of residence. I am seeking up to 12 participants from different city sectors as this will provide a range of information relating to the issue without focusing on one group of users or providers in particular.

#### **Importance of this Research**

Research of this type is important because clean water is essential to human life and people normally access water through a place of residence. As such, without a permanent or locally accessible place of residence there are un-researched concerns about accessing personal-use water that need to be explored and understood.

Understanding the personal use water needs of Canadians in urban centres will contribute to the current view of water access in Canada, and help develop information on current barriers

to both individual and community health. This information will assist health and social services in improving their responses to people in Victoria, potentially improving public health. Given that there is presently little available information on this topic, this emergent research will provide much needed insight into the current state of personal-use water access in Victoria, British Columbia.

### **Participants Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your professional or personal location within the city, but not as a professional representative or spokesperson. I am interested in hearing your thoughts on this issue, and the valuable insight that you have on the issue of personal-use water access in Victoria, B.C.

### **What is involved?**

If you agree to participate voluntarily in this research, your participation will include one interview with the researcher, Karen Gelb, which will last approximately one hour and will take place at a time and location mutually agreeable to both you and the researcher. This interview will consist of a series of open-ended questions that are designed to facilitate conversation and discussion between us. If you agree, I will also contact you at two other times after the completion of the research. The first contact will give you the opportunity, if you choose, to review your transcripts to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the information you wish to convey. I will contact you a second time to offer you the opportunity to review parts of the completed thesis paper; this will give you the opportunity to review and reflect on the way I have used and interpreted your information. At both of these times, it is your decision whether you would like to review the material, you are not obliged to undertake this review.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, predominantly in the time required to participate in the interview. As participation in the study is completely voluntary, if you choose to participate, it is my hope that you find our time together useful and productive.

### **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity to reflect on and discuss thoughts and ideas about personal-use water access, and the relevance of water to life in Canada. This may be important for your own life and personal development as a Canadian, as service providers, as business owners, and as public officials. As one of the few studies on this issue, this research contributes important knowledge about personal-use water access in Victoria, B.C. to the current body of knowledge on the issue, providing valuable emergent knowledge on personal-use water access in an urban Canadian setting. In

this way the research is making an important contribution to society, as it explores the accessibility, relevance, and importance of personal-use water to Canadian's and visitors away from their place of residence, and issue that is intimately tied to public health and well-being.

### **Compensation**

As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be offered either a small monetary honourarium, a food voucher, or a donation to a local charity in the same amount. The honorarium is compensation for the time you have taken from your private life to participate in the research project. It is not a wage for participating in the research for a certain amount of time, nor is it a reward for answering all of the interview questions, or participating in every aspect of the study. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. It is important for you to know that your decision to participate, or not participate, in this study will **not** affect the organizational help or support that you receive from Organization XXXX, or the individual staff member, in the future.

To stop the interview at any point you need simply turn off the recorder. If you choose to end the interview, it is your decision whether any or all of the interview material is used in the research. At the end of the interview, you may indicate if there are any parts of the interview that you do not want included as part of the data. Also, you will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts and select any portions of the interview that you are uncomfortable leaving as part of the data. The researcher will respect this by removing the requested portions of the interview from the transcription and destroying all or particular sections of the transcript.

Regardless of whether you withdraw from the study or not, you will still receive a compensation honorarium.

### **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity only the principal researcher and the research supervisor will be aware of your identity; this is necessary because you will be meeting personally with the researcher for the interview, and it may be necessary for the research supervisor to help in the research process at a stage where all identifying markers have yet to be removed.

## Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected in several ways. All data will be cleaned of any reference to your name. A pseudonym will replace your name in the transcripts, and any reference to your place of employment will be made as general and unidentifiable as possible. Email correspondence during the recruitment process will be kept highly confidential; emails will be stored in a password protected folder during the research process, and will be deleted from the desktop and hard drive as soon as the research is completed. Mail will be stored in a locked filing cabinet separate from the interview transcripts. All transcripts will be cleaned of identifying information and kept in a separate location from the consent forms, which will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home.

No references will be made to specific business or places of employments in the research. However, despite these precautions **there are some limits to confidentiality due to the city setting, and the limited pool of potential participants.** Because there are a limited number of potential participants from some of the sought out city sectors, and because some participants are public officials, it can be expected that some of the opinions they express, the experiences they recount, or the position from which they speak on the issue may be recognizable to community members, even without any identifying markers. In this way, confidentiality may be limited. Additionally, **if you choose to conduct your interview at a place of employment, be aware that confidentiality cannot be ensured, as co-workers and other staff or volunteers may become aware of your participation in the research.**

Every effort will be made to remove potentially identifying information from the transcripts, and the data used in the final thesis. Given that participants will be more familiar with their own community and potential recognizability than me, inviting participants to review their transcripts and the final thesis are two of the key ways that confidentiality is further protected.

## Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: this study will be written up in the form of a master's level thesis paper and will be distributed to a supervisory committee, staff and other students. A copy of the final paper will be provided to all participants. A copy will be kept in the University of Victoria library, and may also be kept on the Library and Archives Canada "Thesis Canada Portal." Results may also be used for scholarly articles, presentations, or publications.

## Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of at several stages throughout the research process. Audio and digital recordings of the interviews will be kept until the first draft of the thesis is submitted, in case any data needs to be checked against the original interview recordings. At that point any tapes will be destroyed, and digital recordings will be deleted from the

computer, hard drive, and any backup files. This should be complete within six months of collecting the data.

Consent forms will be kept until completion of the thesis requirements of the research. This will be no longer than one year from the date of the initial data collection, by no later than January of 2008. The cleaned transcripts (paper and electronic copies) may be kept up to five years after initial data collection; they will be destroyed by January, 2012. Any audio tapes used will be ripped up and smashed so they are no longer readable, and then thrown in the garbage. Digital recordings and files will be fully deleted from the computer, hard drive, and any back up versions of files will be deleted as well. Consent forms and interview transcripts will be shredded.

### **Contacts**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the principal researcher, Karen Gelb, at kgelb at uvic.ca or at 250.XXX.XXXX, the research supervisor, Dr. Michael J. Prince at mprince at uvic.ca.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

---

*Name of Participant*

---

*Signature*

---

*Date*

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

Appendix C. Full List of Codes, Categories, and Blocks

Water for Personal Use			
Preliminary Analysis			
Codes	Categories	Blocks	
use-bathing	uses	Occurrences (Tangible)	
use-consumption			
use-drug use			
use-legitimacy/intention			
use-pets			
use-taking medications			
use-toileting			
access points	access points		
ap-body of water (lake or river)			
ap-community support services			
ap-home			
ap-private buildings outdoor taps			
ap-private business not purchase			
ap-private business purchase			
ap-public facility			
ap-purchase			
ap-rural			
ap-school			
ap-shelter			
ap-sro			
ap-street			
ap-street urinal			
ap-work			
ap tr- ppl>facilities	access point troubles		
ap tr-able to locate public facilities			
ap tr-appearance			
ap tr-communicable illness			
ap tr-drug use			
ap tr-legitimacy/intention			
ap tr-maintenance			
ap tr-motivation/desire			

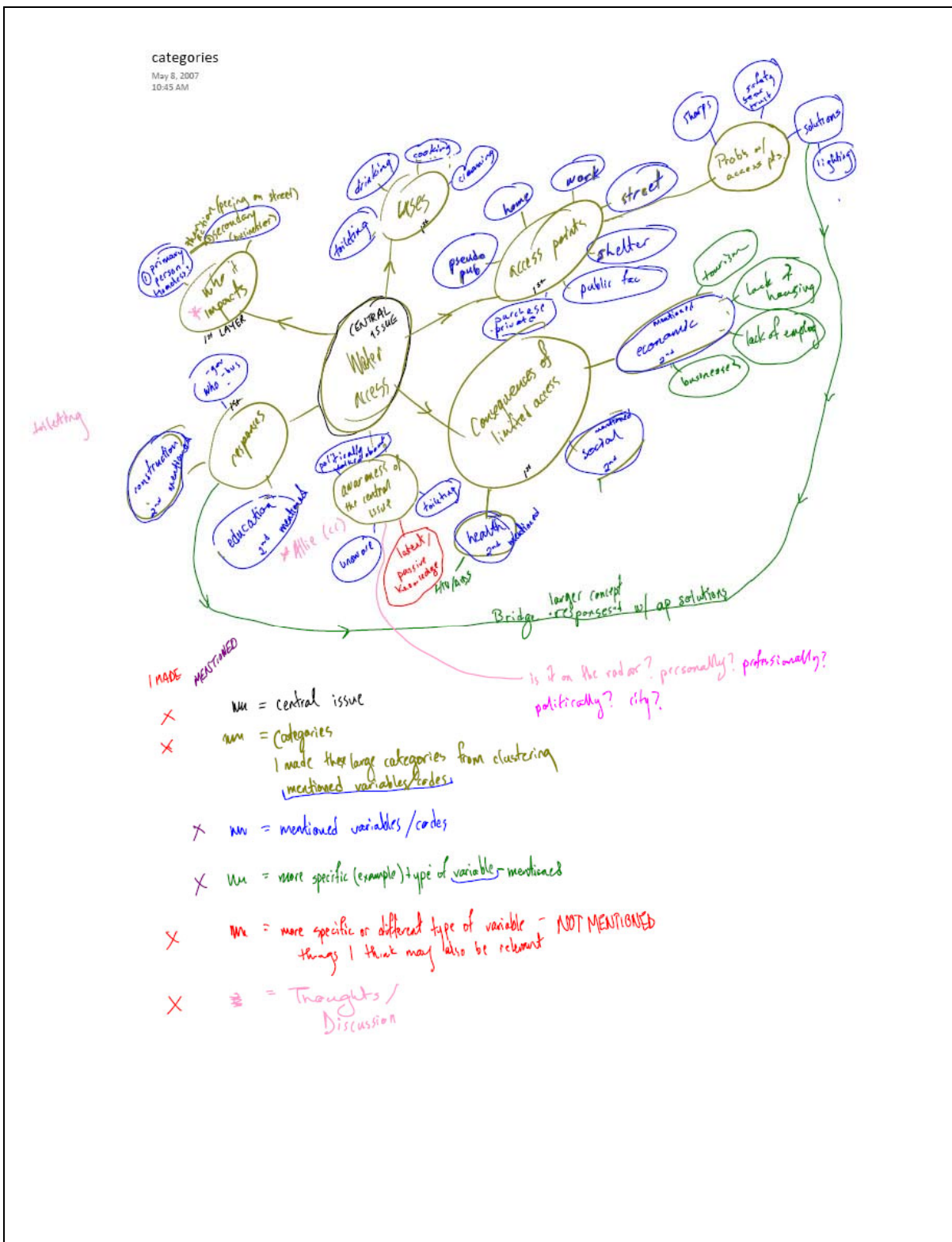
ap tr-portable water		
ap tr-privacy		
ap tr-quality		
ap tr-safety/fear		
ap tr-sex acts		
ap tr-sharps		
ap tr-time and day		
ap tr-trust		
ap tr-unequal distribution of funds		
ap tr-unequal distribution of water		
ap tr solution-lighting	access point troubles solutions (will be merged with res)	

conseq-barrier to employment	consequences (what's the fall-out from limited access)	Implications (Tangible)	
conseq-barrier to housing			
conseq-emotion			
conseq-health			
conseq-hygiene			
conseq-inconvenience			
impact-specific to women	impacts (who/what experiences the consequences)		
impacts-business			
impacts-homeless			
impacts-residents			
impacts-service providers			
impacts-tourism			
impacts-who			
health	large themes (from early coding)		
homeless			
housing			
bar patrons			
tourism			
victoria			
public-private			

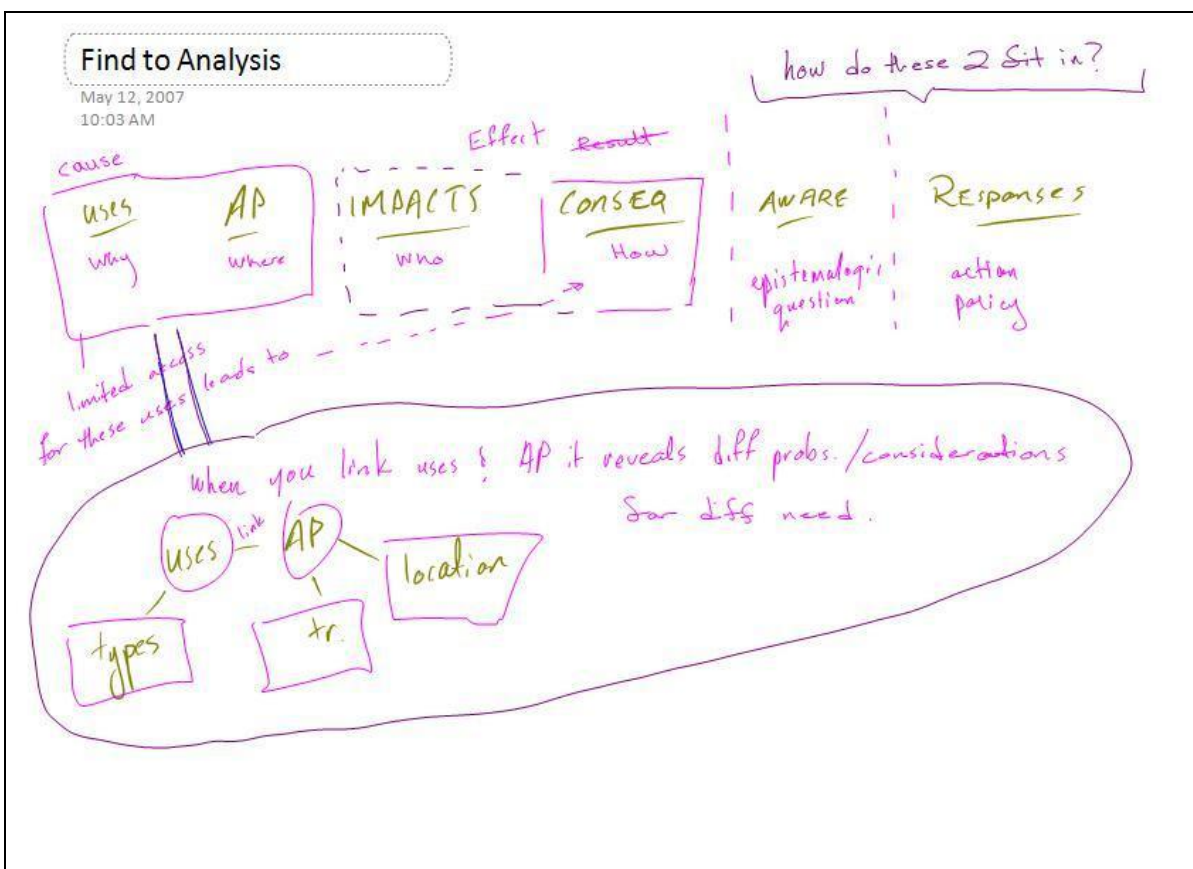
res-aesthetics	responses	Responses (Tangible)
res-awareness raising/creating dialogue		
res-better maintenance		
res-construction		
res-distributing water		
res-everyone can access		
res-integrated		
res-integrated with employment		
res-integrated with environment		
res-integrated with health		
res-integrated with housing		
res-integrated with poverty		
res-integrated with public transit and city planning		
res-integrated with substance abuse		
res-location of access		
res-networking		
res-open more hours		
res-penalize		
res-policies		
res-protest		
res-research		
res-rights		
res-security		
res-signage		
res-standalone		
res private?-ok	response responsibility (whose responsibility is it to act on these/any responses)	
res resp-activists		
res resp-city		
res resp-community		
res resp-fed		
res resp-non profit organizations		
res resp-personal		
res resp-prov		

awareness-personal	awareness (how aware are participants of the issue? Is it on the radar?)	Stakeholder Understanding (conceptual)
awareness-politics victoria		
awareness-professional		
awareness-victoria		
important issue?-no	importance	
important issue?-yes		
action needed?-yes		
why care	why awareness? (participants take on why the issue has not been discussed)	
why not talked about-homeless recent issue		
why not talked about-take it for granted		
why not talked about?-disbelief		
why not talked about?-homeless have bigger problems		
why not talked about?-minority pop		
why not talked about?-others have access		
why not talked about?-too basic and obvious		
why not talking about it?-selfish/money		

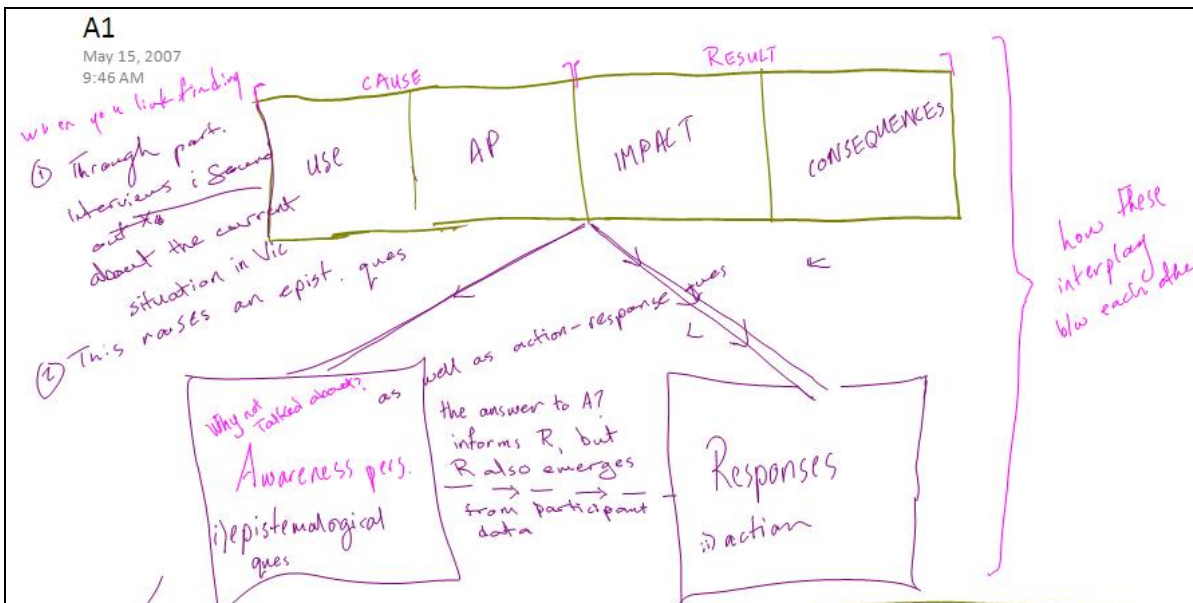
Appendix D. Sketch of Emergent Codes and Categories



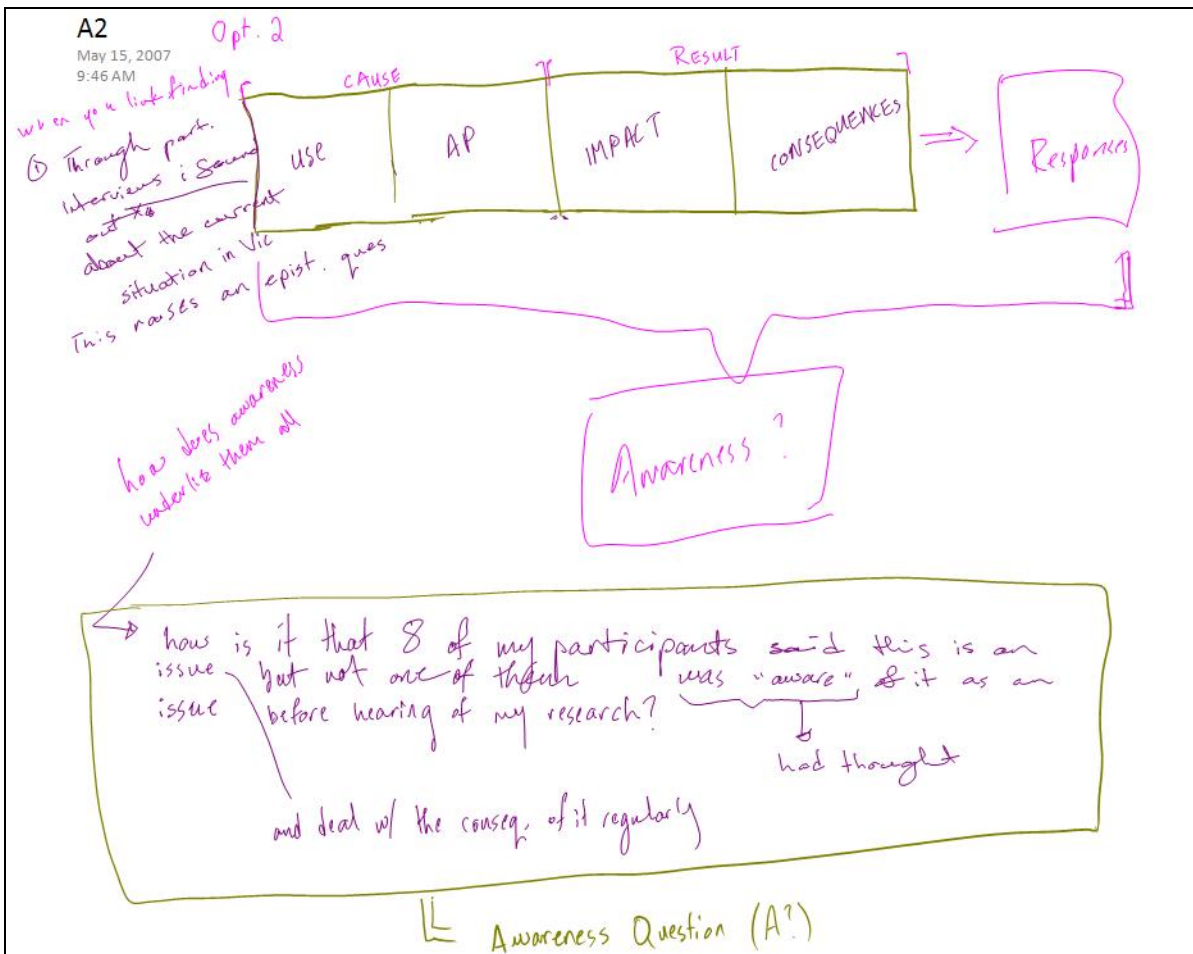
Appendix E. Sketch of Clustering Categories and the early formation of Blocks



Appendix F. Sketch of Analysis Attempt One, Non-linear approach



Appendix G. Sketch of Analysis Attempt Two, linear approach



## Vita

Surname: Gelb

Given Names: Karen

Place of Birth: Rochester, Minnesota, United States of America

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	2005 to 2007
Ryerson University	2005 to Present
University of Guelph	1998 to 2002

Degrees Awarded:

Bachelor of Applied Science, Family and Social Relations, University of Guelph, 2002

Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Graduate Student Fellowship	2005–2007
University of Guelph Adelaide Hoodless Memorial	2001
University of Guelph Dean's Scholarship	2001
University of Guelph Dean's list	1998-2002
University of Western Ontario Faculty Dependant Scholarship	1998-2002

Publications:

N/A

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Author \_\_\_\_\_

Karen Gelb

December 3, 2007