MUTUAL AID NETWORKS IN TWO FEMINIST HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES IN MONTREAL

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the social relations within two feminist-inspired housing co-operatives in Montreal by employing the analytical tool of social network from an interactionist perspective. The housing co-op milieu is a highly suitable terrain for reflections on feminist urban theory. 'Public' and 'private' space, identity and place, and 'community' and community development are central themes addressed in this study.

Members of each co-op were interviewed using a semi-directed interview guide. Social interaction is analysed qualitatively and focuses on the content of exchanges between co-op residents and patterns of socialising. The study concludes with an analysis of spatial micropolitics in terms of conflict and co-operation.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce mémoire porte sur les relations sociales présentes dans deux coopératives d'habitation d'inspiration féministes à Montréal. Nous utilisons le concept de réseau social selon un cadre théorique interactionniste. Dans une perspective féministe, milieu social d'une coopérative d'habitation est un sujet d'étude privilégié de réflexion pour la théorie urbaine. Nous traitons les thèmes suivants: l'espace 'publique' et privé, l'identité et le lieu, le sens de la 'communauté' et, le développement communautaire.

L'analyse est fondée sur des entrevues semi-dirigés avec des membres de chaque coop. L'interaction sociale est analysée de façon qualitative en portant attention au contenu des échanges entre les membres, leurs patterns de sociabilité et, la micropolitique spatiale à l'intérieur de la coop en termes de conflit et de cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the nature of neighbouring activity among residents of two housing co-operatives, both of which have a mandate concerning the advancement of women. The first, Coopérative Tournesoleil, officially requires that two thirds of its members be women, and the second, Coopérative Fil d'Ariane, is a co-op exclusively for single parents. My goal is to uncover the nature and extent of mutual aid, or "neighbouring", taking place between members of the co-op by employing the analytical concept of social network. I conducted semi-directed interviews with members from both co-ops and attended co-op business meetings. I conclude by describing the qualitative nature of neighbouring in both living environments to argue that the micropolitics of space are instrumental in the development of a sense of community.

1.1 Contents of the thesis

This chapter introduces the specific research questions, outlines my philosophical orientation, and explains the methodological approach. Chapter two is a literature review focusing on co-operatives in general and their place within contemporary society, housing co-operatives and women's housing needs. The following two chapters report on the two case studies. Attention is paid to factors such as their location and history of the two projects, and the characteristics of their members as well as the main preoccupation with the analysis of conflict and co-operation between

members of the co-ops. Chapter five evaluates the findings with respect to the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis.

1.2 Aims of the research

Over the years we have witnessed the creation of housing projects -- some are co-operatives -- which are sensitive to the housing needs of women. Needs specific to women arise from changes in gender roles and the emergence of new family types (Michelson 1985; Wekerle 1980; Hayden 1984). The inspiration for these projects is related to the problems many women face as renters in traditional private and public housing markets. The new feminist-inspired housing projects are institutions that create living environments supportive of women in the roles they play as workers, mothers and members of the community at large. Some authors have already explored such alternative social institutions which potentially enlarge the role of the neighbourhood in matters of social welfare (Hayden 1984; Wekerle 1988). What is now needed is an in- depth study of social relations within some of these new spaces in order to understand the dynamics of mutual support within feminist-inspired housing co-operatives.

The present study has several objectives. First, I want to explore the role of neighbour and neighbourly activities within women's housing co-operatives. Understanding neighbouring is a key to understanding mutual aid and its relation to particular living environments. Mutual aid is an important factor for the development of 'community'. This primary aspect of the study will enable me to evaluate previous

studies of women's housing co-ops as well as more general literature on neighbouring, home-based social networks and urban social relations in general (Bott 1971; Castells 1983; Fincher 1987; Leitner 1987; Keller 1969; Smith 1979; Wellman and Berkowitz 1988).

The second objective is more specifically geographical. I wish to analyze the spatial nature of social relations in each co-op. Instances of conflict and co-operation are related to the use and management of both private and collective spaces. Specifically, I will deal with power struggles with reference to experiences of privacy, child-rearing, and the 'cultural politics' which are manifested in these two co-ops. Notions of surveillance, distancing and 'otherness' are useful for analysing conflict and co-operation in these situations. I conclude by reflecting on the feminist discussion regarding the blurring of boundaries between private and public space, the construction of identity and its relation to place, and finally the meaning of 'community' and community development.

1.3 Philosophical orientation

I have chosen to approach this research from a humanistic interactionist perspective (Shibutani 1986). This is an orientation that focuses on the individual, her life world and her entry into relations with others who live nearby, specifically, other residents of the housing co-operative. I have chosen to employ the concept of social network as an analytical tool in order to aid the depiction and explanation of social relations within each co-op. A social network is an analytical tool used to isolate, depict and

explain certain types of social relations in a given historical, geographical and institutional context. The following paragraphs will outline the debates within contemporary social network research and will briefly outline related developments in social theory in order to justify the position I have taken.

There are a few theoretical concepts which unify the various interpretations of the meaning of 'social network'. First, all network approaches emerged as critiques to conventional, mostly positivist, approaches to social science. Second, social network researchers are unified in the sense that they view social structure as grounded in self-other relationships. Many network researches view Georg Simmel as their "founding father" (see Breiger 1988).

> Society, for Simmel, is nothing more than an abstract term denoting the interactions between real individuals. Form and content rather than groups or institutions are the basic units of his sociological analysis. Diverse individual personalities and their inner creative drives constitute the **content** of social reality. The various relationships and interdependencies that develop between and among individuals comprise the **forms** of social interaction (Smith 1979, 90 my emphasis).

As Smith goes on to observe, "the proper function of sociology, in Simmel's view, is to grasp the deeper meanings and uses of recurring forms of social interaction (p. 90). Divergences with respect to what should be emphasized, 'form' or 'content' -- which are themselves analytical categories -- is the basic theoretical cleavage in the social network literature.

On the one hand, the "structural analysts" emphasise network form and view their approach as a unique manifestation of structuralism:

> [Structural analysis] is a comprehensive paradigmatic way of taking social structure seriously by studying directly how patterns of ties

> allocate resources in a social system. Thus, its strength lies in its integrated application of theoretical concepts, ways of collecting and analyzing data, and a growing, cumulative body of substantive findings (Wellman and Berkowitz 1988, 20).

The resources which are most commonly analyzed by this group are material (income, goods, services) rather than the less tangible aspects of social interaction such as meanings and values. A political economic approach is favoured in order to explain the origin and persistence of certain networks. The methodologies associated with this school are designed to seek out patterns of relationships.

Another, much smaller, group of network researchers consider themselves symbolic interactionists (or phenomenologists) and focus on the content of social networks, sometimes in addition to form (see Fine and Kleinman 1983; Ley 1983, 189-98). They place importance on the meanings attributed to the relationships in the network, how they are continuously re-negotiated by the actors involved. Interviews are used to explore the depth and nuances of social network relationships over time.

The two types of social network research outlined above correspond roughly to the structuralist and humanistic critiques which have been articulated in the social sciences including, of course, geography. The structural analysts, who explicitly identify themselves with structuralism by focusing on resource allocation, emphasise marxist-inspired political economic analysis in order to analyze the results of their empirical research. Structural analysts seem to place considerably more emphasis on the empirical grounding of social theory compared to other structuralists (Berkowitz 1988, 477-79). By looking at networks they place an emphasis on day-to-day social

relations of individuals. Their emphasis on everyday human experience is perhaps more closely linked to the humanistic approach to social life (see Ley 1983, 8).

Although there are many variations of humanism, its basic concern generally remains the same:

> The basic feature of humanistic approaches is their focus on the individual as a thinking being, as a human, rather than as a dehumanized responder to stimuli in some mechanical way, which is how some feel they are presented in the positivist and structuralist social sciences (Johnston 1986, 55).

Many branches of humanism, especially phenomenology, place an emphasis on the meanings and values which contribute to the identity of individuals and groups. Humanists affirm that since all knowledge is subjective, social research should employ an intersubjective methodology in order to understand those being studied.

Intersubjectivity, or shared experience and meaning, is brought about by contact with other people, places, things and institutions. "Social life can be thought of in Martin Buber's terms as a twofold process of both setting at a distance and entering into relations" (Ley 1983, 174). Setting at a distance and entering into relations can also be related to the concepts of "presencing" and "absencing" (Giddens 1981, 35). Presence and absence are primary features of day-to-day existence as we move through time and space. Much of this quotidian activity is routinised "in which individuals move through definite 'stations' in time-space" (Giddens 1981,38).

The time-space approach to human geography was first developed by Torsten Hägerstand and the Lund School; its main purpose was to understand the everyday life of the individual (see Johnston 1986, 93-4). Time geography emphasizes that

time cannot be empirically separated from space; all movement takes place through time. The concepts of path and project are employed to trace the activities of the individual through time and space. More recently, "diorama" is used to represent day-to-day human activities as part of a particular historical and spatial context. In his recent writings, Hägerstrand has placed greater importance on the meanings and values which are, notwithstanding certain constraints, precursors to much of human action (Gregson, 1986, 189).

There are intimate conceptual links between time geography and social network analysis. Before developing the "web model" used graphically to depict paths taken by individuals through time-space, Hägerstrand experimented with social networks in order to illustrate his theory. It was through networks that he eventually developed his model of spatial diffusion. Both the network and time-geographic approaches stress the **connectedness** of human social activity. People enter into relations with each other in certain time-space contexts.

Certain authors have tried to bring together the structuralist and humanistic views of society. Berger and Luckman (1967) are considered the pioneers of a theory which views structure and agency as recursive or mutually dependent. More recently, Giddens (1979, 1981, 1984) has received trans-disciplinary acclaim for his development of 'neo-weberian' structuration theory which posits "the interdependence of human agency and social structure in time and space" (Gregson 1986, 185). Giddens credits time-geography as a valuable approach to the study of the interweaving of time and space in the human activity.

Structuration theory has been enthusiastically received by geographers although it is not without its critics (Gregson 1986, 1987; Storper 1985). Giddens has been blamed for a piecemeal approach to theory building in which he carelessly extracts bits from other bodies of writing (such as time geography) and criticizes them, sometimes inaccurately, in order to support structuration. He is also chastised for failing to provide feasible empirical illustration (Abercrombie et al. 1988, 245).

My perspective is both humanistic and interactionist, but is also informed by recent developments in social theory, particularly structuration. Gidden's approach to structure and agency is particularly useful for this research which attempts to seek out patterns of interaction and situate them in their institutional and geographical contexts. I am interested in the active role played by co-op residents in the creation, maintenance and mutation of their physical and social living environments. Essentially, my orientation:

> is an interactionist perspective which aims to uncover how social structure is defined and maintained through social interaction, and which studies how social life is constituted geographically through the spatial structure of social relations. (Jackson and Smith 1984, vii)

I make no claims to 'objectivity'. My values and political motives my choice of research topic and method which I hope will promote local collective initiatives such as co-operatives, while at the same time keeping in mind the importance of gender issues. I have been inspired by the work of 19th century geographers such as Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin (see Breitbart 1981; Fleming 1988; Giblin 1982; Reclus 1977; 1982) and recent feminist research from a similar political perspective (Hayden 1981 and 1984; Wekerle et. al. 1980 and 1988). These values have influenced the

questions I posed and my interpretation of responses and observations.

> Because reality is complex and infinite, choices must be made, and it is here that the beliefs of the analyst condition his or her object of inquiry. (Jackson and Smith, 200)

I view society as social interaction which, from a neo-weberian perspective, is in a permanent state of 'dynamic disequilibrium' (Jackson and Smith 1984, 208). This philosophical orientation, combined with my political and social values, has led me to pay attention to relations of power both at the macro and micro scales. This thesis then, is an attempt to analyze the formation of competing groups and differential distribution of power within two micro-environments: Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane housing co-operatives.

1.4 Methodology[1]

Five housing co-operatives, which were identified as having a mandate concerning women, were initially contacted in writing concerning the possibility of being included in this study. Three replied affirmatively, and I selected two which offered interesting contrasts of age, location, membership characteristics and management policies. In each I attempted to interview as many residents as possible by contacting key members, such as the president or a founding member, and asking them to recruit potential interviewees and by attending co-op meetings in order to solicit candidates. I interviewed out of the 18 members of Tournesoleil (88%) and 10 of the 24 members of Fil d'Ariane (42%). This cleavage is due to a number of reasons such as interviews being scheduled during summer holidays and reticence to being

interviewed on the part of Fil d'Ariane residents. The bulk of the interviews took place between June and October 1989 but a few were scheduled in the winter and early spring of 1990.

I employed a semi-directed interview guide in order to glean both qualitative and quantitative information about co-op life. Answers to factual questions such as number of children, former place of residence, occupation and so on, were grouped and quantified. Then, in addition to questioning members on the web of social relations within the co-op, I asked for details of their housing histories, satisfaction with the co-op and their future plans. This enabled me to situate an individual within her broader life history and her perceived personal trajectory.

The second step in the analysis was to establish the form, content and dynamics of neighbouring networks within the co-ops. Members were asked to provide me with a list of those with whom they entertained relations of mutual aid within the co-op. They were also asked to describe the type of support they exchanged with these members. I was then able describe and explain these links as perceived by members themselves.

I have placed emphasis on the processes relating to the production and maintenance of neighbouring relations (Fine and Kleinman 1986). Most studies of networks concentrate on the structural elements of linkages but ignore the subtle and changing meanings of relationships which define the content of relationships. Close attention must be paid to the types of exchanges taking place between member and the "intimacy" of the link described not as a position on a

continuum but as the quality of the relationship (subjects discussed, types of emotional support).

1.5 Specific research questions

In addition to seeking the information described in the preceding section, there were three groups of specific empirical questions:

1. Who 'exchanges' with whom on a regular basis within the co-operative? Which ties are strong or weak? Why are certain people linked together?

2. What is the content of exchanges, be they tangible or intangible, between residents of the co-operative? Are the exchanges reciprocal and equal?

3. What is the frequency of these exchanges between co-operative residents? What is the significance and importance of intra-co-op mutual aid for individual members in relation to their wider sphere of social relations?

The primary concern was therefore to determine the composition and content of the mutual aid network for each individual interviewed in order to establish the significance of the entire 'web of group affiliations' within each co-op. In order to situate the co-op social networks in the larger context of each individual's life world, participants were also asked to comment on their mutual aid and friendship ties outside the co-op. Based on this information, patterns of conflict and co-operation and their various spatial manifestations were identified within both housing projects. We all participate in many activities in the confines of our day-to-day home environment, whether we are conscious of such neighbourly relations or not. For many people, such activities meet crucial emotional and

material needs. A latent effect of friendly, solidary and helpful neighbourly relations with a concern for personal privacy is the creation of urban sub-cultures (Ley 1983). Housing co-ops have been identified as prime environments for the development of urban sub-cultures as they are often 'villages' within neighbourhoods (Fortin 1988). Membership in an urban sub-culture can lead to heightened quality of life within an environment which is sometimes characterized as cold and individualistic.

Finally, this thesis touches on community economic development as a strategy for increased local autonomy and identity in a world of oligopolistic corporations and growing cultural homogeneity. Housing co-operatives can be viewed as alternative institutions which promote the aims of new urban social movements and empower those who are involved. It has been said that feminist-inspired housing co-operatives in particular, by combining the tenets of direct democracy with a feminist concern for gender equality, provide us with a model for a more egalitarian urban housing strategy. It is the goal of this thesis to explore the social dynamics within two such housing co-operatives in order to better understand the process of feminist grass-roots community building.

NOTES

1. A more detailed explanation of research methodology can be referred to in the appendix. Also included are the questionnaires and interview guides used.

-Chapter Two-

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of this chapter is to review relevant literature which guided this research. Section one deals with the literature on the co-operative movement. First, co-operatives in general and housing co-operatives in particular will be situated in the context of contemporary capitalist society. I will also deal with the origin of co-operatives and the ideals which fueled their development and expansion. Following this, I will deal with the history of the housing co-operative movement in Quebec and its link with the ideals of social equality and local economic and political control. Finally, the place of co-operatives within contemporary urban social movements and the world political economy will be touched upon.

Section two will address the abundant literature dealing with gender and the urban environment. I will begin by tracing the historical foundations which underlie the differing relationships women and men have with respect to the North American city. The problems inherent in this sexual segregation of our cities will then be discussed. Some of the solutions proposed to redress these problems will be outlined. Section three will deal with the particular benefits of housing co-operatives for the needs of women and will comment on the literature dealing with co-ops that have been created by and for women in Canada and abroad.

2.1 Co-ops and housing co-ops

The origin of the co-operative movement

Ideals of local autonomy and self-management circulated thousands of years ago with citizens and theorists of the Greek Polis and later within medieval cities (Bookchin 1985 & 1986; Braudel 1979). Geographers such as Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin in nineteenth century Europe advocated and strived for such a society based on the principles of anarcho-communism (Breitbart 1981; Giblin 1982; Fleming 1988). The idea of a social structure in which power is in the hands of local communities rather than hierarchically organised from above is popular in today's development theory (Stöhr 1981) and as community-based economic development (Jessop and Weaver 1985; Shragge 1983). It is considered a viable alternative to the "top-down" experience of much development activity. The "neighbourhood strategy", to use the expression used Dolores Hayden (1984), has been adopted by feminists in the past (see Hayden 1981) and many contemporary feminists preoccupied with the notion of sustainable development (Conn and Chudnowsky 1986; Smith 1986; Mackenzie 1987). Such a political structure is thought to be more suitable than traditional socialism for the full realization of the emancipation of both women and men.

Modern co-operatives attribute their origins to the ideas propagated by so-called "utopian" socialists Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. Fourier stressed the importance of striving toward smaller, more self-sufficient communities based on free and voluntary association (Buber 1950, 19). Fourierists in Europe and North America created alternative communities, or phalenstères, in which property was collectively owned and

managed and tasks such as childcare and meal preparation were the responsibility of the community (Desanti 1970, 152-3). Owen, the British industrialist, formed model industrial communities in the United Kingdom and the United States in which most tasks were managed and performed collectively (Desanti 1970, 248-9). The experiments and writings by Owen, among others, inspired the official founders of the co-operative movement: the Rochdale Pioneers.

The Pioneers were a group of English weavers who set up a number of consumer and producer co-operatives following a grave industrial crisis in 1844. Their best known achievements were the successful co-operative stores which distributed retail and wholesale goods to members in Lancashire but which eventually spread to other parts of England and, later, to Scotland (Cole 1987, xix). The pioneers and their followers ventured beyond retail stores to experiment with other co-operative enterprises such as cafés, Turkish baths and 'temperance hotels' (Brown 1944, 36).

The Rochdale workers were familiar with the work of Owen but also with the experiments of others such as William King who had been key in the creation of co-operative societies all over Britain.[1] Many Pioneers and other early British co-operators embraced Wesleyan Methodism, principles of Christian Socialism and many were active in the temperance movement. Owen's atheism and ideas of 'rational marriage' were therefore rejected by many co-operators. Political ideologies, such as anarcho-communism, which, like co-operativism, advocated worker control of enterprises and local democracy, were also rejected by many Pioneers because of their strong anti-clerical stance and tendency to advocate violent revolution.

The principles which guided the Rochdale Pioneers were codified by the 1937 Paris Congress of the then newly formed International Co-operative Alliance (Brown 1944, 79). Most co-operatives adhere to these 'Rochdale principles' listed below.

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THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF CO-OPERATION

1. **Open and voluntary Association**
2. **Democratic control**
3. **Limited interest on capital**
4. **The principle of rebate**
5. **Cooperative education**
6. **Interco-operation**

Source: Beland, Claude 1977 Initiation au co-opératisme. Montréal: éditions du jour. 47.[2]

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Co-operatives, as open and voluntary associations, are committed to a policy of non-discrimination. They function democratically; each member is entitled to one vote concerning all decisions pertaining to the organisation. Limited interest on capital and the principle of rebate ensure that co-operatives are not guided by the goal of profit but rather by the aim of providing a quality service to their members. Any profits that are made are re-distributed to members or invested in order to improve the co-operative.

The principles of co-operative education and interco-operation stress the idea of informing the public about the co-operative strategy, working together and with others in the movement (or federation) and promoting the formation of new organisations based on the same principles. Internationally, co-operative movements as diverse as the co-operatively run region of Mondragon in Basqueland, Scandinavian co-op ventures and various 'third-world' experiments, have embraced the above ideals and principles of management (Campbell et. al. 1977; Childs 1980; Kaswan and Kaswan 1989; Moser and Peake, 1987). Housing co-operatives as well, such as the Swedish HSB and the Antigonish movement, are usually based on the principles outlined by the Rochdale pioneers (CCQ 1976; Esping-Andersen and Korpi 1987; Heclo and Madsen 1987; MacLeod 1986). The housing co-operative movement in Quebec was inspired by these founding principles but went through various distinct phases in which commitment to a restructuring of society along co-operative principles waxed and waned.

Quebec housing co-operatives

The Quebec housing co-operative movement is distinctive as one of Canada's oldest traditions going back to the 1940s. Since then, the movement has periodically grown, declined and taken on new forms (Rutigliano 1971). The early co-operative housing movement was promoted by the catholic church and french-canadian labour organisations and was laden with ideological implications related to the promotion of the nuclear family and the rejection of organised communism (Collin 1986, 35).

In Quebec of the 1940s co-operation was used as a strategy by the church and

bourgeois intellectuals to reinforce official Catholic family values through the creation of homogeneous and secure residential neighbourhoods (Collin 1986, 51). Co-operative strategies were used to direct the poorer classes away from the popular radical political ideologies of the time which flourished in urban slums. The theory of Co-operation was thought to offer a remedy for the ravages of capitalism and was considered a 'non-socialist' strategy (Choko 1988). The co-operative movement was also closely linked to developments of french-canadian nationalism in the forties, fifties and early 1960s (Collin, 33).

Housing co-operatives often took the form of "building co-ops" or "garden cities". The building co-ops were formed to pool resources for the purchase of materials and labour and were disbanded after the construction of members' houses. Building co-operatives were therefore of a transitory nature; the collective action was a temporary and pragmatic measure used to obtain individual private property.

The architectural forms associated with these ventures were twofold. Suburban developments of single-family dwellings were favoured by the building co-ops. A more 'utopian' development, in which single-family homes were included within an integrated community setting, was the second approach. This idea was based on the idea of "garden-city" which was first developed by Ebenezer Howard and very popular in Europe at the turn of the century.

The forms of these developments embodied specific types of gender relations. The single-family house carried with it the view that a woman's role was homemaker and mother; a private person in a private sphere (Hayden 1981 & 1984). Choko has

remarked on the deliberate strategy aimed at the social control of women and children, in addition to the ideological control of male workers, through the creation of these co-operative garden cities.

> Préservation de la famille nombreuse, des "bonnes moeurs", et lutte contre les idées subversives constituent le coeur de cette vision très idéologique du logement ouvrier....Entre sa dénonciation des abus du développement capitaliste et sa crainte de voir les idées socialistes ou communistes prendre de l'ampleur auprès des travailleurs, l'Eglise en vient à tenter de définir de nouveaux rapports sociaux. (Choko 1988, 34)

As a result of this particular housing co-operative strategy, the role of women as "private sphere" homemakers and mothers was further constructed and perpetuated.

The second phase of co-operation in Quebec housing was the Fédération Co-op Habitat, a centralised highly bureaucratic structure which failed and is thought to have alienated the membership, which is the foundation of any co-operative venture, because of its highly centralised bureaucracy (CCQ 1976, 1-5; Fincher 1982, 24; Quintin 1983, 22). This "welfare state" view of co-operation was inspired by Scandinavian housing co-op experiences, especially the successful Swedish HSB. Fédération Co-op Habitat failed for a number of reasons. First, it lacked capital and its financial problems were aggravated by a construction strike in the spring of 1969. Secondly, in order to continue receiving financing from the Quebec government, Co-op Habitat was forced to build new housing for the sake of survival which gave the impression that the movement did not need it own capital (CCQ 1976, 3-4). Fincher goes on to say that Co-op Habitat failed because "its ambitions were too great to be supported by a pyramidal financial structure" (Fincher 1982, 24).

Only the third contemporary phase of housing co-operatives in Quebec - characterised by the continuing occupancy non-profit co-op - has been edifying institutions aimed at the emancipation of disadvantaged social groups by promoting grassroots, democratic control of collective property. The non-profit continuing-occupancy form of housing co-operative started emerging in Quebec and Canada after 1973 following a restructuring of the Federal CMHC aid program. This type of co-op is considered to be a relatively de-commodified form of state subsidised housing and has become very popular in Quebec compared to other provinces of Canada since the "provincial government took advantage of available federal funds for non-profit housing, by setting up branches of the state apparatus to channel this money into the province" (Fincher 1982, 28). This strategy relieved the need for a public housing program in Quebec.

As of 1986, CMHC introduced a new funding formula for housing co-operatives in which households exhibiting 'core-need' are granted housing subsidies whereas households which are not considered as financially deprived must essentially pay market rents for their units. This policy has been criticised extensively by the co-operative housing movement as one which will further erode the autonomy of housing co-ops and will drive away the 'backbone membership': the lower-middle income groups (Champagne 1989).

Co-operatives today are a marginal form of housing tenure in Quebec accounting for less than one percent of the total housing market. They proliferated in the late 1970s to early 1980s. Today there are approximately 10 000 housing units owned co-operatively

in Quebec (Nadeau 1986). Two-thirds of these units are in the Montreal area while the remainder are split evenly between Quebec City and other regions in the province. Differences in the types of co-operative projects can be noticed in various regions. Montreal's projects are mostly renovated buildings in low-income neighborhoods (70%) while Quebec City co-ops are commonly recycled from other uses such as former schools and convents. Elsewhere in the province new construction projects predominate (Nadeau 1986).

Quebec housing co-operatives house a low income population. In 1982 it was found that 40% of households in co-operatives received total incomes under 13 000 dollars per annum. Most of these households were comprised of lone parent families (nearly always led by the mother) or women living alone (Olson and Gauthier 1982). Renovation projects in the Montreal area are usually situated in low income neighborhoods. The housing co-operative formula is a new model for neighborhood revitalisation since the housing stock is improved without displacement of the incumbent population. It was found that two thirds of households in Montreal's housing co-operatives were previous residents of their units prior to collectivisation. These housing projects therefore build on existing community networks, strengthening the local fabric and having consequences for community development.

Housing co-operatives and capitalism

One of the important issues at stake is to situate co-operatives within the context of contemporary capitalism. It is generally accepted that a new "mode of development" (to

use Castells' term) or "régime of accumulation" has become increasingly hegemonic since the early 1970s (Cox 1989; Geddes 1988). Generally speaking, the type of production undertaken and its location are being altered in parts of Western Europe and North America by focussing away from heavy industry and the production of a standardised range of consumer durable goods and instead, orienting toward more flexible high technology production and producer services (Storper and Scott 1989, 21). This new régime of accumulation is significantly eroding the role of the state as provider of social services and is increasingly shifting this burden to the "third" sector; one which is based on community and voluntary associations (Castells 1983; Klein 1988 & 1989). The emergence of a distinctive type of urban social movement focussed on issues of social welfare, such as housing and health, has been associated with these recent mutations of capitalism (Clavel 1986).

Co-operatives are situated at an interesting junction between the three sectors as they are not profit-seeking capitalist enterprises, often dependent on government financial support, and community-based organisations. Recent economic restructuring has serious consequences for the future role played by housing co-operatives and other grassroots local organisations. Delving into the nature of these consequences is not within the mandate of this thesis. I will discuss one of the social manifestations of the recent restructuring of the world economy: namely, the emergence of a new type of urban social movement which is oriented toward access to 'reproductive' type services such as housing, health care and education.

The anatomy of contemporary urban social movements

Castells defines 'urban social movements' as a distinctive phenomenon: they are always urban, that is, related to the city or community; secondly, they are locally-based or territorially defined; and finally, they mobilise around the three goals of i) collective consumption, ii) cultural identity and iii) political self-management (idem, 328).

These movements are reacting to the new economic and social conditions evident under the changing relationships between production and the state. Klein (1988; 1989) notes that decreases in state spending in the field of welfare services have created a void which the new consumption oriented movements are attempting to fill. This "quality of life" approach has important geographical implications.

> Il se développe ainsi un lien intense entre les mouvements sociaux et les communautés où ils sont ancrés, ce qui correspond à un processsus de "territorialisation" et de renforcement du sentiment d'appartenance. (Klein 1989, 53)

Local territorial networks are being reinforced and newly developed in some cases. The quest for cultural identity and political self-management can be viewed as a response to the emergence of a standardised, indeed Americanised, international mass culture and the economic dominance of a handful of multi-national corporations. The interface between space and politics at this time is such that the economic sphere has been transcended to the international level and the social sphere has been "localised" (Lévy cited by Klein 1989, 54).

Movements for social change, if they are to be successful, must take into consideration the conditions imposed by the changing conditions of production and the complicity of the state. A strategy which gives primacy to the local level while attempting

to forge a new relationship of interdependence with the national and international scales of organisation is considered by many authors as the best strategy (Geddes 1988, 104; Godbout 1986, 121; Goodwin and Duncan 1986, 19).

Urban social movements in Montreal

Movements such as those described above have been active in Montreal for many years (Castells 1974). The success of many of these autonomous groups of citizens, such as the Montreal Citizen's Movement, is a thesis in itself but one thing is clear. The demands and activities of these many urban organisations have mobilised public opinion and changed attitudes toward consumption and social reproduction issues. Collective strategies such as housing co-operatives have known a great success in Montreal. An example worth citing is the 'Milton-Park' affair in which neighbourhood residents successfully put a stop to a large redevelopment project in the early 1970s leading ultimately to the creation of the largest housing co-op federation in the city (Cousineau 1980; Helman 1987). The recent creation of several neighbourhood "Community Development Corporations" have favoured co-operative strategies to respond to employment, childcare and housing needs. These corporations, for the most part, prioritise local economic and political control as a strategy for community economic development. The withdrawal of the state from the funding of organisations such as housing co-operatives has forced community economic development corporations and municipal governments to secure and distribute funds (see, for example, City of Montreal 1989).

The trends outlined in the preceding discussion illustrate the links between the co-operative movement, housing co-operatives in particular, and the current movements for social change as they relate to prevailing economic and social conditions. Housing co-operatives are key actors in the community development process because of their effect on the housing market, local control of resources, and the creation of a sense of identity. Collectively owned and managed housing is a strategy for the empowerment of disadvantaged members of society. Recent economic restructuring and resulting local struggles for control over consumption issues such be viewed as a prime opportunity for housing co-operatives in general, and feminist-inspired co-ops in particular, to galvanise support.

2.2 Women and the urban environment

The origins of separate spheres

The underlying concept which guides much feminist urban research is that of a spatial division of labour which reflects and reinforces the sexual division of labour in our society. This division of labour is one in which women are primarily responsible for the rearing of children and most domestic work. This work has increasingly become spatially segregated from other places of activity, especially the waged workplace, and was designed as a "separate sphere" for women and young children. The quintessential expression of this sphere is the residential suburb -- homogeneous neighbourhoods composed of single-family detached houses and little else.

A certain sexual division of labour is almost as old as society itself but the idea

that reproductive work - such as the care of children, food preparation and other household chores - become an essentially private responsibility performed by one woman and taking place within the confines of a single-family house, has its origins in 16th century Dutch society (Rybcynsky 1986, 59). The idea and practice of private domesticity eventually diffused to other parts of Europe, and later in North America, in the centuries to follow.

The physical origins of these separate spheres for women and men's work can be traced back to the 19th century when the emerging industrial city was in a crisis of social upheavals and sanitary problems. Those who had the financial means escaped the crisis ridden city and settled on the outskirts of the city. The first suburbs were thus born.

These suburbs, and those to follow, were designed for the traditional nuclear family. The housewife, the family home and eventually the residential neighbourhood itself, became identified with "private" pursuits, in particular, childrearing, family meals, rest and recreation. All these activities were to be organised by a full-time unpaid homemaker. The family home became a haven for the male breadwinner and a safe, comfortable environment for women and children. Ultimately, however, this formula for social reproduction contained the seeds of problems which were to develop in the future.

> Whereas the 19th century "Urban Question" has been primarily focussed around inadequate conditions for reproduction in the central cities, the solution to these problems - the extensive, distant and expensive suburb separated from the wage workplaces -becomes the mid-20th century "Urban Problem", a problem which is especially acute for that growing proportion of the [waged] labour force who are also domestic community workers (Mackenzie 1989, 46-7).

Alternatives were actively promoted and implemented but became increasingly marginal

compared to the neighbourhoods comprised primarily of single-family detached homes. The classic North American suburb, despite criticism, reached its apogée in the decades immediately following World War Two.

World war two and the growth of suburbia

During the second world war, society's ideal of woman as homemaker was temporarily modified while women in North America were employed as industrial workers to support production for the war effort. A number of "model industrial communities" were built during this period to support both men and women as parents as well as workers in an industrial labour force (Hayden 1984, 4). These towns were ethnically integrated, energy efficient and housing required low maintenance since many of these tasks were shared between households. Services such as daycare, public transportation and ready-to-serve meals were readily available and scheduled to meet the needs of men and women workers and their families.

These model communities generally came to an end with the return of veterans after the war. From then on, the creation of extensive, remote, mostly 'white' and middle-class suburbs composed of identical bungalows became the dominant type of residential neighbourhood for many young families composed of a male breadwinner, full-time housewife and young children. The rise of Levittown and its clones has been explained a number of ways. Some authors have stressed the influence of the powerful North American building industry, automobile interests and the banking system coupled with the push to have households buy consumer goods, as primary explanations for the

creation of the post WWII suburb. The rise of advertising, particularly through television, provided the needed propaganda to promote these business interests (Hayden 1984).

> Housing Americans was, as Hoover had predicted, a big, big business, and American banking, real estate and transportation interests were intimately involved (Hayden 1984, 38).

Others have stressed that a war-weary generation was ready to settle down in a quiet milieu in order to get on with the business of raising a family in an "ideal" suburban setting. Women were more than happy to take on the vocation of full-time housewife and concentrate on nurturing activities for their families. Some authors dismiss the possibility of a deliberate strategy of suburban development adopted by North American business interests by stating that such a living environment was "desired" and nothing more (Popenoe 1980, 167).

There is no doubt that both explanations of suburban development have some validity. The single-family dwelling is the setting for many consumer goods designed to "facilitate" reproductive work, such as laundry, food preparation and so on. To relegate reproductive activities to the scale of the nuclear family, usually performed by a housewife/mother, is to ensure that consumer goods such as washing machines, cooking accessories and household maintenance tools must be purchased by each individual household rather than a larger group of users.

The suburban environment, dominated by single-family detached dwellings and lacking the easily accessible services of urban neighbourhoods, promotes the social relations of the mythified "traditional" nuclear family, which is largely obsolete, and

hinders mutual-aid within a neighbourhood setting. North American suburbs, more than any other type of residential environment, spatially segregate the world of reproductive work from the world of so-called "public" activities, such as commerce and industry. Following World War Two, traditional "street-corner" society -- characterised by its street-facing porches, corner stores and other thriving local businesses -- was replaced with an inward-looking "back-yard" society -- typified by the replacement of local business by distant standardised suburban shopping malls which made owning a car a necessity for residents to obtain necessary goods and services.

Problems in 'dreamland'

The revitalisation of inner-city neighbourhoods, also known as "gentrification", has recently offered a residential alternative to those not interested in living in the suburbs. Suburban environments, however, are still preferred by many women and men for childrearing because they are 'quiet', the sites of "good schools", and thought to be sheltered from the ills of urban life such as inter-ethnic strife, unemployment and crime.

As women all over North America began to question their socially defined domestic roles as housewives and mothers -- coupled with the rising cost of living -- the efficiency, indeed the necessity, of the 1950s suburbs started being critiqued (Popenoe 1980, 168). Women with small children were socially and physically isolated from mainstream society and this was no longer considered acceptable by many feminists (Freidan 1963). The separation between home and places of waged employment made finding work or participating in other non-domestic pursuits difficult for many women

who continued to be responsible for most of domestic responsibilities (Palm and Pred 1974 cited by Saegert and Winkel 1980, 44). Many wanted options which often were not locally available, such as part-time flexible employment, which could more easily be combined with child-rearing than a conventional nine to five job.[3] Of course, business responded to these needs by developing 'pink collar' jobs in suburbia which provided employers with a new, eager, and cheap labour force (Howe 1977).

Changing family structure since the 1960s has been typified by the growth of lone-parent families where one parent, usually the mother, must assume the role of breadwinner and principal "nurturer". Fulfilling this double role is more difficult in a single-family house and suburban neighbourhood which is designed for the traditional nuclear family. Necessary services, such as shopping, are often inaccessible to women (Keller 1981, vii).

> Transportation, housing, work schedules, store hours, and much of the rest of the structure of opportunity in our society are predicated on the idea of the sexual division of household work and work outside the home, even though almost half of the women in the United States do both (Saegert and Winkel 1980, 60).

The segregation of urban land-uses in the vast, auto-dependant suburb, poses problems of access for many suburban women, who more often than men, are less mobile due to lack of a car (Fava 1980, 135). Responsibility for children has also made a good many women into "chauffeurs" - driving children to and from appointments, running errands for the family and so on - combined with their own commute to and from work.

Feminists have labelled the tendency for wage-earning mothers who perform most household duties in addition to a full-time jobs as exhausted victims of the "double day"

(Mackenzie 1989, 40). Many view the solution to this problem as the equal participation of men in child-rearing and housework but this is not enough because the contemporary city is so divided in terms of time and space.

> These problems of scheduling cannot be solved merely by equal sharing of domestic tasks between men and women -however desirable that may be - since the present spatial and temporal organization of urban areas hinders the integration of public and private activities for men and women (Women and Geography Study Group of the I.B.G. 1984, 65).

The contemporary North American city poses problems for women in their expanded societal roles on two inter-related scales: the single-family house and the residential neighbourhood -- the post world war two suburb being its most extreme manifestation. The single-family house reduces possibilities for sharing tasks such as child-rearing and meal preparation with unrelated individuals and households at the neighbourhood scale. The single-family house, with its greater needs for overall maintenance and 'self-contained' nature, was predicated on the full-time unpaid work of women which makes it anachronistic and inefficient.

Residential neighbourhoods comprised mostly of single-family detached houses and lacking in neighbourhood based services such as daycare facilities, shops with convenient schedules, and other community facilities, further reinforce the outdated ideologies embodied in the architecture of the single-family house.

> The geographical segregation of residential environments from public life reinforces the cultural choice of work or home, especially for women, who do not have the luxury of a wife (Saegert and Winkel 1980, 60).

The problem with neighbourhoods is both their composition and their isolated location relative to the rest of the city.

In addition to the concerns of feminists, the classic suburb is not a flexible form of housing when one considers changes in the life-cycle which render a large single-family house and child-oriented neighbourhood obsolete for many "empty-nesters" (Schmertz 1981, 196). Rising costs, especially for energy, and environmental concerns, such as urban sprawl and the pollution resulting from automobile emissions, drive the idea of the adequacy of expensive suburbs further home.

It is evident that the single-family detached house and its residential neighbourhood pose many problems for contemporary urban society despite some of their qualities, such as relative quietness, safety, and comfort. The effort to solve these problems will be very challenging due to the almost sacred status of such living environments in North American society.

> Single-family suburban homes have become inseparable from the American Dream for economic success and upward mobility. Their presence pervades every aspect of economic life, social life and political life in the United States (Hayden 1984, 14-15).

This orientation toward the goal of the home in the suburbs is of fundamental importance to understanding Canadian urban culture as well. The contemporary mythology of the American lifestyle and the living environment has diffused to Canada as well as other parts of the world (see Werner 1980, 175 for the example of Sweden). Any proposals to change the status quo in typical North American residential neighbourhoods must de-mythify the suburban landscape and the single-family house. The ideology of the "good life" must move beyond a conception of the "ideal" house or even neighbourhood to once again encompass the scale of the city in its entirety. Only such a comprehensive approach will succeed in addressing today's urban ills, one important one being the

anachronistic spatial segregation of the city according to traditional gender roles.

Redressing the separate spheres

A number of solutions have been proposed to redress the gender segregation of the city. Changes have been suggested on two levels: 1) that of the house itself; and 2) the physical and social design of neighbourhoods and ultimately the city. Most proposed strategies involve a redefining of the traditional sexual division of labour and a new domestic economy based on the intervention of grassroots community organizations. I will deal first with proposed changes to housing design and follow with a discussion of ideas for more sexually egalitarian neighbourhoods and cities. This distinction is for analytical purposes only since housing and neighbourhood design are mutually interdependent and are ultimately part of one overall strategy of urban design.

1. Changes in housing design

Aside from the more obvious technical requirements of suitable housing for women such as affordability, availability (no discrimination against women or households with children) and play space for children, most ideas concerning non-sexist housing design revolve around the ideas of "flexibility" and "integration". Authors all agree that housing has to be flexible enough to accommodate different types of individuals and various social groups. For example, housing design should accommodate people through different stages in the life cycle, rather than segregating housing type according to whether one is single, living with another person, with small children, an 'empty-nester' or

widow/widower (Schmertz 1981, 196). Flexible housing makes it possible for households to modify their housing according to changes in their lives. Transitional housing is especially important for women who are responsible for children and have recently experienced separation or divorce. Integration according to household type reduces the need to move to a different neighbourhood because of inadequate housing when a change in family composition takes place.

In order to make housing design flexible, housing units must not be designed solely with the nuclear family in mind. Domestic architecture must envision the possibility of single persons sharing accommodation or several families living together, a practice which is widespread for economic and social reasons but lacks a suitable housing form because of the dominance of redundant designs.

> Coming home to an empty house or apartment every night can be dreary, but sharing traditional housing designed for the closeness of one family can be frustrating in its lack of privacy (Hayden 1984, 13)

It should be possible to build accessory apartments, change the functions of certain rooms, and so on. Rooms must be potentially multi-purpose to accommodate various functions such as bedroom, office, playroom, or storage space. Traditional housing limits such potential by ascribing certain functions to certain rooms prior to occupation by residents. Adding features, such as alcoves, can enlarge usable space and make it possible to add furniture, appliances or other objects which can change the function of the space.

Another area of consensus involves the integration of work space within housing. To begin with, many authors have mentioned that traditional housing design does not

facilitate the performance of domestic work itself. Supervision of children is often difficult, if not impossible, in various parts of the house, space for cooking is insufficient or inappropriate, cupboards and closets are in inaccessible locations. Many have suggested that the entire concept of 'kitchen' requires a major overhaul if the entire household is to be involved in performing household work related to food.

> We probably should give up once and for all the idea of the dream kitchen as an enclosed room lined with cabinets whose real function, besides the most obvious of storage, is to conceal objects whose correct placement only the wife knows (Rock, Torre and Wright 1980, 95).

Instead, the kitchen should be designed such that the placement of appliances, utensils and food is openly visible, so that all members of the household can participate in kitchen maintenance. Central storage rooms should be an integral part of housing design and should make household tools and equipment accessible to all household members.

An issue of major importance, is the limited capacity for conventional housing to accommodate income-generating work. Such work has been performed by women in their homes to make ends meet, but it has tended to take place in an unsuitable work environment (Mackenzie 1989, 53). Women have done commercial sewing on kitchen tables, catering in kitchens designed for family cooking, and set up informal day-care centres in their private homes. Much of this home-work is informal, involves the bartering of goods and services and is a cheaper, personalized and often high-quality alternative to market services. A flexible housing environment must provide for such possibilities.

Multi-unit housing projects should provide spaces for formal employment, especially services relating to home life such as day-care, youth centres, food shops,

restaurants and laundries (Cook 1988, 117; Hayden 1984, 227; Novac 1988, 14; Rock, Torre and Wright 1980, 88). Space can be leased to small businesses and co-operative enterprises that provide employment for local residents and contribute to the economic and social vitality of the neighbourhood. The spatial integration of informal domestic work and formal waged work is a overarching remedy to many urban ills in addition to the problem of gendered 'separate spheres'. Transportation problems, caused by the separation of residential and commercial zones, and public security, threatened by empty streets and lack of public "surveillance" in downtown areas devoid of residents and residential areas or lacking congregative facilities such as restaurants, theatres and community centres, are a few examples.

The physical and social design of housing should make possible and encourage sharing and mutual aid between households and should ideally build upon existing kinship and community networks. One of the biggest problems with contemporary housing design is that it segregates neighbours from one another in addition to separating men from women, "work" from "home" and limiting access to lower-income groups and minorities. Some possible solutions are placing balconies to facilitate potential social interaction, limiting the number of apartments per floor, and creating semi-private or semi-public spaces, such as courtyards and common rooms, where people can meet.

A better social "engineering" of housing projects, through participation of residents in decision making, and through co-ordination of social activities along with other measures which provide opportunities for neighbours to meet one another, are suggested in order to reduce resident isolation and increase possibilities for mutual aid. This would

presumably make home life more efficient, economical and pleasant -- especially for women. Social interaction within the context of housing must be accompanied by changes in architecture which enhance the potential for neighbouring and make it easy to maintain patterns of socialising. We must broaden our concept of "family" beyond the kinship group; the space occupied by these new "families" must be modified. Anachronistic housing design hinders these new forms of social interaction and can even create tensions because of problems maintaining privacy.

Privacy, defined as the control of unwanted social interaction (Rapoport 1980, 296), must be ensured by enhancing sound-proofing, reducing visual access and providing meeting spaces which reduce the need for people to enter one another's homes in order to interact. As the next section will illustrate, what is "private" versus "public" must be renegotiated if we are to build egalitarian, efficient and pleasant homes, neighbourhoods and cities.

2. Neighbourhoods and cities

The preceding discussion of the integration of various household types on the one hand and of work-places with residential areas on the other also applies to the scale of the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood which has accommodations and services for diverse household types has a stronger sense of community, allows individuals to help one another and reduces the constraints people experience is all are subjected to the same schedules (nine to five). Some authors attack neighbourhood design more than the physical and social architecture of conventional housing (Fava 1980; Hayden 1984).

All authors on the subject of neighbourhoods and their impacts on the lives of women agree that some major changes are needed to make our residential environments more efficient, ecological and pleasant. In a pragmatic sense, policies which should be implemented at the neighbourhood level are: the creation of more collective spaces; accessible daycare; employment opportunities close to home; affordable alternatives to the single-family detached house; efficient public transportation at all hours, and an environment which provides necessary services for different stages in the life-cycle (Keller 1981, 74; Klodawsky and Spector 1989, 143-6). The traditional Scandinavian suburb exhibits many of these features and has been upheld by many as a model for the changes necessary in the post world-war two North American suburbs (Werner 1980). The importance of creating a residential milieu which facilitates the creation and maintenance of social relationships is a key factor which is often cited (Cook 1988, 4).

Although this list of very practical considerations on how to improve our neighbourhoods is shared by most feminists, some authors go one step further by envisioning an ideal future scenario which should inform contemporary strategies for change. These approaches to the neighbourhood are part of a more comprehensive view of the city and the physical form and type of social organisation it should take. Dolores Hayden is a vocal proponent of such an approach which she labels as the "communitarian ideal". This ideal has been strongly influence by "utopian socialist" experiments in community living - either in theory or practice.

> Most experiments in utopian socialism hoped to seize economic initiative in three areas: agricultural, industrial, and domestic work. By combining the labour of many workers, male and female, they proposed to end the isolation of the individual farmer, industrial worker and housewife,

> improving efficiency through some division of labour while keeping all individuals involved with these three areas of work (Hayden 1980, 112).

This more radical approach the question of neighbourhood reorganisation seeks the replacement of private property by collective property and the replacement of wage-labour and unpaid domestic labour by a "communist system of shared work, resources and decision-making" (Novac 1988, 10). So-called "domestic" work would cease to be performed by individuals or small groups of people in private households and, instead, is performed on a rotation basis by larger groups of non-kin individuals in new community spaces such as collective laundries, childcare centres, gardens and community dining halls. The city therefore becomes a political forum in which citizens are directly involved in and responsible for decisions made in their neighbourhoods and the entire municipality (Bookchin 1985; Castells 1988; Hayden 1984).

Proponents of the communitarian ideal are well aware that the possibilities for such an urban social organisation are not imminent in many parts of the world. North Americans are militant supporters of private property for the most part and are a far cry from a kibbutz-like communal life. Real-estate in general and home-ownership in particular are the prime investment opportunities most households look forward to as secure and profitable ways of financing the future. A fully communistic social and economic system may be inappropriate and simplistic for our technologically and socially complex society. A community-based strategy of similar inspiration, however, is very possible in today's context and, in fact, has been successful in many North American municipalities (Clavel 1986). Hayden suggests that municipal decision making must be comprehensive in its approach and reunite social, economic and physical planning.

Public life and private life must be "rethought" and redesigned to include more semi-private (or semi-public) urban spaces such as courtyards, arcades, and community dining clubs which are important places for social interaction and self-help. Tied with this must be the creation of local small-scale enterprises which provide services and jobs to neighbourhood residents and contribute to local economic development by maintaining profits within the neighbourhood and city (Hayden 1984, 178). Collective ventures such as co-operatives, should be encouraged as institutions which work with existing mutual aid networks, contribute to local development, educate members and are controlled democratically by members. The next section will deal with housing co-operatives as institutions which can be a step toward achieving the "ideal" urban neighbourhood.

2.3 Women and housing co-operatives

Recent empirical research has shown that women are a growing group of primary housing consumers due to a rapidly growing number of female-led lone-parent families and single women. Women are doubly hard hit in the housing market due to their typically disadvantaged economic situation (McLain and Doyle 1983; Morissette 1987). These studies have discovered that women are predominantly renters rather than home owners. The primary reason for this is that so many women cannot afford to buy property.

All authors on the subject of women's housing needs have proposed housing co-operatives as a partial remedy (McLain and Doyle 1983, Klodawsky et.al. 1985, 10-37; Morisette 1987, 32). Housing co-operatives are usually affordable, offer a sense of

community, are controlled by residents and allow for the development of useful skills related to management and maintenance. The only negative aspect of co-operative living seems to be the extra time required for participation in administrative activities; a commodity which many women lack. Studies of women within the housing co-operative movement have shown that at the grassroots level women play a key role in the organization and development of co-operative initiatives. They are leaders in the back rooms where important decisions are made rather than on the boards of federations which are the more visible levels of organization. The 'back-room' decisions are important since all co-ops are fundamentally democratic institutions (Farge 1985 and 1986). We know that housing co-operatives in general are a suitable housing alternative for many women. The question is now "How can co-operatives be improved to serve as a model for alternative communities that are inspired by feminism as well as the theory of co-operation?". It is believed that such a strategy would effectively meet the needs of a rapidly evolving urban society and changing family structure.

Housing co-operatives designed by and for women have emerged very recently in cities across Canada. The first such co-operative, "Constance-Hamilton" in Toronto, was opened in 1979 (Goliger 1983, Novac 1988). One major study (Wekerle 1988) has traced the development of five women's housing co-operatives in Regina, Toronto, Quebec City and Halifax. Some of these projects were designed to meet the needs of lone-parent families in particular while a few were instituted by the local feminist network for women in general.

Wekerle's study raises many important issues. Two aspects of the housing process

are expanded upon, namely: the physical design of the projects and their social implications and, the "community" building efforts, or social design within these innovative residential spaces. The study clearly explains the role of housing co-operatives with respect to community building and explains how this factor is of utmost importance for the fulfillment of women's housing needs:

> Residents are often attracted by the promise of a supportive community rather than by the housing itself or the location. [Housing co-operatives provide] a territorial base which residents control, where the sharing of space and facilities supports the formation of other ties... Even more so than in other non-profit co-operatives, residents in these women's co-ops engage in a wide variety of shared activities with other members, ranging from informal socialising to shared babysitting or meal-preparation, to a very high participation in the management of the co-op. The residents place great importance on the emotional support that they provide for each other, as well as the material support gained from living in a co-op. (Wekerle 1988, 2)

The above quote will now be expanded upon in order to describe how Wekerle arrived at this conclusion and how other authors have dealt with this fundamental aspect of co-operative living.

Economic advantages of co-operative living

The empirical literature which paints a general socio-economic and demographic picture of housing co-operatives in Quebec has concluded that, on the average, co-ops offer below market rents (Olson et al 1982) which is of great importance to women with limited incomes - especially lone-mothers who have to think of providing for the needs of children. Nadeau confirmed in his study that these cheaper rents were largely attributable to renovation co-operatives whereas average rents in new projects were comparable with market rents. Quebec is the only place in Canada where such a large

percentage of co-operative housing projects are of the renovation type and therefore inexpensive. Wekerle's study dealt with only one project in Quebec, and subordinated the importance of economic motivations behind women wanting to live in a co-op, stressing instead the need for emotional support and community. This may well be the case in provinces other than Quebec.

Empowerment

Another advantage of living in a housing co-operative is the control over one's housing situation. For women this is of double importance since many are living in poor quality rental accommodation and often suffer discrimination from landlords because they have children or because they receive government transfer payments as a source of income (IRFL 1988; Sirard et.al. 1986). Although women have traditional importance within the domestic economy they are seldom involved in the decisions regarding finance, construction or maintenance of their accommodation. By taking control over their housing situation through the formation or adherence to a housing co-op, women can learn new skills, gain confidence and begin to break the traditional division of labour between the sexes. In women's housing co-ops, women are in complete control of their housing situation and are not just participating in a process. Thus, they are responsible for all aspects of the project, from accounting, through maintenance to organizing social events. The usual marked qualitative division of labour between the sexes is therefore impossible.

Physical design

Living in a co-operative implies the sharing of facilities and tasks related to their upkeep. This increases the places and opportunities for contact between residents. The women's housing co-ops studied by Wekerle have sought to include more community space than conventional rented accommodation and possibly more so than other types of non-profit co-operatives. The provision of community space for facilities such as meeting rooms, work space, daycare and even rentable retail space has been one of the most interesting achievements of the new women's co-ops. They are attempting to build communities rather than housing alone. This community building is necessary for many residents of these projects who have transportation or childcare problems.

By the same token, the desire for such an unconventional project has led to funding problems. Traditional sources of financing, notably the CMHC and provincial housing agencies, have been reluctant to provide the co-ops with money to construct housing which is viewed as specialized or unusual and which may not be suitable for other groups in the eventuality of bankruptcy and foreclosure of the co-op (something that hardly ever happens). Housing agencies have a specific mandate to provide shelter alone and the funding of activities such as daycare, or the creation of workspace, are the responsibility of another arm, or level, of government. Non-residential aspects of co-operatives contribute to the development and maintenance of solidarity within the co-op (Simon 1985). As well they are of tremendous financial importance to the members.

The second aspect of design which is peculiar to the women's co-ops is the

recognition of diverse family types. Women are not a homogeneous group but this obvious fact is often ignored by authors who make generalizations about women as a whole, even in the housing literature (Farge 1985). With the disintegration of the nuclear family, we are witnessing the proliferation of a myriad of family or household types, many led by women. With this in mind, the women's housing co-operatives have had units designed in order to accommodate a wide range of women: single parents, lone women, elderly or handicapped women as well as several women sharing a unit. The newly built co-ops had more design flexibility than renovation projects.

Skill development

Living in a housing co-operative enables members to gain skills related to the management of the project. Housing development and administration are not traditional areas of employment for women. Members thus learn the technicalities related to interviewing architects and contractors, budgeting and financial planning, maintenance of buildings and general negotiating and human relations skills (Wekerle 1988, 91). Skill development is one of the prime factors motivating women to join a housing co-operative. Men, however, seem to get involved due to ideological considerations more so than for the development of valuable work skills (Farge 1985)

Women's housing co-operatives often have an explicit mandate concerning skill development because of their consciousness of the fact that women have been negatively affected by the traditional division of labour. They believe it important

for women as a group to be involved in all steps of the housing process. Women's co-ops are usually small in size compared to other co-ops and therefore have less of a need for professional managers. Instead, members at large are responsible for all tasks, with perhaps the collaboration of a part-time co-ordinator. A high level of member participation is favoured in order to reduce expenses and make units more affordable.

The lack of prior skills can be compensated by close contact with resource groups (Groupes de Ressources Techniques or GRT's in Quebec) which provide technical support and guidance. Most co-operatives in Quebec owe their existence to the assistance of GRT's.

Mutual aid

The housing co-operative has been depicted as a living environment which promotes high levels of mutual aid between residents. Co-ops break the pattern of anonymity that exists in many other contemporary housing arrangements (Lettre 1983 and 1986). Members get to know each other through the administrative structure of the co-operative. Lettre concludes that reciprocity is a very important psychological and economic benefit for members: especially the elderly who live alone most of whom are women. On the other hand, the lack of anonymity is sometimes perceived as an invasion of personal privacy. It is often difficult for co-op members to strike a healthy balance between these two extremes.

Wekerle states that three types of exchanges tend to take place between the members of the women's housing co-operatives. The first category she

identifies as "participation" and refers to the formal tasks required for the management of the co-op. Through meetings, committee work, maintenance and other activities, members get to know each other and exchange information and ideas.

The second type of exchange is labelled as "social". Activities, such as picnics or sports which are organized by the members, fall into this category. Sometimes these are planned by the co-op at large or else take place spontaneously between groups of members. Tremendous emotional support is often exchanged between members; an intangible but invaluable asset to co-operative living designed especially for women.

The third type of reciprocity is the most tangible type referred to simply as "exchange". This takes place when members exchange goods and services. The most frequent exchanges are services such as babysitting, meal preparation, professional services and the sharing of assets such as cottages and cars (Wekerle 1988, 86).

> The greatest number of shared activity types are primarily social (39% of all activities), while 23% of activities are formal co-op activities and 10% are exchange or barter. (Wekerle 1988, 86)

Although not clearly stated, Wekerle seems to suggest that these types of exchange take place on an informal basis. Some of the services that are often informally exchanged <u>can</u> be formally institutionalised within the co-op, notably childcare. Methodologically, one would have to determine whether a formalised

type of exchange can be viewed in the same way as spontaneous informal exchanges.

The combination of shelter with services - such as proposed by many women's housing projects - can be a viable strategy for local economic development (Simon 1985). Housing co-ops also tend to be well integrated with existing community based social networks which can lead to increased social interaction and exchanges at the neighbourhood level (Fortin 1988).

Fortin's approach emphasises the quotidian informal relations created within housing co-operatives and between members and the wider community which resembles the strategy adopted by other housing co-op researchers (Saucier 1986a and 1986b). However, an explicit discussion of the "urban question" - or the relationship between co-operatives and the neighbourhood and city - are of necessity in any analysis of housing co-operatives as they relate to the community and the lives of individuals. A more feminist analysis of life within housing co-operatives as well as a thorough discussion of co-ops inspired by feminism and their relation to the city is lacking.

NOTES

1. Contrary to Owen, the co-operatives inspired by King were fuelled by religious zeal. Cooperative enterprises and settlements were thought to embody the teachings of Christianity. Owen viewed the cooperative structure as the product of reason.

2. Some authours included a seventh Rochdale principle, that of political and religious neutrality (Brown 1944, 79). Cole (1987), has interpreted this in light of the political and religious context of mid-19th century Britain in which the co-operative movement was divided on the issues of 'chartism' and various struggles for suffrage rights.

3. This entire discussion is based on the experiences of those families who do not "contract out" for domestic work such as a full-time "nanny", housekeeper or services such as "rent-a-wife" which are beyond the financial means of most households and which involve serious ethical considerations.

-Chapter Three-

TOURNESOLEIL HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

"Co-opérative d'Habitation Tournesoleil" has an explicit mandate to support women who are disadvantaged in the housing market due to discrimination and lower incomes. The co-op is typical of many housing co-operatives in Montreal by being a renovated row of triplexes located in a traditionally working class neighbourhood.

This chapter will profile Tournesoleil co-op which promotes the selection of socio-economically disadvantaged women as its members yet maintains a diversity of households: lone parent families, couples with and without children, and single women and men. The history and geography of the co-operative will be traced, followed by a discussion of the organisational structure of Tournesoleil and the composition of its households and a description of the responses of members to my questions. Finally, I will report on the nature of mutual aid between residents by employing the concept of social network.

3.1 Feminist roots in the 'Plateau'

History of the co-op

Co-opérative d'Habitation Tournesoleil, incorporated as an association in 1979, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The first members of the co-operative were recruited through the participation of a local feminist organisation, the Centre d'Information et de Reference pour les Femmes (CIRF). The project was

coordinated by a local Groupe de Ressources Techniques (GRT). GRT's are often responsible for developing co-operative housing projects in Quebec.

From the beginning, the project attracted mostly women following the diffusion of information about the co-op through the bulletin of the CIRF. One of the primary mandates of Tournesoleil was and remains a commitment to improve the socio-economic condition of women. This objective has been officially ratified; at least two-thirds of the members of the co-operative must be women. At the time of the study three men were residing in Tournesoleil, two of them members. Certain members pointed out that it would be a good idea to have more men in the co-op, as there were in the past, in order to maintain an equilibrium and heterogeneous atmosphere.

The membership of Tournesoleil underwent several changes from the time the association was formed (March 1979) to the day the units were ready to be occupied (July 1980). Some of the first members of the association abandoned the project because they were offered a more suitable housing alternative (for example, specialised housing for senior citizens). Tenants who were already located in the buildings prior to the purchase by the co-op were invited to join as members. When it was finally time to move into the renovated apartments, there were only five original members of the co-op association. The remaining units were occupied by former residents and a few people from the immediate neighbourhood.

The local environment

Originally, the members of the co-operative wanted to purchase and renovate a former nurses' residence, but due to cost difficulties and negotiation problems, ended up choosing their current site on Hôtel-de-Ville Street between Mont-Royal and Villeneuve Avenues (see Figure 3.1). This area of Montreal is part of a working-class and multi-ethnic neighbourhood known as "St-Louis"; an immigrant corridor which is a transition zone between English and French-speaking areas of the city. St-Louis is considered part of a much larger neighbourhood known as the Plateau Mont-Royal. The Plateau, like other areas of the city, has been undergoing considerable change in the last few years as a result of 'gentrification' (Rose 1987 and 1989). The upgrading of this area of the city has been undertaken by professionals --many of whom are women in the arts, communications and social service sectors -- because of the easy access to various cultural facilities, transportation and places of employment.[1] The upwardly mobile professionals of Tournesoleil are very conscious of the displacement of low-income individuals by professionals in gentrifying neighbourhoods: many have stated that they will move out of the co-operative once they are financially solvent in order to give someone else the opportunity to benefit from the low cost and other benefits of co-operative living.

Housing co-operatives are concentrated in the Plateau together with an unusually large number of community groups. A strong sense of belonging and a thriving community spirit is both a cause and result of this high level of local

involvement. The Plateau, and especially St-Louis, are neighbourhoods thriving with a vibrant street life and urban animation. The residents of Tournesoleil identify with this neighbourhood and participate in its social and political life.

Tournesoleil is located in the vicinity of Mont-Royal Avenue, St-Laurent Boulevard and St-Denis Street: all highly developed commercial arteries. Mont-Royal and St-Laurent both offer reasonably priced food shops, inexpensive clothing stores, hardware stores and other amenities. The ethnic diversity of the area guarantees the availability of a range of specialised goods and a cosmopolitan atmosphere. St-Denis street, with its cafes and bistros, provides a distinctive nightlife.

There are, however, certain disadvantages related to Tournesoleil's location. Members are concerned with the safety of their children in the vicinity of the co-op. The street is known to be "tough" and the presence of a few bars and video arcades nearby aggravates the problem. The co-op has been in contact with the city about this issue. Since the formation of two other co-ops on the same street, the safety of the immediate neighbourhood seems to have improved according to some members of Tournesoleil.

Design

Like most housing co-operatives in Montreal, Tournesoleil is a renovated project. The fifteen units are divided between five triplex rowhouses -- the typical late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century brick housing of many

neighbourhoods in Montreal. Most of the apartments are comprised of four and one-half to five and one-half rooms (two and three bedrooms). Each apartment has a private entrance off the street and a section of balcony facing the back yard. Many members feel that separate entrances are a positive design element because privacy is more easily maintained when access to an fro is inconspicuous. Separate entrances also cut down on noise. Even an eight year old child living in the co-op remarked on how proud she was of the fact that her family now had its own door.

Themes which are prevalent in feminist design such as children's play space and security have been important aspects of planning Tournesoleil. The back yard for the use of members and their families is landscaped with a lawn, flowers and bushes. Picnic tables were constructed by the spouse of one of the members for their collective use. In the summer, the yard is used for leisure activities and for children's play. It is certainly considered one of the most positive elements of design and was an important factor leading many of the members with children to choose Tournesoleil over other housing options.

3.2 Organisational structure and household types

Tournesoleil decided to adopt a consensus decision making model and committee system in order to complete the many tasks involved in managing a co-op. There is therefore no de facto executive, although a president and treasurer are officially appointed and given signing authority for purely bureaucratic purposes. All members are involved in one of four committees: secretarial, accounting,

maintenance or communications. The communications committee is the newest, and its mandate is twofold: i) to mediate between the community and the co-op and to diffuse information to members through the publication of a newspaper; and ii) to organize social events for co-op members (Christmas party, corn roasts). Each committee has a number of established tasks and presents a report of its activities to the annual general meeting. Decisions which are the responsibility of the membership at large are made, as much as possible, by consensus. When this is not possible the issue in question is brought to a vote.

Consensus decision making is an ideal. In practice, power struggles still take place. Certain members have more influence than others due to their knowledge and greater skill when it comes to managing an organisation such as a co-operative. Others are unfamiliar with "meeting jargon", intimidated as a result and hesitate to voice their opinions. Sub-groups or "cliques" form out of natural affinities and often form political "blocks" since opinions are discussed privately and often shared. Tournesoleil, like all human organisations has a rich political life. In the concluding chapter, the micropolitics within Tournesoleil will be described, analysed and compared to issues of importance within the second co-op, Fil d'Ariane.

Currently, Tournesoleil has 18 members who are housed in 15 apartments. Some spouses have chosen to join while some have not. The breakdown of household types is listed on Figure 3.2.

Age of members, household size and occupations

The diversity of household types is accompanied by a diversity of professions, ethnic backgrounds and lifestyles. Of the several students and professionals in the co-op, most are active in the social service sector (see Figure 3.3). Of the professionals, a number are middle-aged women who have undergone a career change in the last few years. Residents originate from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and are all primarily French-speaking. The presence of a variety of age groups also adds to the heterogeneity of the co-op. Finally, members have a diversity of interests, many in the fine arts but also in the sciences, spirituality, and politics.

3.3 Housing histories

The sixteen members interviewed were questioned about their housing situation prior to moving into Tournesoleil. As Figure 3.5 indicates, the members of the co-op had resided in their dwellings anywhere from less than a year to twenty or thirty years prior to the opening of the co-op in 1980. Most of the members (10), however, moved into Tournesoleil between 1982 and 1986.

Origin of members interviewed

Members were asked to state what neighbourhood they resided in prior to moving into the co-op. As Figure 3.6 illustrates, nearly half those interviewed (44%), previously lived in the Plateau Mont-Royal. Many residents have lived in the Plateau for most of their adult lives and have a strong commitment to the area.

Reasons for previous move

Most members chose to leave their previous apartments for financial reasons. This is perhaps a reflection of the trend toward the gentrification of the Plateau which has significantly increased the rents of many formerly low-cost apartments. Three members were evicted from their dwellings in the Plateau; the first member's apartment was converted into a condominium; the second's was renovated resulting in rent increases beyond the reach of the household; the third person's apartment was repossessed by the landlord.

Other members were forced to vacate their previous place of residence following a divorce or separation; others chose to move in with their partner who was living in the co-op. Some members had difficulty with their landlords, such as not receiving proper services, for example, heating. Others felt uncomfortable about their surroundings due to the witnessing of violence, the presence of rowdy bars and other activities which made them fear for the safety of their young children. One member (listed under "other reasons") chose to move into the co-op in order have a new type of living experience and feel more a part of a community. The last remaining member moved to Montreal from another city and had heard of housing co-operatives and decided to apply before her move.

Those interviewed were asked to state if they preferred the immediate neighbourhood of Tournesoleil to their previous surroundings in terms of their relative access to shopping, transportation and other services. Ten members said they preferred the immediate vicinity of the co-op. Only one person preferred her

previous neighbourhood as far as safety was concerned. One remaining member was indifferent, two did not answer give information and, of course, two members had lived in their apartments prior to the formation of Tournesoleil.

Previous mutual aid linkages

One third of the members interviewed had no contact with their neighbours in their previous dwellings as Figure 3.8 indicates. In these cases, those interviewed said "hello" to their neighbours and little else. Four members had "some contact" with their previous neighbours meaning they occasionally exchanged services such as babysitting, petsitting, or else had one good neighbour who had a copy of their housekeys and kept an eye on the apartment during vacations. Only two of the interviewees had a great deal of supportive contact with their previous neighbours. The first member had lived in her neighbourhood for over ten years and "knew everybody" and the second lived in a building with only four apartments, knew all her neighbours and frequently exchanged services such as babysitting. Those who did not have much contact with their previous neighbours did, however, receive support from friends and relatives who were in easy reach for help with tasks such as moving, help in an emergency and general companionship.

3.4 Residential satisfaction

Out of the sixteen co-op members interviewed, only two expressed serious reservations with regard to the quality of life at Tournesoleil. One member felt

that she was the victim of hostility from other residents, and another complained of the tensions between neighbours and grudges which sometimes affect decisions related to co-op management (maintenance, renovation of individual apartments, etc.).

Figure 3.9 summarises the comments of those interviewed pertaining to the perceived social environment in Tournesoleil. A majority of residents found the atmosphere in the co-op "very welcoming". Characteristics numbered two through five are an indication of some of the problems experienced by Tournesoleil members however, as mentioned above, only two people displayed an overall negative tone with regard to their total experience in the co-op.

Two members felt that the social environment in the co-op was "good" but expressed some reservations pertaining to the great deal of work and personal expense related to the repair and renovation of individual apartment units. Others, identified by numbers three, four and five, found that there were important social problems in the co-op such as inter-neighbour relations (eg. dealing with noise), integrating new members as well as those who are timid about participating, and personal conflicts and jealousies which later appear as power struggles within the co-op decision making structure. One member stated that the social environment in Tournesoleil was "hostile and ungrateful". This woman felt that certain cliques in the co-op ostracized her and made a point of humiliating her at co-op meetings and in other situations. Finally, two members of the co-op felt that they could not make a reasonable assessment of the social environment since they had strong

social ties with members prior to moving into the co-op.

Advantages of living in a co-op

Members were asked to list the general advantages of living in a housing co-operative (Figure 3.10). The vast majority of those interviewed noted that the below market rents and rental subsidies were a prime advantage of co-ops. Seven out of fifteen members cited a high degree of mutual aid among residents as another positive aspect of co-operative living. The "sense of community" present in a co-op was a related characteristic cited by four members. Security of tenure and good quality housing were advantages quoted by four and three members respectively. Finally, other advantages such as meeting people, professional contacts, skill development, a good environment for children and the development of broader horizons were other positive aspects of living in a housing co-operative mentioned by residents.

Disadvantages of living in a co-op

The most common disadvantages of co-operative living as perceived by residents of Tournesoleil are: i) the fact that collective management of a housing project is time demanding; ii) the potential for personal conflicts is greater than in a housing situation where residents do not come into contact with one another; and iii) the invasion of privacy associated with a high degree of resident interaction. The problems associated with decision making such as power struggles, cliques, the time

required for a consensus, and communication difficulties were mentioned at least nine times. One member mentioned the fact that living in a co-op requires adjustment in general which is seen as a disadvantage by some. Finally, one member did not feel there were any disadvantages to living in a housing co-operative.

Expected length of stay in co-op

Members were asked to indicate how long they intended to live in Tournesoleil. Five members specifically stated they would move once their finances improved. For these people, it is the responsibility of a financially solvent co-op member to yield her or his place to a person of low-income who can in turn benefit from the co-op. Other members saw no prospect of moving in the near future (numbers two and three on Figure 3.12). Many of these residents had experienced such hardship in the past that they were perfectly content with the co-op living environment for the long term. In addition, these households did not expect an improvement in their financial situations in the future. Three residents were vague when answering this question and stated that they forecast a stay of "a few more years", the future being less certain. For a majority of the residents (10), the ideal living arrangement is one of owner-occupation, either in the city (specifically the Plateau) or in the country.[2]

3.5 Mutual aid networks

Description of networks

A number of social networks between the residents of Tournesoleil can be identified. These links seem to have developed as a result of several factors. Spatial proximity, child play patterns, lifestyles, and even schedules, have led to the development of certain patterns of interaction. Refer to Figures 3.14 and 3.15 which illustrate the links between the households of Tournesoleil.

One of the most important factors linking people together in the co-op are pre-existing ties, in other words, those who knew one another prior to moving into Tournesoleil. Two sisters and their respective partners form a first network (number one in Figure 3.14). Also linked to this social cluster are those who went to school together and those who share common values (eg. feminism) and lifestyles (all are professionals without children). As depicted in Figure 3.3, several members of this network - composed of three couples - frequent one another on an intense, daily basis. Members are very close friends and spend much time socialising together. An extended family situation is evident whereby neighbours eat together, help each other with household tasks, lend the use of expensive commodities such as cars and computers, and take care of one another's animals and plants when on vacation. This cluster is also spatially conditioned; all members are immediate neighbours.

A second cluster, comprised of those who have young children, illustrates another factor leading to network formation. Three apartments on the ground level each house families with children under the age of twelve. A number of these

children are playmates which has resulted in a number of exchanges between the parents. Babysitting after school is a frequent occurrence. Network 4 illustrates the babysitting networks within the co-op. Mothers often get together for meals or a cup of coffee. In the summer, excursions of parents and children are made to 'La Ronde' (amusement park) or other sites. A used-clothing 'pipeline' has also developed whereby clothing (usually for children) arrives from a source outside the co-op and is circulated between the parents.

Other smaller networks have developed between immediate neighbours who share interests and lifestyles and usually have similar responsibilities in the co-op. Committees present an opportunity for members to interact on a regular basis often resulting in the formation of relationships of mutual aid. There is an "artistic" cluster (number three), based on shared interests in the arts, which developed partially as a result of membership in the same committee. Another link exists between two single parents who share certain life experiences and whose daughters play together (network number four on Figure 3.14). These two women are immediate neighbours and members of the same committee as well.

The two senior women in the co-op present an interesting scenario (network number five). One woman, "Thérèse" (all names have been changed), is already a "care-giver" to an invalid. The second senior woman member, Alice, was recently widowed and receives much material and emotional support from Thérèse, her longtime friend of twenty-five years. The two women do much of their shopping together, spend afternoons chatting and Thérèse often invites Alice for meals.

Another member from the co-operative who is an immediate neighbour, "Ginette", has daily contact with both senior women and "keeps and eye" on Alice by helping her with various tasks and having her in for meals and coffee. The members organised a "corvée" or work crew to paint and upgrade Alice's apartment following her husband's recent death.

Key actors

One member who described co-op relations as representing one half of the important social contacts in her life has an interesting place in the architecture of social ties within Tournesoleil (refer to Figure 3.15). "Denise" is a member of several social clusters and seems to play the important role of the 'fifth business' within the drama of everyday life in the co-op. In theatrical terms, the 'fifth business' is that character of a play who, despite not occupying a lead role, is of pivotal importance to the development of the plot. Without the fifth business, the events of the play cannot take place. Denise, by linking together several 'players', can perhaps be viewed as a strategic member for the maintenance of social cohesion in the co-op. Denise was mentioned by eight residents as a member of their respective social networks. Figuring in second place, eight other members were mentioned by only five other residents, making Denise appear clearly as a central character, or "bridge person" in the map of social relationships.

Relative importance of co-op relations

Members interviewed were asked to comment on the importance of mutual aid links between themselves and other co-op residents compared to mutual aid linkages in their lives at large. In other words, how much do they depend on the co-op environment for emotional and material support in their daily lives?

Not surprisingly, the five members who indicated that relationships within the co-op were the most important ones in their lives were members of social network number one. As previously mentioned, most members of this network knew one another prior to moving into Tournesoleil because of kinship or school friendships.

Preliminary conclusions

Information on community events, help in an emergency, and friendly interaction, such as the occasional cup of coffee, are all resources which flow between certain co-op members who did not know each other prior to moving into Tournesoleil. Most members have maintained their strongest ties with people outside of the co-operative. Mutual aid relationships between co-op members are not necessarily links of friendship; the role of neighbour and the behaviour associated with it is distinct from that of "friend" which involves emotional commitment and companionship.[3] Perhaps the greatest consolation for many of the residents of Tournesoleil is the knowledge that someone they know and trust is within easy reach if the need for emergency help arises. Indeed, one member benefitted from

such emergency help following her recovery from a major accident. Fellow residents were quick to come to her aid for tasks such as laundry, shopping and other household work which requires mobility.

Problems have developed as a result of living as neighbours as well as "co-managers" of the housing project. Friction has arisen due to personality differences, noise complaints, and difficulties related to the affairs of the co-op. These "negative links" are a common feature in other situations, such as the workplace and even the family, where people often cannot avoid interaction with one another. When lines of communication are "open" such that meetings, or other organisational structures, allow for the airing out of certain difficulties, some of these problems can be resolved. Frictions which are related to more profound incompatibilities, such as personality conflicts, jealousies, or prejudices (eg. homophobia) are more deeply rooted and have remained unresolved.

The theoretical implications of the rich and varied social environment of Tournesoleil such as conflict resolution, the experience of privacy in a highly interactive living environment, the fragility of democratic control, the redefinition of private versus public space and the socialisation of domestic work are all issues which will be clearly dealt with in the conclusion. The following chapter however, will summarise the research findings pertaining to the second case study, "Co-opérative d'Habitation Fil d'Ariane".

NOTES

1. For an analysis of gentrification in the Plateau Mont-Royal see Damaris Rose. 1989. A feminist perspective of employment restructuring and gentrification: the case of Montreal. in J. Wolch and M. Dear (eds.). The Power of Geography. London: Unwin-Hyman.

2. This was an observation and was not specifically asked of all interviewees. The response of four residents is therefore unknown.

3. For a discussion of the role of neighbour and the socially defined behaviour associated with neighbouring see Suzanne Keller. 1968. The Urban Neighbourhood. New York: Random House.

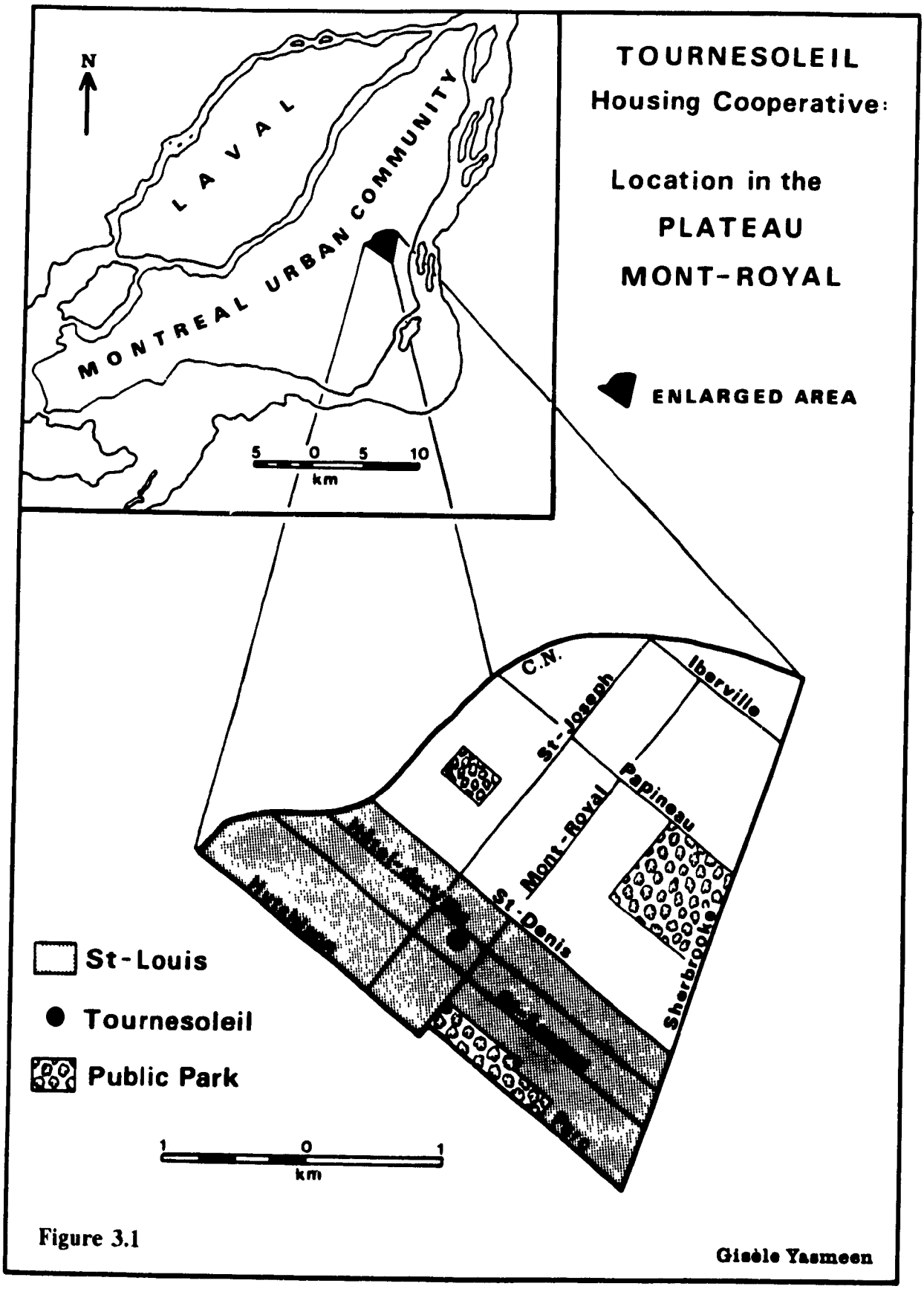


Figure 3.1

Gisèle Yasmeen

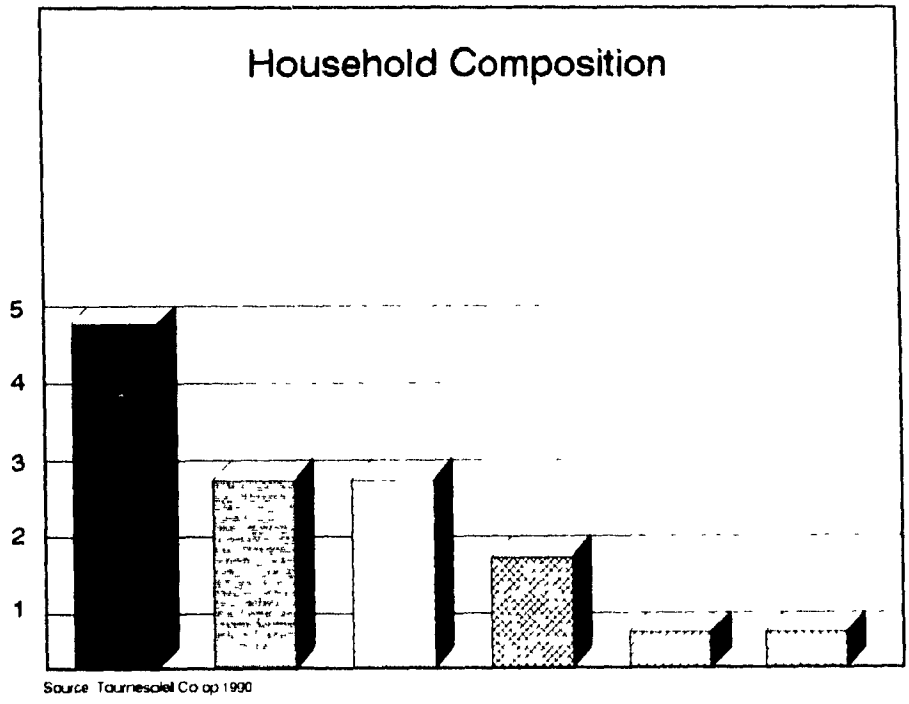
Photo 3.1 Tournesoleil Housing Co-op, front view

Photo 3.2 Tournesoleil Housing Co-op, back view

Photo 3.3 Tournesoleil Housing Co-op, backyard

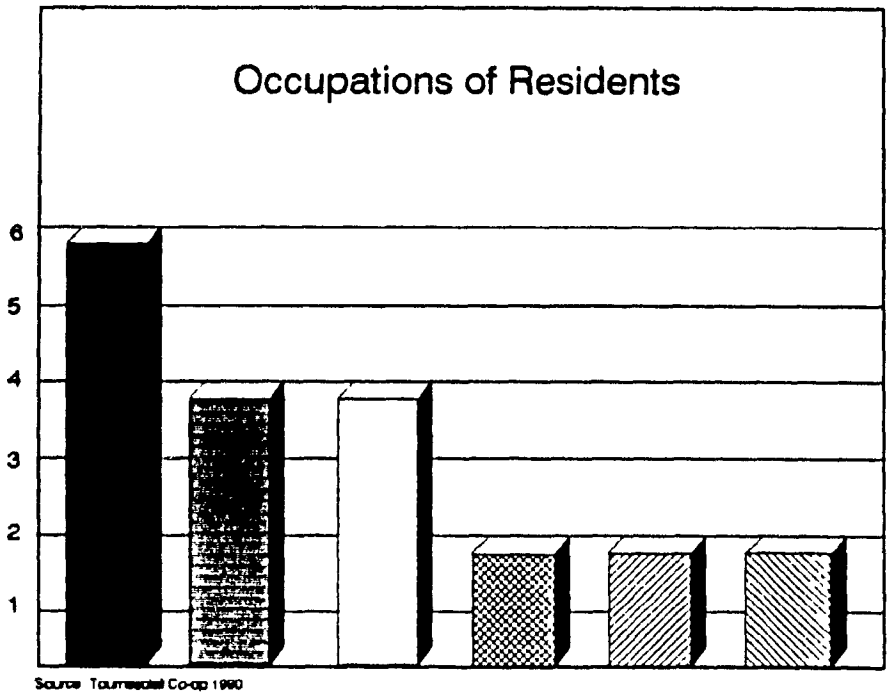
Photo 3.4 Tournesoleil Housing Co-op, pièce double, (double living-room)

FIGURE 3.2



Household Types	Number
Lone parent families headed by women	(5)
Younger and middle aged women living alone	(3)
Couples without children	(3)
Senior women (60 and over) living alone	(2)
Couple with children	(1)
Man living alone	(1)

FIGURE 3.3

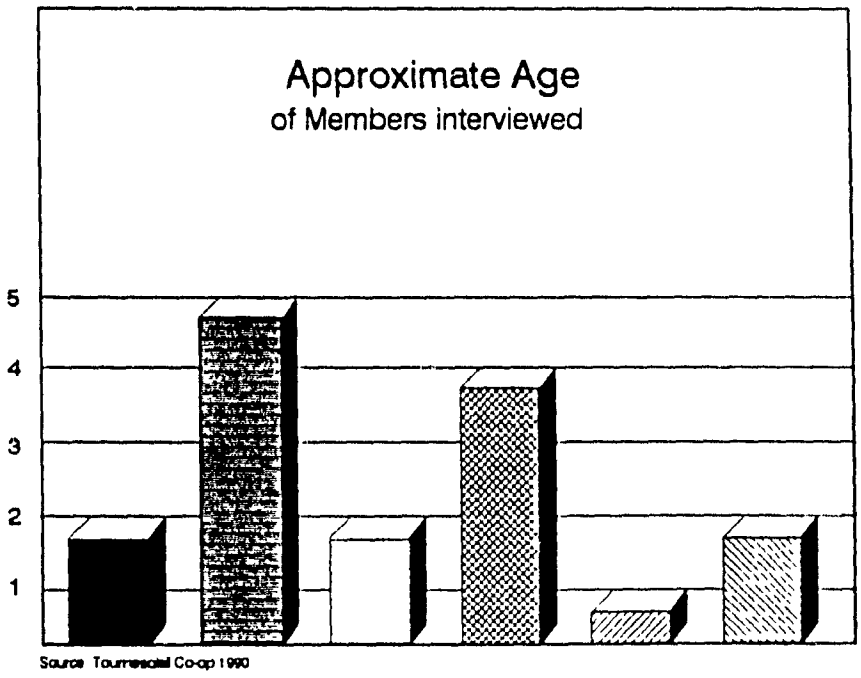


Source: Tournesol Co-op 1990

Occupation	Number
Students	(6)
Social service professionals	(4)
Homemakers	(4)
Fine Arts professionals	(2)
Foster families	(2)
Retired	(2)

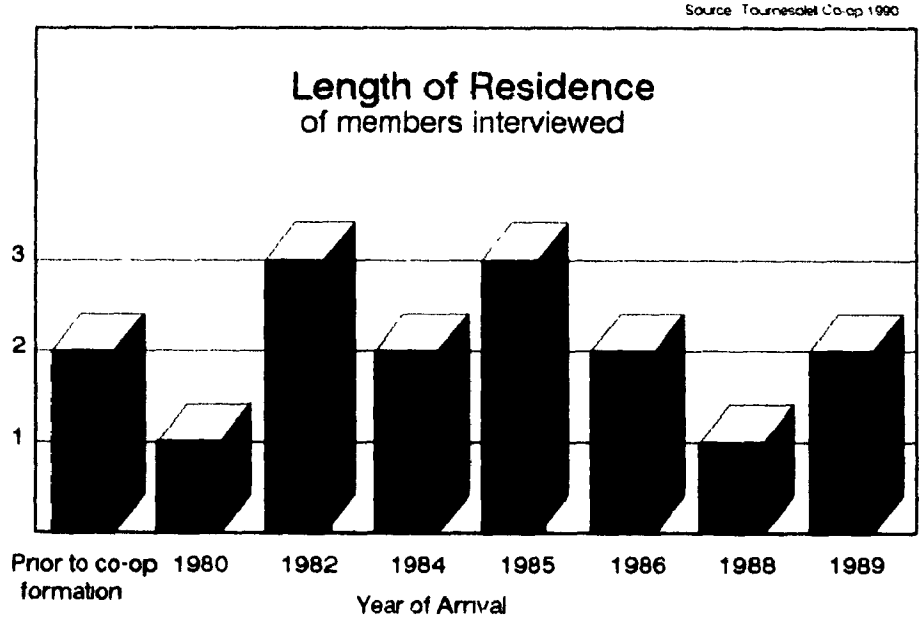
Note: Total exceeds number of adult residents due to dual occupations

FIGURE 3.4



Approximate age of Members interviewed	Number
Late Twenties (20's)	(2)
Early Thirties (30's)	(5)
Middle Thirties (30's)	(2)
Early Forties (40's)	(4)
Middle Forties (40's)	(1)
Middle Sixties (60's)	(2)

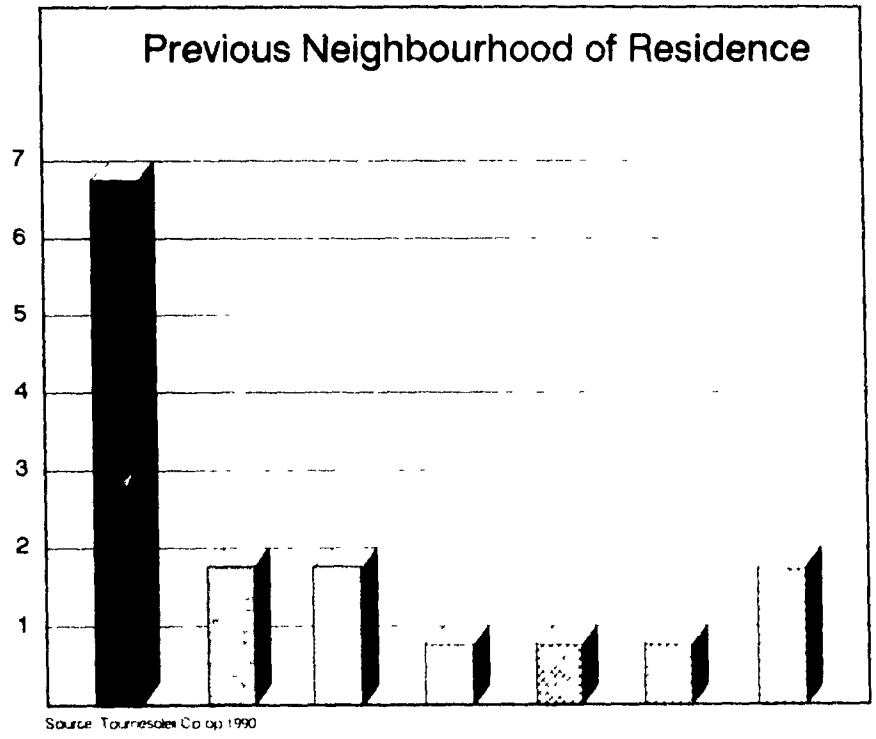
Figure 3.5



Years denote time of arrival to the co-op
Numbers refer to the amount of residents

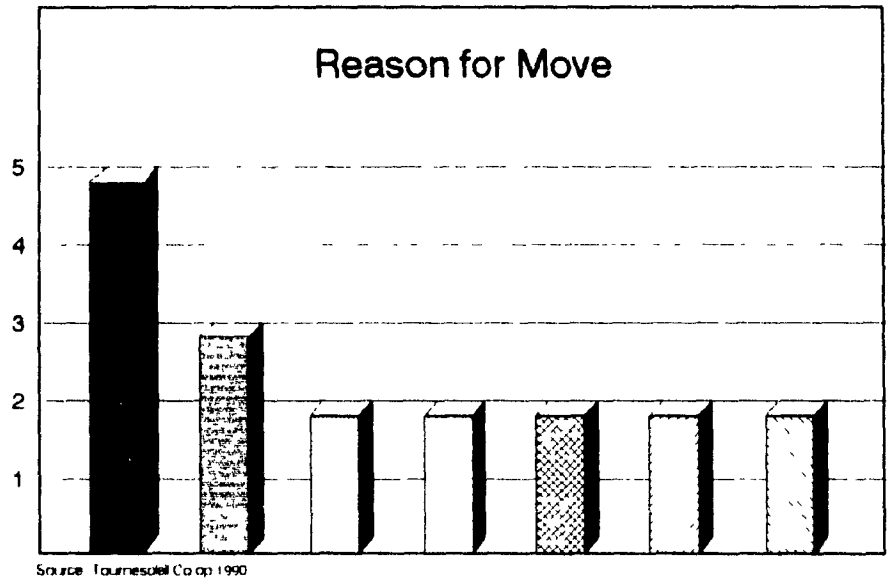
Numbers on the Y axis refer to the Number of Members

Figure 3.6



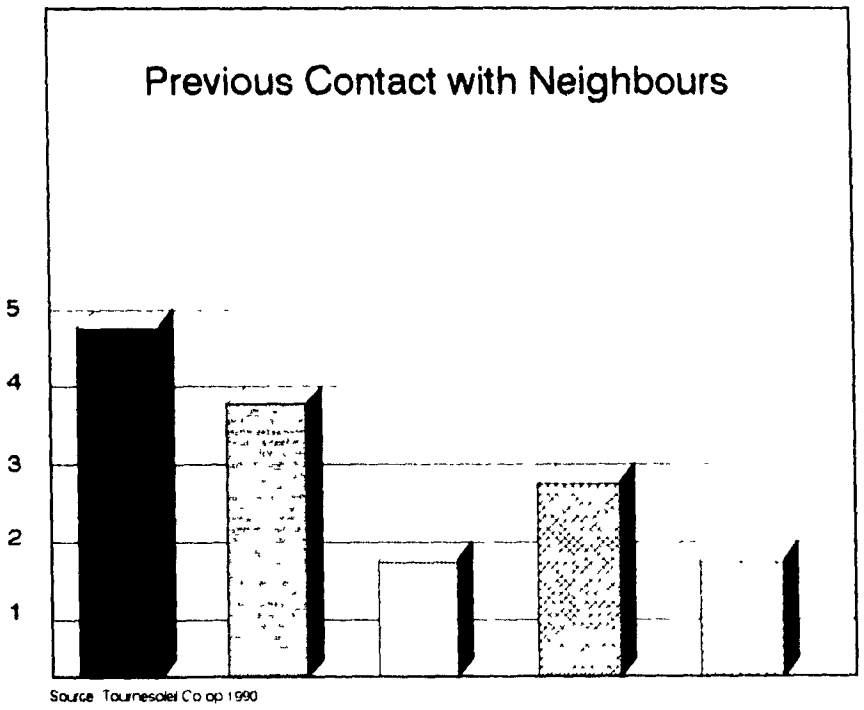
Neighbourhood	Number
Plateau Mt Royal	(7)
Villeray	(2)
Parc Extension	(2)
Ville d'Anjou	(1)
Repentigny	(1)
Outside of Montreal Area	(1)
Not Applicable	(2)

Figure 3.7



Reason cited	Number
Financial	(5)
Divorce/Separation	(2)
Eviction	(3)
Move with partner	(2)
Bad neighbourhood	(2)
Previous landlord	(2)
Other reasons	(2)

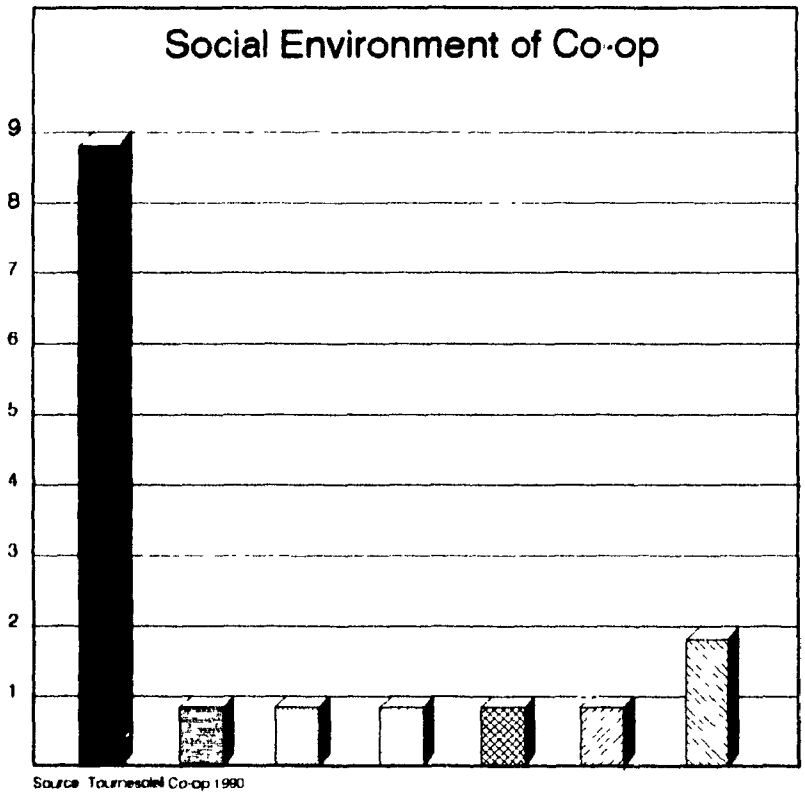
Figure 3.8



Source Tournesolei Co op 1990

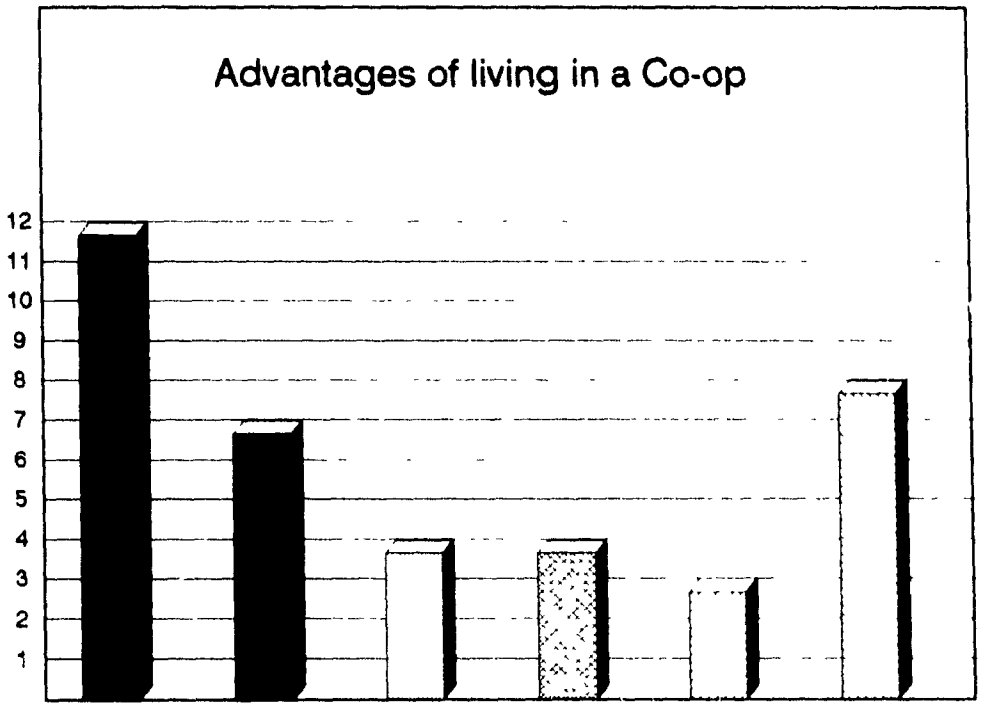
Degrees of Contact	Number
No contact	(5)
Some contact	(4)
Much contact	(2)
No information	(3)
Not applicable	(2)

Figure 3.9



Characteristic cited	Number
Very welcoming	(9)
Good but associated problems*	(2)
Tense environment	(2)
Difficult integration	(2)
Conflicts and jealousies	(2)
Hostile and ungrateful	(2)
Not Applicable	(2)

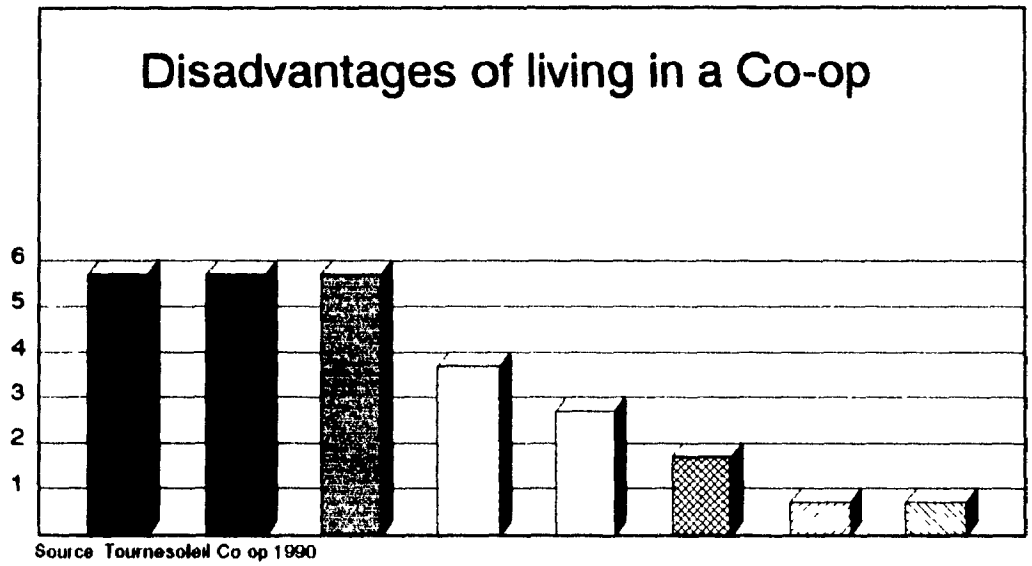
Figure 3.10



Source Tournesoleil Co-op 1990

Advantage cited	Number
Inexpensive	(12)
Mutual aid	(7)
Sense of community	(4)
Security of tenure	(4)
Quality of housing	(3)
Other advantages	(8)

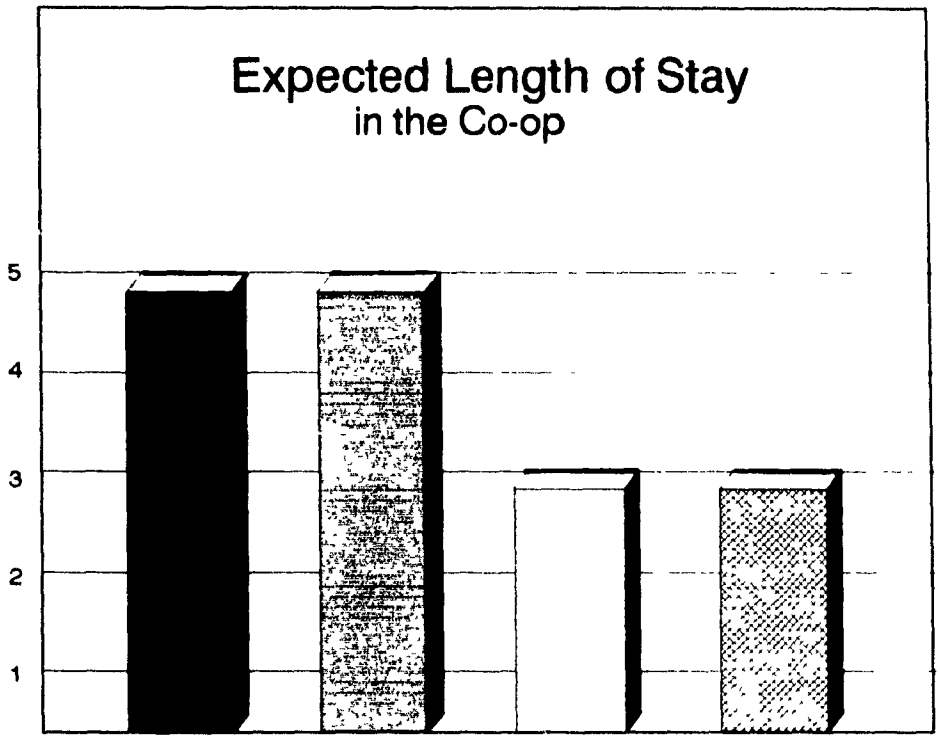
Figure 3.11



Source Tournesolell Co op 1990

Disadvantage cited	Number
Demands time	(6)
Personal conflicts	(6)
Invasion of privacy	(6)
Decision making	(4)
Power struggles	(3)
Cliques	(2)
Other	(1)
No disadvantages	(1)

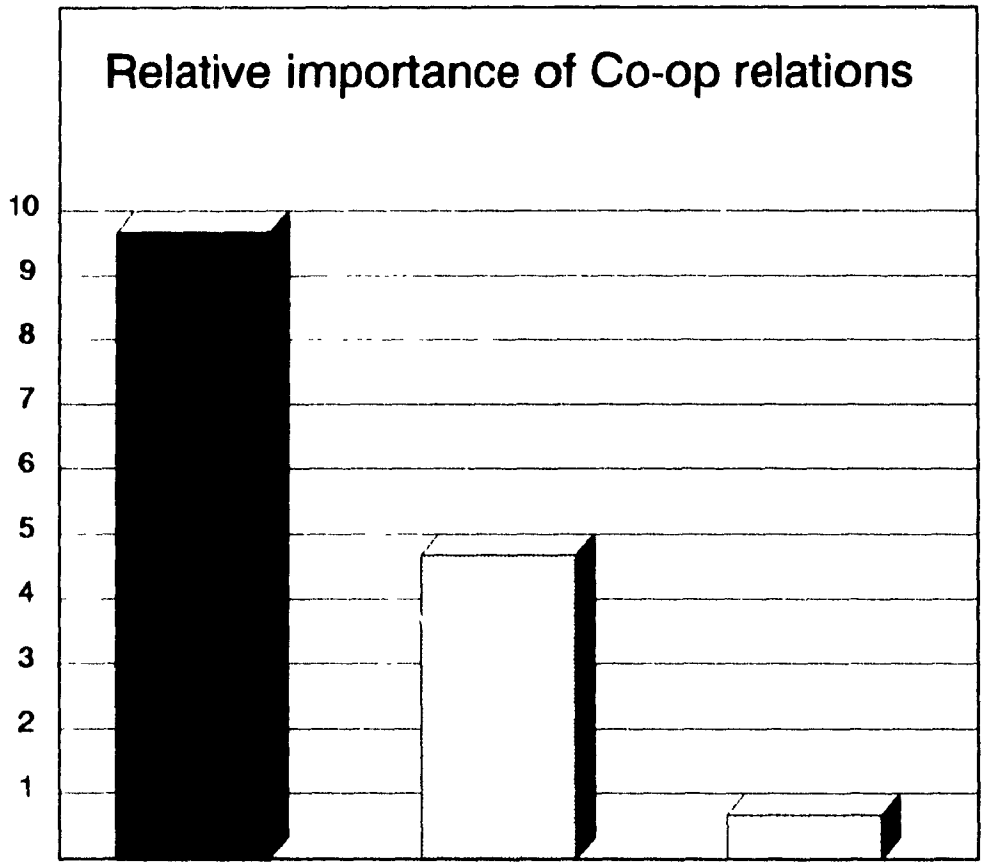
Figure 3.12



Source Tournesolell Co-op 1990

Length cited	Number
Until finances improve	(5)
A "Longtime"	(5)
Permanent	(3)
A "Few more years"	(3)

Figure 3.13



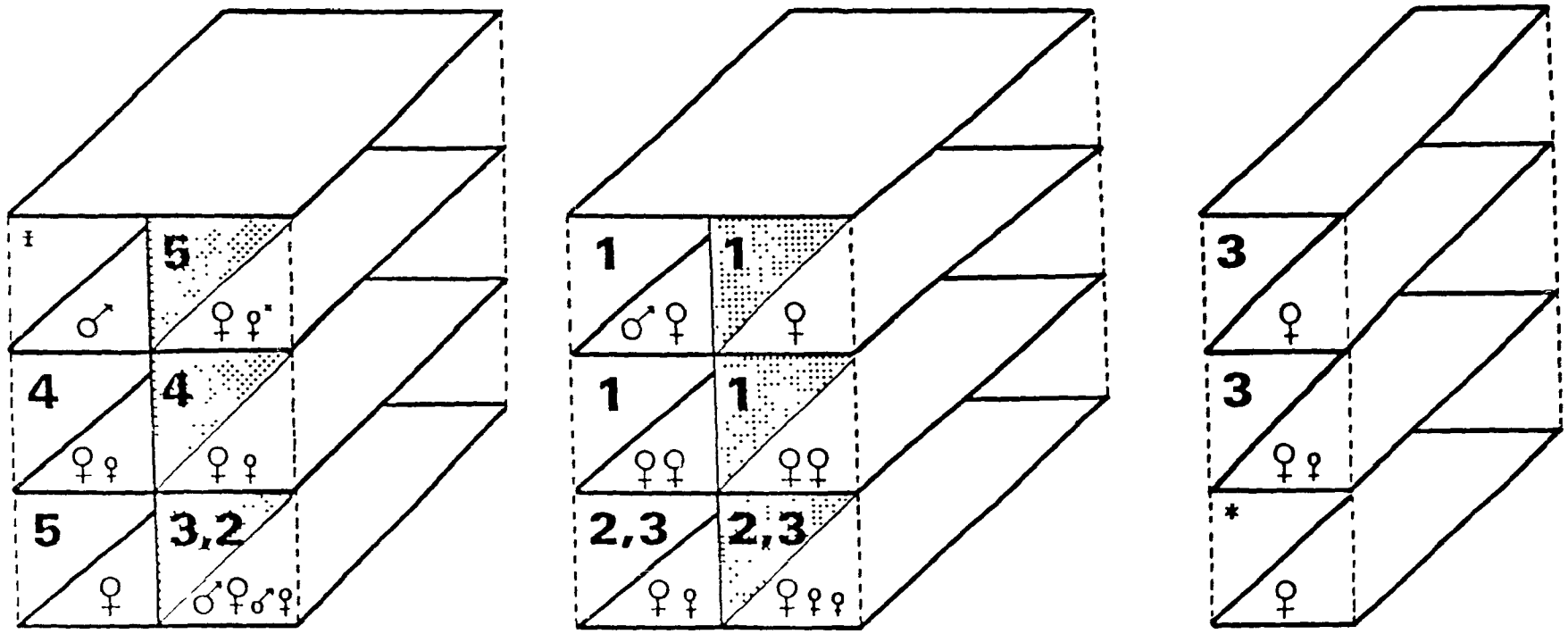
Source Tournesolei Co-op 1990

Comment	Number
Most relations outside of the Co-op	(10)
"Very important"	(5)
"About half and half"	(1)

Figure 3.14

TOURNESOLEIL HOUSING COOPERATIVE

Links Between Households



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

- ♀ Woman
- ♂ Man
- ♀ ♂ Children
- ♀* Invalid Elderly Woman

MUTUAL AID NETWORKS

- 1 Name of Network
- 2,3 Household in Two Networks
- * No Developed Links
- ‡ No Data

Blocks are not physically separate.

Gisèle Yasmeen

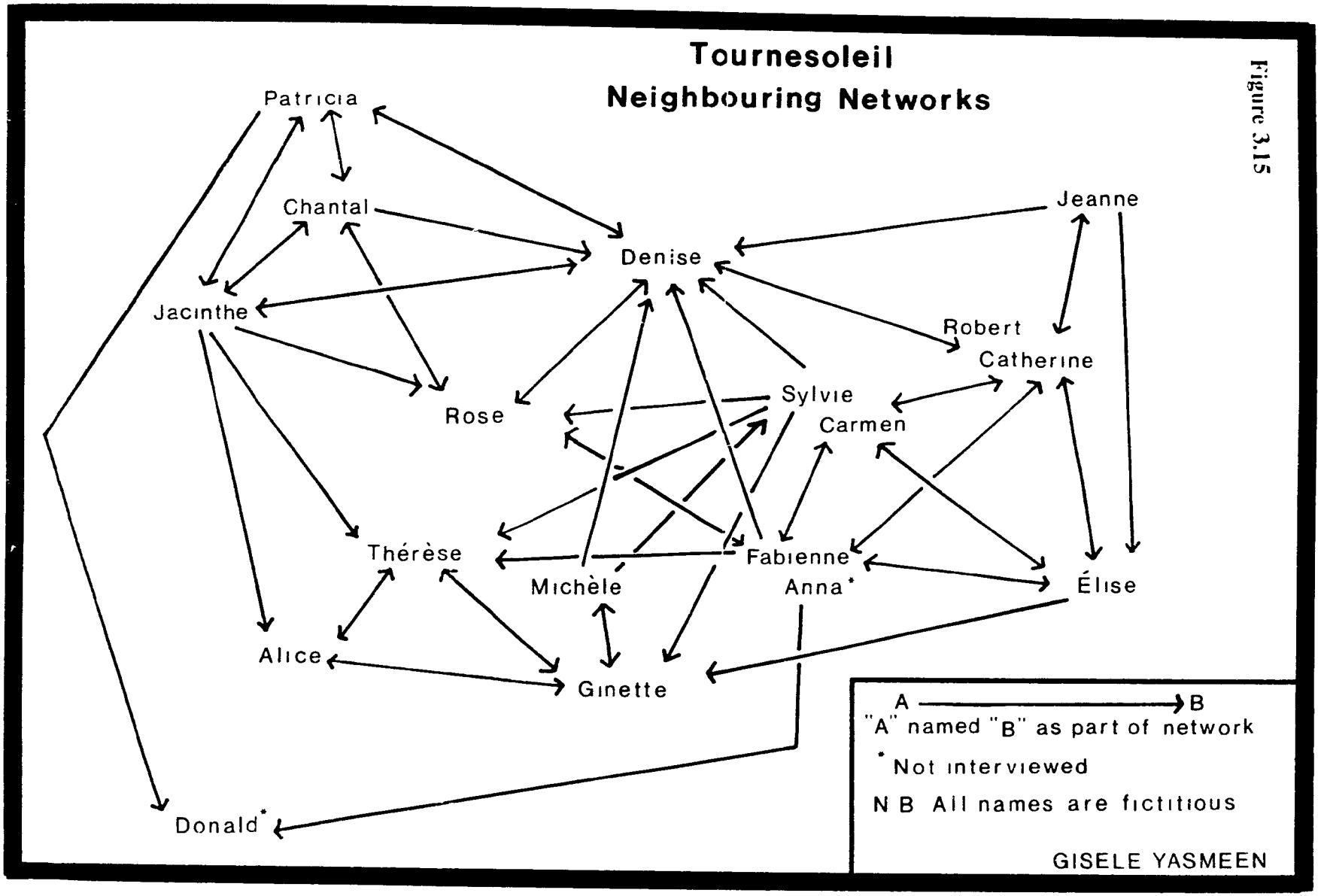

Tournesoleil
Neighbouring Networks
Patricia
Chantal
Jeanne
Denise
Jacinthe
Robert
Catherine
Rose
Sylvie
Carmen
Thérèse
Fabienne
Michèle
Anna*
Élise
Alice
Ginette
Donald*
A → B
"A" named "B" as part of network
* Not interviewed
N B All names are fictitious
GISELE YASMEEN

Figure 3.15

-Chapter Four-

CO-OPÉRATIVE D'HABITATION FIL D'ARIANE

Fil d'Ariane housing co-operative is a one-and-a-half year old housing co-op exclusively for lone-parent families. It is located in Rivière-des-Prairies (RDP), a satellite town on the Northeast of the Island of Montreal, which is officially annexed to the City of Montreal. As a recent development in a new sub-division, Fil d'Ariane is an example of the latest wave of suburban housing co-ops and low-income housing projects in Montreal and other North American cities. It also represents the changing face of Montreal and its suburbs by housing a large number of Haitian immigrants which is typical of the housing projects in the immediate vicinity (Bernèche 1983).

This chapter will outline the steps taken to create Fil d'Ariane and will describe the neighbourhood in which it is situated. The physical design of the co-op, which includes some innovative features due to the high level of member consultation with the architect, will also be included in the first section. The characteristics of the women interviewed and a summary of their responses to my questions will form the second, third and fourth sections of the chapter. The 'cultural politics' and questions pertaining to the definition and management of a lone-parent co-op are of considerable importance within Fil d'Ariane and will be introduced. Finally, section 4.5 will deal with mutual aid networks in the co-op. There are certain 'key' actors within the co-op who influence the structure and content of mutual aid networks and who can potentially improve relations between Fil d'Ariane's many 'factions'.

4.1 A new population in a recent sub-division

Location of Fil d'Ariane

Although parts of RDP were settled as early as the 17th century, the area is largely a residential development of the post-WW II era. The community has a well developed life of its own which is socially as well as geographically separate from Montreal proper. RDP contains its own commerce, a host of community centres and groups, as well as professionals. The area houses a great number of Italians - most of whom own their own homes and are well established in the area - and more recent Haitian immigrants who tend to live in newly built higher density co-operatives and low-income housing. Fil d'Ariane is located in one of the newest sub-divisions of RDP and is surrounded by similar looking co-operatives and low-income housing projects, or HLMs (Habitation Loyer Modique) which were built in the 1980s (See Figure 4.1).

History of the co-op

The co-op was an initiative of the local Groupe de Ressources Techniques (GRT).[1] The idea to develop such a project was very much related to the initiative and encouragement of one particular employee of the GRT who was active in various feminist organisations. She had been involved in training programs designed to reintegrate women in the workforce following divorce, separation or change in life-cycle. A number of women interviewed had heard about the Fil d'Ariane initiative following their involvement in one of these programs. The GRT also advertised in several east-end Montreal community newspapers in order to recruit members.

Construction began in April 1988 and half the co-op was ready for occupation in November of that year, the other half being completed by December. The immediate neighbourhood was still very much under construction at the time of the interviews which took place from June 1989 to February 1990. A public park was planned for the area across the street as well as a large shopping mall which was completed by the fall of 1990. The women interviewed were anxious for the park to be completed for the use of themselves and their children. They awaited the opening of the shopping mall with anticipation since they foresaw the possibility of employment on the premises and easier access to services.

Physical design

Fil d'Ariane is comprised of two three-storey "walk-up" blocks with a total of 24 two, three and four-bedroom apartments. Each apartment has a balcony facing the front and a view to the backyard. The balconies in Fil d'Ariane are much larger than those found in neighbouring co-ops and HLM's due to suggestions to the architect from the co-op members.

Other more innovative design features have been included in Fil d'Ariane due to the unusually high participation rate of residents with the architect. It was not unusual to have 20 members attend meetings to discuss design plans with the architects, as opposed to an average of six members from nearby co-ops.[2]

The primary design innovation residents suggested was <u>not</u> to have a basement. Basement apartments are usually rented by those who cannot afford the

better quality apartments above ground-level. Members of a social co-op pay rent according to their incomes, rather than based on the value of the dwelling; therefore, the only way to convince certain members to take basement suites would be to charge a lower rent. The poorest residents would have been financially coerced into basement suites. In a co-operative, where all members are supposed to be treated equally, this was considered unfair. A regular basement was not dug. A community room, where meetings take place and office work is performed, is the only facility below ground level. Each apartment is equipped with a washer and dryer. These appliances were purchased with a bursary supplied by a national association of catholic nuns which was solicited by the resourceful president of the co-op.

Plans for the kitchens were modified to include more counter space, broom closets in accessible places, locations for archways and the colour co-ordination of carpeting, tiles and linoleum. The backyard is being landscaped as a playground and is already equipped with picnic tables which are used individually and sometimes collectively for corn roasts or other social activities.

4.2 Profile of members

Age of members and household size

All 24 members of the co-op are lone mothers, although the project is not exclusively for women in theory. The women range in age from 27 to 50 years of age (see Figure 4.2) and have anywhere from one to six children (see Figure 4.3).

There are a total of 54 children aged 4 to 21 living in Fil d'Ariane. Children

are permitted to stay in the co-op as 'dependents' until age 25. After this age, any income earned is calculated into the family income for the establishment of rent which is 25% of household income. When a woman's children have all left home, she must find other accommodations. This is in keeping with the policy of the co-op being reserved solely for lone-parent families.

Occupations of members and ethnic background

Most of the members are full-time housewives who receive social assistance, seven are students and two are engaged in wage work. In terms of ethnic background, nine of the women are Haitian immigrants, one is of Polish background while the remainder are 'French-canadian'.[3]

Managing a new co-op is tremendously time-consuming. In terms of organisational structure, Fil d'Ariane has an elected seven member executive and a number of committees. At the time of the interviews several members of the co-op were working over 45 hours a week doing work related to the co-op Certain members of the executive reported having spent close to sixty hours a week performing co-op related work in the first five months following the opening. The executive, which is comprised of seven members, performed much of the work and had problems eliciting the participation of the remaining 18 members.

4.3 Housing histories

Origin of members interviewed

As indicated in Figure 4.6, only three members interviewed from Fil d Ariane are originally from the city of Montreal.[4] Four of the women stated they were from outside of the city. Two of the members interviewed were originally from Haiti. As previously mentioned, nine members of the co-op were of Haitian background at the time that interviews took place.

The women were asked to name the neighbourhood in which they resided immediately prior to moving into the co-op. With the exception of one member who moved directly to Fil d'Ariane from Ste-Hyacinthe, all those interviewed previously lived in the east-end of the city. This result is not surprising since most of the advertising used to solicit members was made in east-end community newspapers and social service centers.

Reasons for previous move

Nearly all the women interviewed wanted to move out of their previous dwellings due to rents beyond their budgets. Most of the co-op members are financially dependent on meager government assistance. In addition, most women found their previous accommodations much too small. Families with two children were often living in apartments with only three and a half rooms. Children rarely had their own rooms. There were also instances of two families sharing one-bedroom apartments for several months at a time.

Many of the women interviewed had moved several times in the years

following the break-up of their marriages and resulting financial instability. Generally speaking, most were living in accommodations that were grossly inadequate in terms of size and their poor condition. The frustrations resulting from this situation pushed many of the women to try and find a suitable home for themselves and their families. The co-op presented an answer to one of their most pressing problems: the need for an inexpensive, spacious, secure and comfortable dwelling.

Previous mutual aid linkages

Only half of the women interviewed responded to the question concerning the extent of contact with previous neighbours. Two members mentioned that they had experienced intense supportive contact with their previous neighbours. Both these women had been living in the same neighbourhood (PAT) for the past 15 to 20 years. As a result they knew many neighbours, as well as one another, and frequently interacted with people from their local community.

One woman, "knew" her neighbours in her previous community (Ste-Hyacinthe) and had regular contact with them in order to exchange small services, goods and "a cup of coffee". The remaining members interviewed said they had little or no contact with their neighbours in their previous living arrangements.

As indicated in Figure 4.9, many members previously depended on members of their family for help in times of emergency or for other aid. Most women indicated that they are still in regular contact with family members since their move into the co-op. To a lesser extent, members interacted with friends and neighbours

who formed an integral part of their previous "local" mutual-aid networks.

4.4 Residential satisfaction

Advantages of living in a co-op

According to the members interviewed, the primary advantage of living in a housing co-operative is affordability. Most members of Fil d'Ariane benefit from government rent subsidies which make it possible for them to make ends meet on their low incomes. The second important advantage cited is the fact that the apartments in Fil d'Ariane are spacious and in good condition. Each mother is guaranteed her own room and, as much as possible, an attempt is made to provide children with their own individual rooms.

Other advantages that were mentioned related to increased contact with other people (items three and four on Figure 4.10) and feeling less isolated as a result. Finally, only one member mentioned skill development as an advantage of co-operative living, however, many women alluded informally to how many skills they had acquired as a result of involvement in co-op management.

Disadvantages of living in a co-op

Although all the women interviewed at Fil d'Ariane were satisfied with the price, physical design and good quality of their new abodes, most characterised the social environment of Fil d'Ariane as "tense".

One of the problems in the co-op relates to 'race relations'. A rift has

developed between many of the Haitian women and the remaining 'French-canadian' members. Suspicions have developed on both sides and certain problems have been blamed on the Haitian women by some of the white women and vice-versa. For example, a few cockroach infestations have been "associated" with the Haitians who have been blamed for shopping in roach-ridden grocery stores (even though most, if not all, grocery stores experience cockroach infestations on a regular basis). The Haitian women have been accused of other 'misdemeanors' such as working 'under-the-table' to supplement their low-incomes. Another problem relates to perceptions concerning the way in which the Haitian women raise their children: they are accused of being too 'strict'.

Unfortunately, only two women originally from Haiti were interviewed.[5] However, an alternative perspective to the above problems did emerge. The first woman was critical of the ethics of 'policing' activity or surveillance carried out by other members. She mentioned that the Haitian women felt as though other members of the co-op were keeping an 'eye' on them more than others. As a result, mutual suspicions had developed between both cultural groups. The second woman originally from Haiti commented that most members of the co-op were difficult to deal with and personality conflicts therefore ensued.

A problem exists with respect to the definition of a "lone-parent co-op"; in other words, to what extent are companions or lovers to be tolerated in such a setting? Certain members felt they were being watched by other members when men entered or left their apartments. Some find this type of surveillance particularly

unacceptable as a breach of personal privacy. Others feel as though some members are living with a partner in a co-op reserved for lone-parents and that this is unfair to the other members.

One resident commented on the lack of services in a co-op such as Fil d'Ariane where there are families who have been through a lot of recent problems. Identified were the need for access to daycare services and other social services for mothers and children (eg. personal and career counselling). Conflicts stemming from the behaviour of certain children were identified as key problems in the co-op.

Finally, one member remarked that many disputes at Fil d'Ariane stemmed from 'little' things, such as care for the new lawn, and other tasks related to co-op maintenance. She felt that the importance of such issues was exaggerated and, as a result, created unnecessary tension in the co-op.[6] Management and control of collective co-op spaces such as the front and back yards and entrances have been the sites of much conflict at Fil d'Ariane because certain members are acccused of not doing their 'share' of the maintenance work. This conflict over co-op space will be further developed in the next chapter.

Not surprisingly, due to the many tensions within the co-op, most members who were interviewed cited "social conflicts" as one of the major disadvantages of living in a co-op. No member of Fil d'Ariane had previously experienced co-operative living and therefore many believed that the problems experienced by their co-op were common to all other co-ops. The types of social conflicts identified were related to personality differences, aggressive members, lack of openness, invasion of

privacy and the potential for gossip.

The many responsibilities and subsequent time commitments associated with membership in a housing co-operative were cited twice as disadvantages. It is surprising that this factor was not mentioned more often since Fil d'Ariane is a new co-op and therefore requires much more work than a well established project, especially for the members of the executive (who were over-represented in the sample of members interviewed). Although certain members of the executive worked 'full-time' for the co-op and complained about a lack of free-time, most took pride in their work and appeared satisfied with their commitment. Working for the co-op was a source of pleasure and self-confidence which helped develop women's identities beyond the roles of housewife and mother to include 'president', 'vice-president' or 'treasurer'. Indeed, certain members took their functions so seriously as to be labelled 'authoritarian' by other co-op residents.

Finally, lack of co-operation on the part of co-op members was once mentioned as a disadvantage. Many members shared this view and mentioned it informally at various other stages of the interview. The vast majority of time spent working for the co-op is spent by members of the executive, in particular the President, Vice-President and the Treasurer who essentially worked 40 to 60 hours a week in the first year of residence at Fil d'Ariane.

Expected length of stay in co-op

Five members interviewed intend to move out of Fil d'Ariane in the next few years. Many women in the co-op have gone back to school and forecast improved career opportunities and higher income in the near future. These women see living in a co-op as a temporary housing strategy which can enable them to get back on their feet, both socially and financially, in the tumultuous years following marriage break-up.

Four of the women interviewed presented quite a different view of their futures. This second group intends to stay in the co-op for a long period of time, some even used the word 'forever'. These women do not see an impending change in their financial status and generally have young children under the age of ten making it difficult for them to opt for career development. Not coincidentally, the women who intend to make Fil d'Ariane their permanent home are also the ones who are most highly involved in the co-op executive. One woman from this group stated that the co-op was her life - "la co-op, c'est ma vie". She along with other members of the executive were essentially full-time workers on the co-op executive. One of the regulations which prohibits co-op members from making Fil d'Ariane their permanent home is the fact that one must be a single-parent. If a woman enters into a permanent relationship she is officially required to quit the co-op. Another disincentive is the regulation that stipulates once a woman's children are over 25 the rent will be calculated by including the income of adult children which would increase the rent drastically. All the women interviewed consider the individual ownership of a single-family house as their ideal, given the financial means.

4.5 Mutual aid networks

Description of networks

Various mutual aid and friendship networks have developed within Fil d'Ariane. The pattern of linkages between members as described by interviewees is depicted in Figures 4.14 and 4.15. Several members of the executive committee have become good friends and often exchange goods and services such as food, babysitting, emergency help and, of course, emotional support (networks numbers one and three on Figure 4.14). The president, vice-president and treasurer of the executive form the core of this network. A few other residents, who are not on the executive, find themselves on the periphery of this social network (see Figure 4.15).

A second network is the product of previous relationships - there are two sisters and their mutual friend present (network number 2). These three women lived in the same community prior to moving into Fil d'Ariane (PAT) and return there regularly to participate with mutual friends in organised recreational activities, namely pétancle in the summer and bowling in the winter.

Another mutual aid network is formed by the Haitian women (network number 4 on Figure 4.14). Although only two of the women knew one another previously, the Haitian women became acquainted rather quickly due to a common language, culture and feeling of 'subtle rejection' by non-haitians as the only cultural sub-group in the co-op.[7] In addition, the Haitian families are concentrated in the two blocks which contain the largest apartments because most have many children. This has further reinforced the integration between the Haitian members and their

collective segregation from the other members both spatially as well as socially.

The members of network number 5 are all close neighbours who occasionally babysit one another's young children. Two members of this network consider one another to be close friends.

There are sub-groups within the networks described above. Some members of these sub-groups met at a workshop designed to assist women reintegrate into the workforce, or at meetings of other associations. Small cliques have developed as a result of a common experience, such as attending a CEGEP or junior college, the case of many women in the co-op.

Key actors

Certain members of Fil d'Ariane play key roles in the social network 'structure' which is depicted in Figure 6. The President, Simone (not her real name) has extensive contact with many members of the co-op, especially those in the executive. Her administrative responsibilities have led to the creation of certain friendships and relations of mutual aid. Simone babysits many children from the co-op. When she experienced problems with her health in the first year of residence at Fil d'Ariane, other members of the co-op provided valuable aid to Simone in order to keep herself, her family and the co-op going.

Another key member of the co-op is the vice-president, Béatrice. Béatrice is the 'fifth business' or bridge-person of Fil d'Ariane.[8] She was named as part of six other social networks whereas no one else was mentioned more than four times.

Béatrice is a bridge person between the two cultural sub-groups being the only French-canadian woman to include two Haitian women in her social network.

Relative importance of co-op relations

Members interviewed were asked to explain the importance of their relationships within Fil d'Ariane compared to their social networks at large. The answers are summarised in Figure 4.13.

Nearly half the members interviewed at Fil d'Ariane situate the most important relations of their social lives within the co-op. Five interviewees said that their most important social links were with friends and family outside the co-op in the Montreal area.

Fil d'Ariane has been particularly unfortunate when it comes to the health of its members. There have been several major accidents involving residents as well as chronic illnesses and the need for major surgery, often hysterectomies. Members have helped each other extensively in these instances by driving one another to the hospital, or shopping for the recovering person. In one case, a member had a serious heart attack and was fortunately discovered in her apartment by another member.

Preliminary conclusions

The nature of the social environment within Fil d'Ariane is very much a reflection of the fact that: 1)it is a new project which requires a tremendous investment of time

and energy on the part of its members; 2) its ethnic composition of "Québecoises de souche" and Haitian immigrants has led to mutual suspicions and conflicts; and 3) it is located in a new subdivision meaning that members of the co-op and neighbouring housing projects are all new to the vicinity and fewer services (eg. recreational areas, bus etc.) are yet available making day-to-day life more complicated; and finally, 4) the families in this co-op have nearly all experienced tremendous turmoil in their recent lives which intensifies the tension already present in the co-op. The problems being faced by residents of Fil d'Ariane, then, are not so much a result of the nature of the members themselves but of difficulties related to their geographical and social context.

The following chapter will compare Fil d'Ariane and Co-opérative d'Habitation Tournesoleil and will arrive at a conclusion concerning the formation of mutual aid networks in both living environments, the process of 'community building' and various issues of theoretical importance.

NOTES

1. GRT translates as "Technical Resource Group" which are Quebec government sponsored organisations providing technical assistance for those involved in social housing projects.

2. Interview with the President and Vice-President of Fil d'Ariane on June 20, 1989.

3. Immigrants from Haiti will sometimes be referred to simply as Haitian, even though this term is not legally precise. I had difficulty determining how to refer to the members of Fil d'Ariane who are not immigrants from Haiti. The chose to employ the term French-canadian even though it is now considered outdated because the term Québecoise could

conceivably be used to refer to any female resident of Quebec regardless of ethnic origin (when speaking in French). The term "white" is also rather outdated and I preferred staying away from such a term.

4. The one member from Pointe-aux-trembles (PAT), which is officially part of the City of Montreal, was listed separately as PAT - located on the eastern tip of the island of Montreal - is geographically removed from the rest of the municipality and has a strong sense of its own identity.

5. A third interview was scheduled, but was unfortunately cancelled. Other Haitian women contacted were unable or too shy to meet with me.

6. Two members interviewed did not comment on these issues to a great extent.

7. The idea of 'subtle rejection' was proposed by one of the women interviewed.

8. See chapter 4 for a definition of fifth-business.

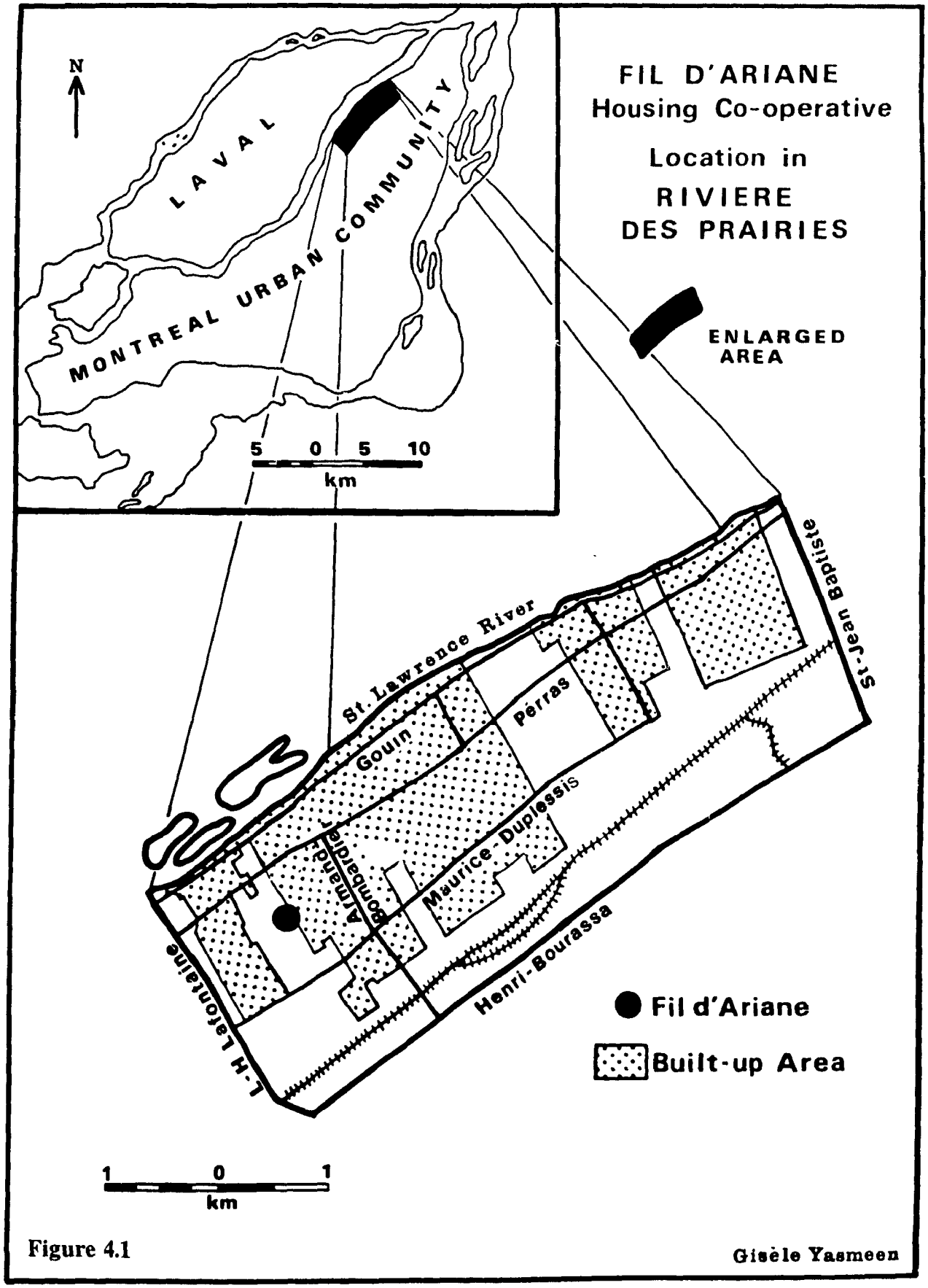


Figure 4.1

Gisèle Yasmeen

Photo 4.1 Single-family detached house in Rivière-des-Prairies, near Fil d'Ariane Housing Co-op

Photo 4.2 Fil d'Ariane Housing Co-op, front view

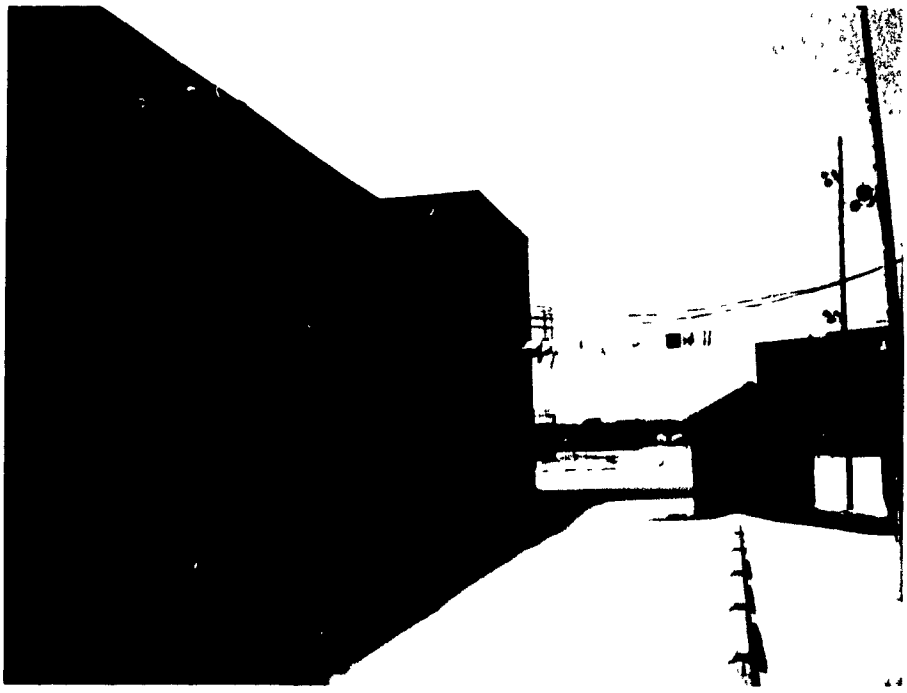
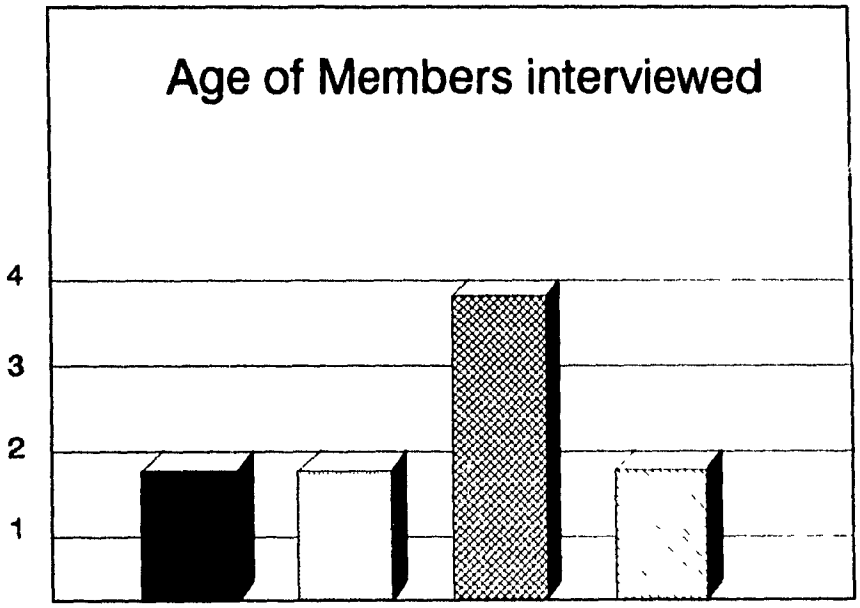


Photo 4.3 Fil d'Ariane Housing Co-op, back view

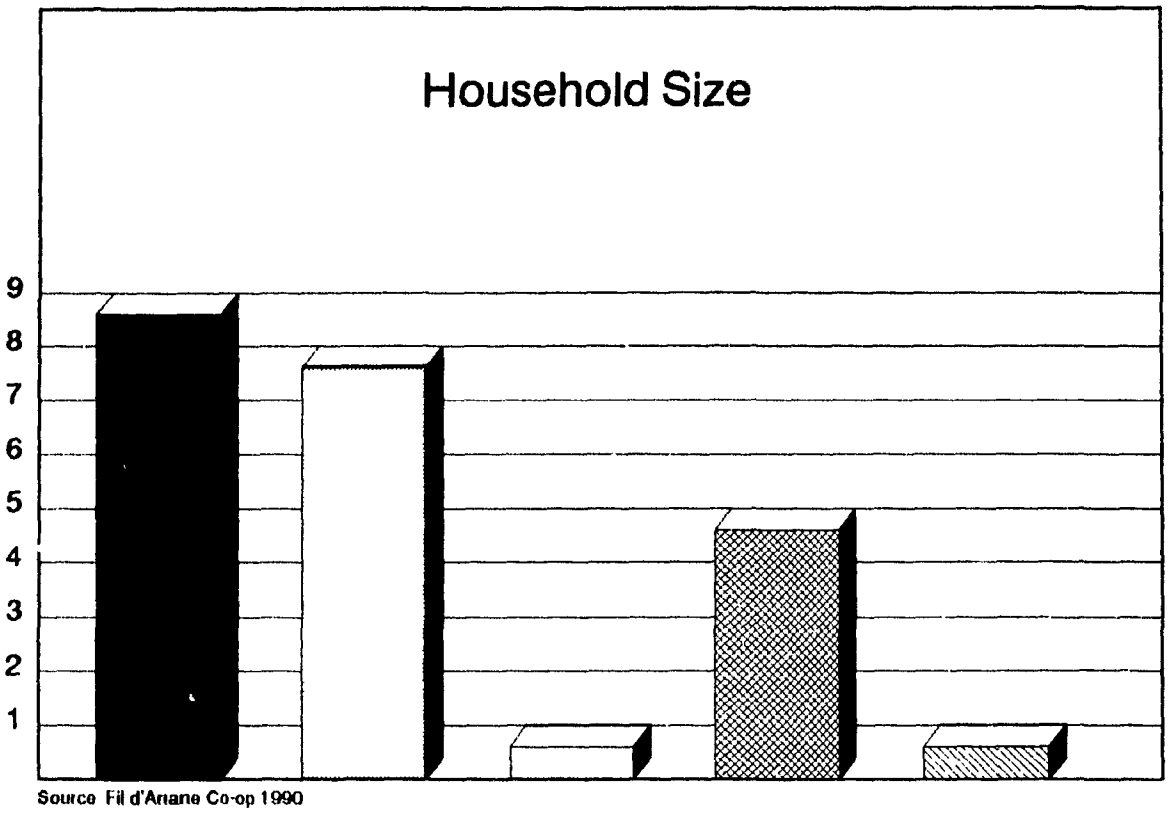
Figure 4.2



Source. Fil d'Ariane Co op 1990

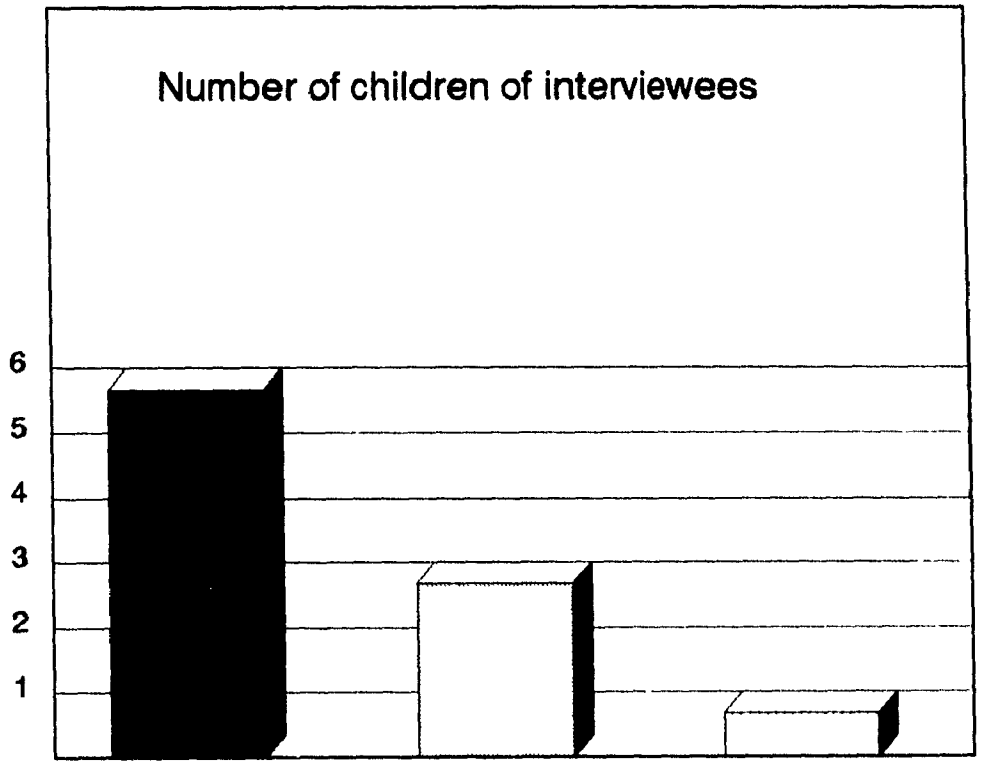
Age of Members interviewed	Number
Between 30-35	(2)
Between 36-40	(2)
Between 41-45	(4)
Between 46-50	(2)

Figure 4.3



Number of persons	Frequence
2	(8)
3	(9)
4	(1)
5	(5)
7	(1)

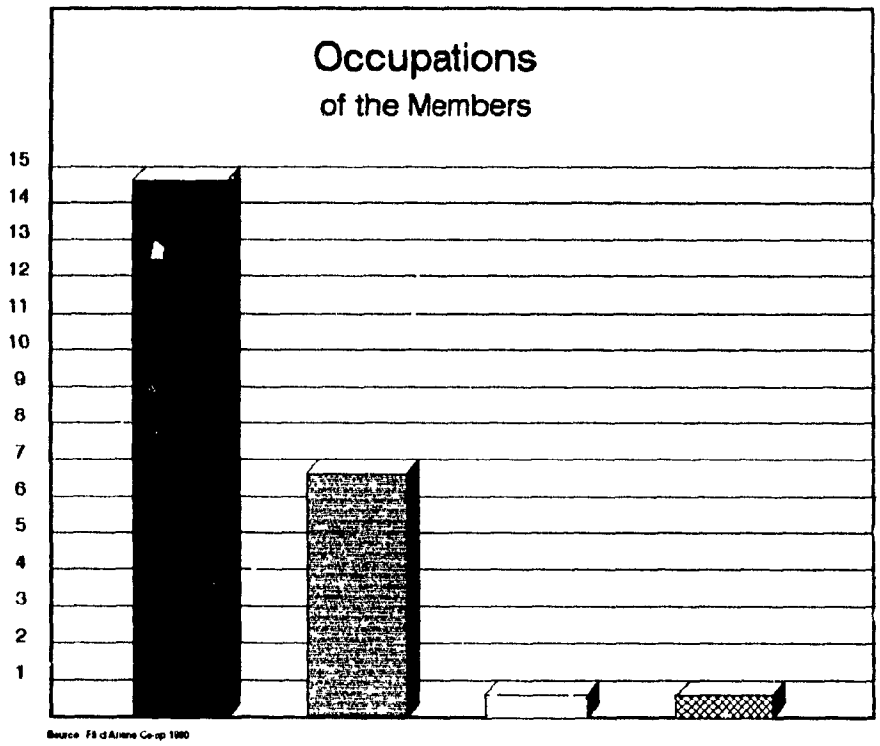
Figure 4.4



Source: Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

Number of children	Frequency
1	(6)
2	(3)
4	(1)

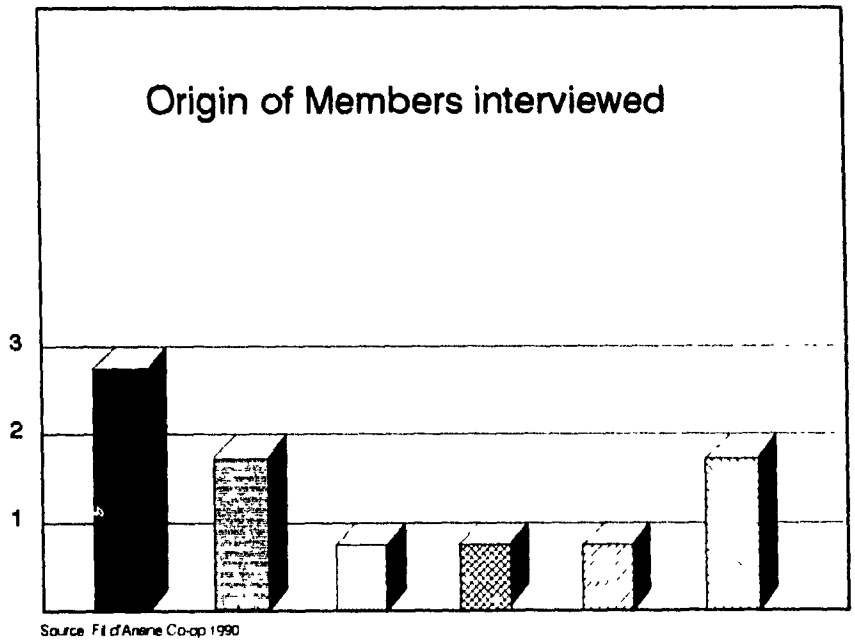
Figure 4.5



Source: Field Alliance Group 1990

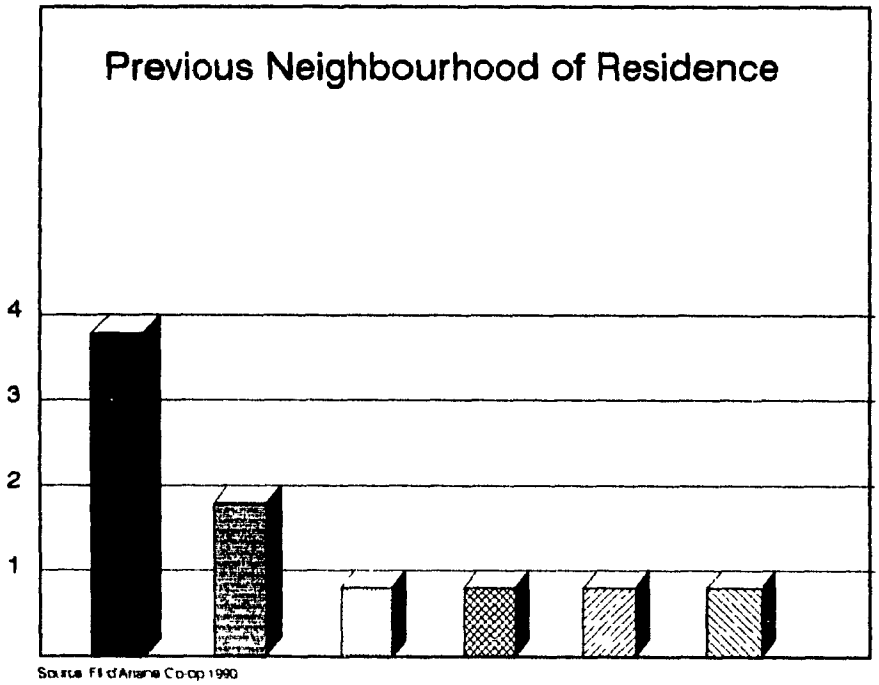
Occupation	Number
Housewife	(15)
Student	(7)
Seamstress	(1)
Childcare worker	(1)

Figure 4.6



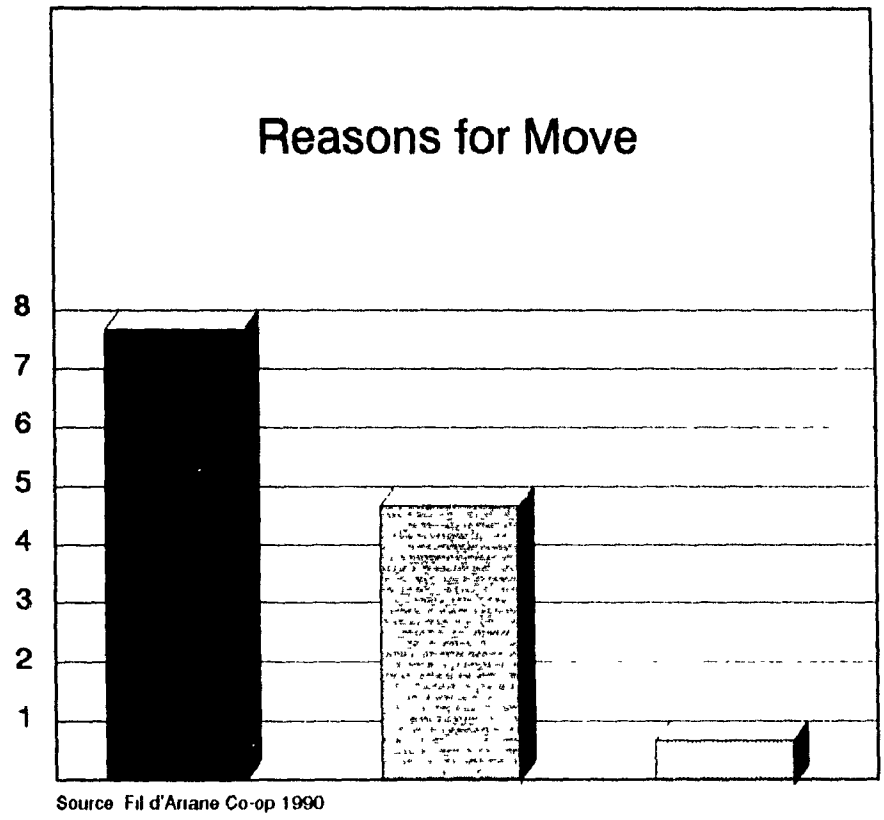
Place of origin	Number
Montreal	(3)
Haiti	(2)
P A T	(1)*
Joliette	(1)
Sorel	(1)
Ste-Hyacinthe	(1)

Figure 4.7



Neighbourhood	Number
Montreal North	(4)
Pointe-Aux-Trembles	(2)
St-Leonard	(1)
Ville d'Anjou	(1)
Villeray	(1)
Ste-Hyacinthe	(1)

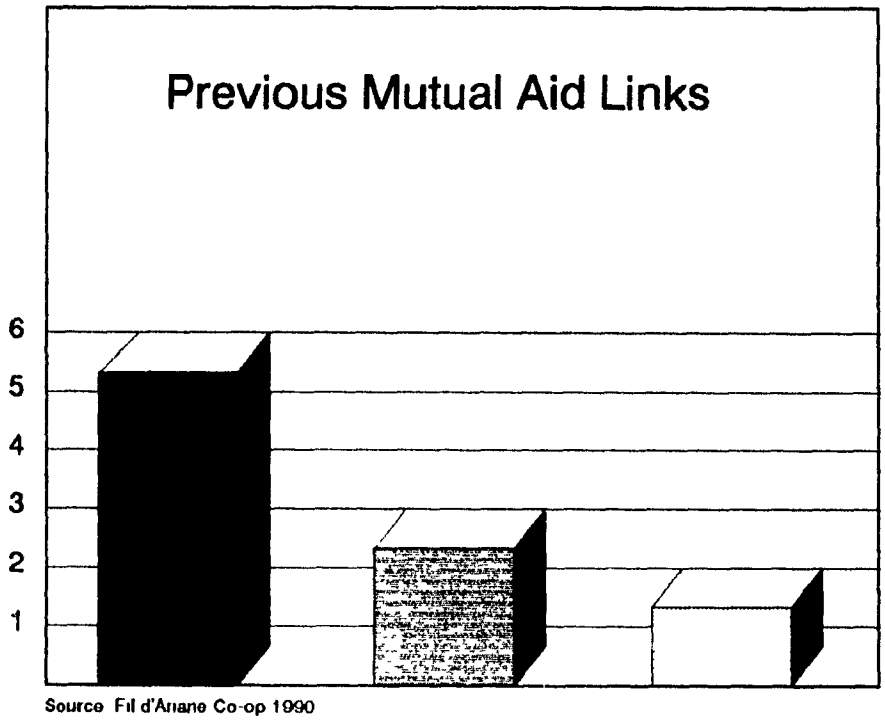
Figure 4.8



Source Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

Comment	Number
Too expensive	(8)
Too Small	(5)
Poor quality	(1)

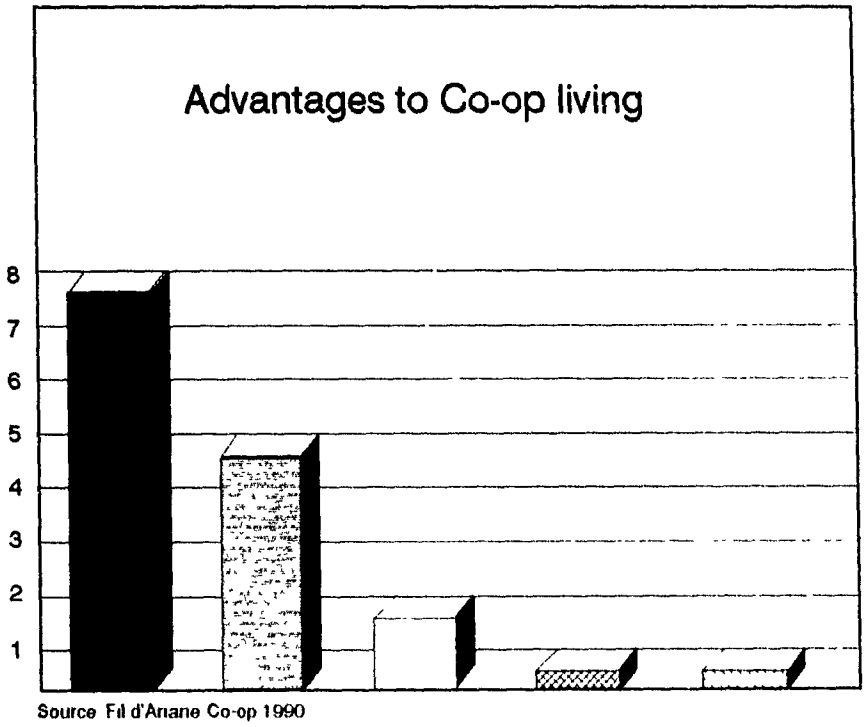
Figure 4.9



Source Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

Composition	Frequence
Family member(s)	(6)
Friend(s)	(3)
Neighbours	(2)

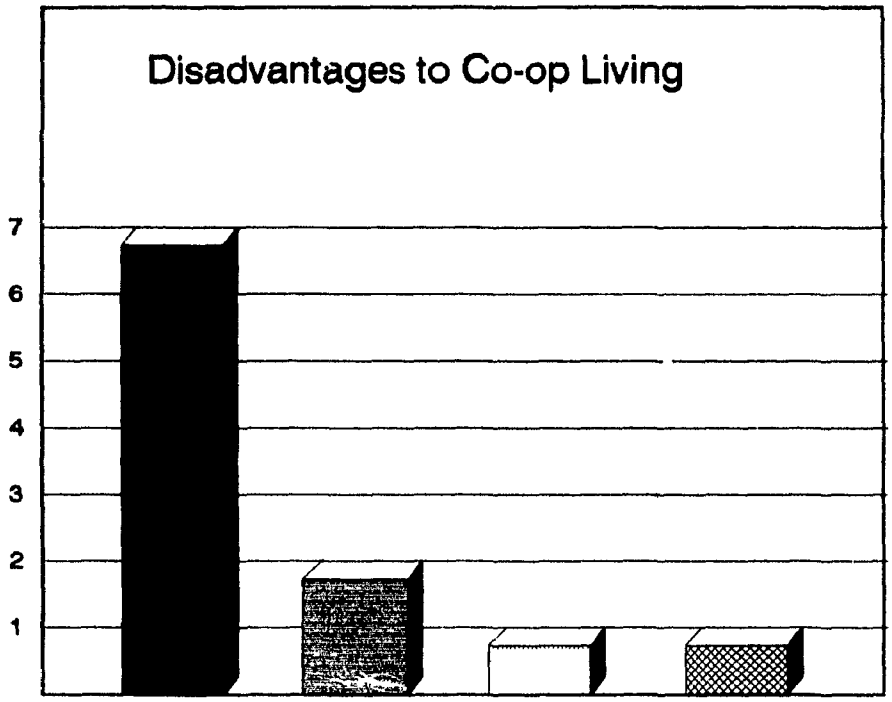
Figure 4.10



Source Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

Advantage cited	Frequence
Inexpensive	(8)
Good quality housing	(5)
Less isolated	(2)
Sense of community	(1)
Skill development	(1)

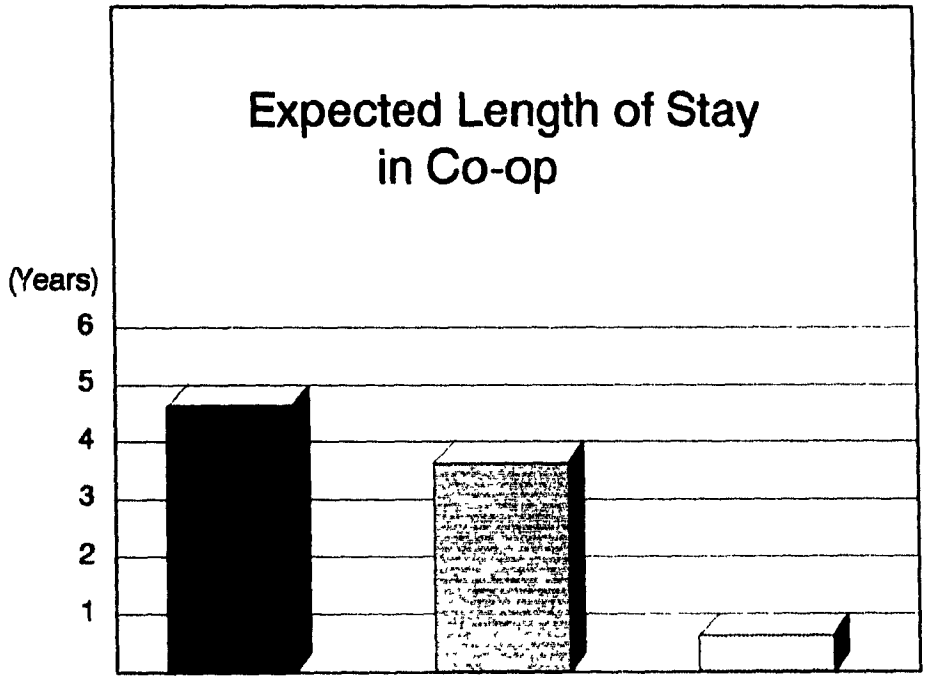
Figure 4.11



Source: Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

Disadvantage cited	Frequence
Social conflicts	(7)
Responsibilities/time	(2)
Lack of cooperation	(1)
No disadvantages	(1)

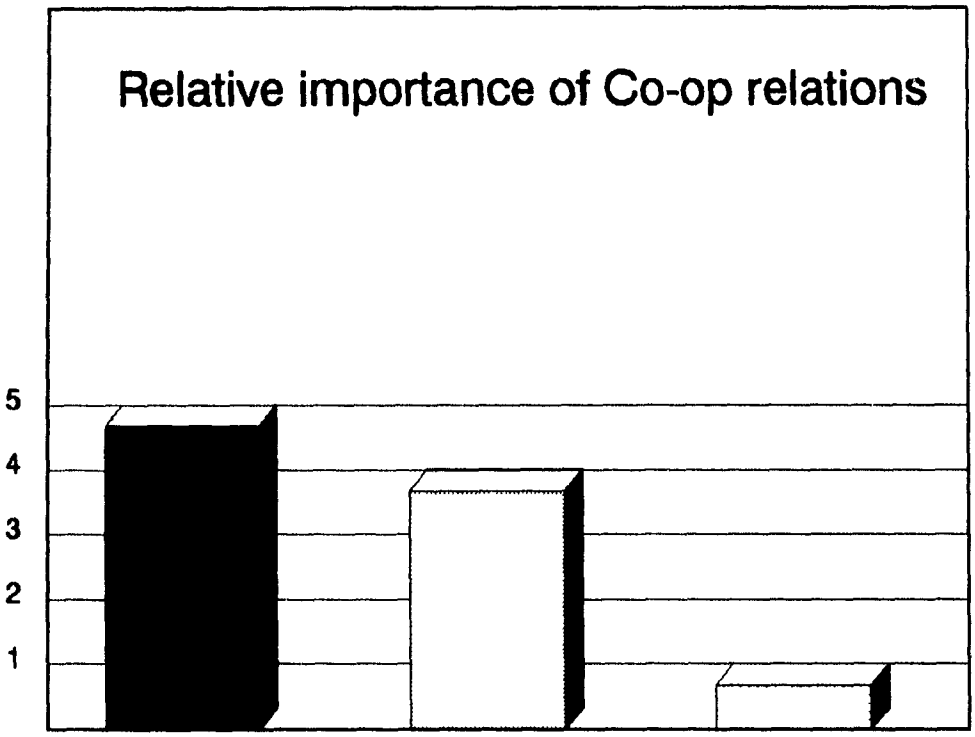
Figure 4.12



Source: Fil d'Ariane Co op 1990

Time period	Frequence
A "Few more years"	(5)
A "Very long time"	(4)
No information	(1)

Figure 4.13



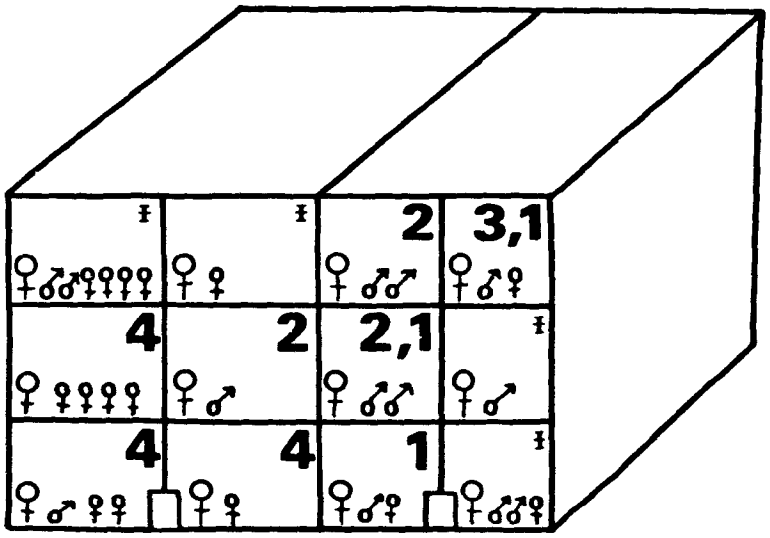
Source: Fil d'Ariane Co-op 1990

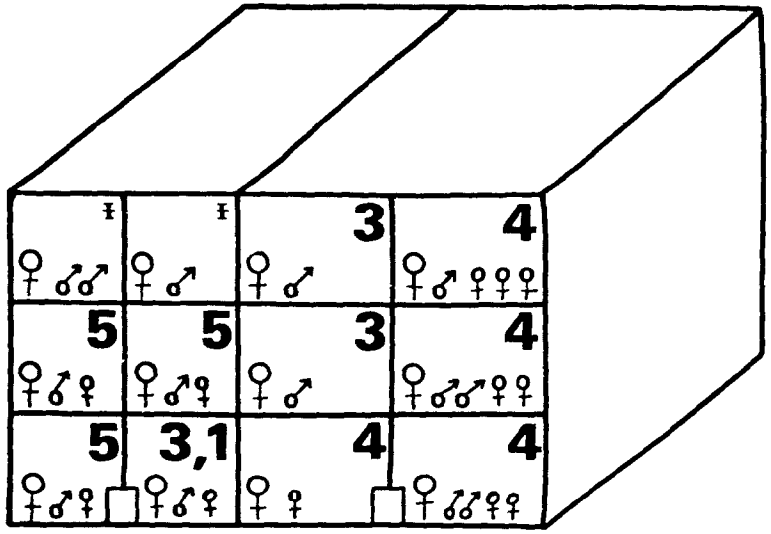
Comment	Number
"Not very important"	(5)
"Very important"	(4)
No information	(1)

Figure 4.14

FIL D'ARIANE HOUSING CO-OP

Links Between Households





HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

♀ Woman

♀ ♂ Children

MUTUAL AID NETWORKS

1 Name of Network

2,3 Household in Two Networks

ǂ No Data

Gisele Yasmeen

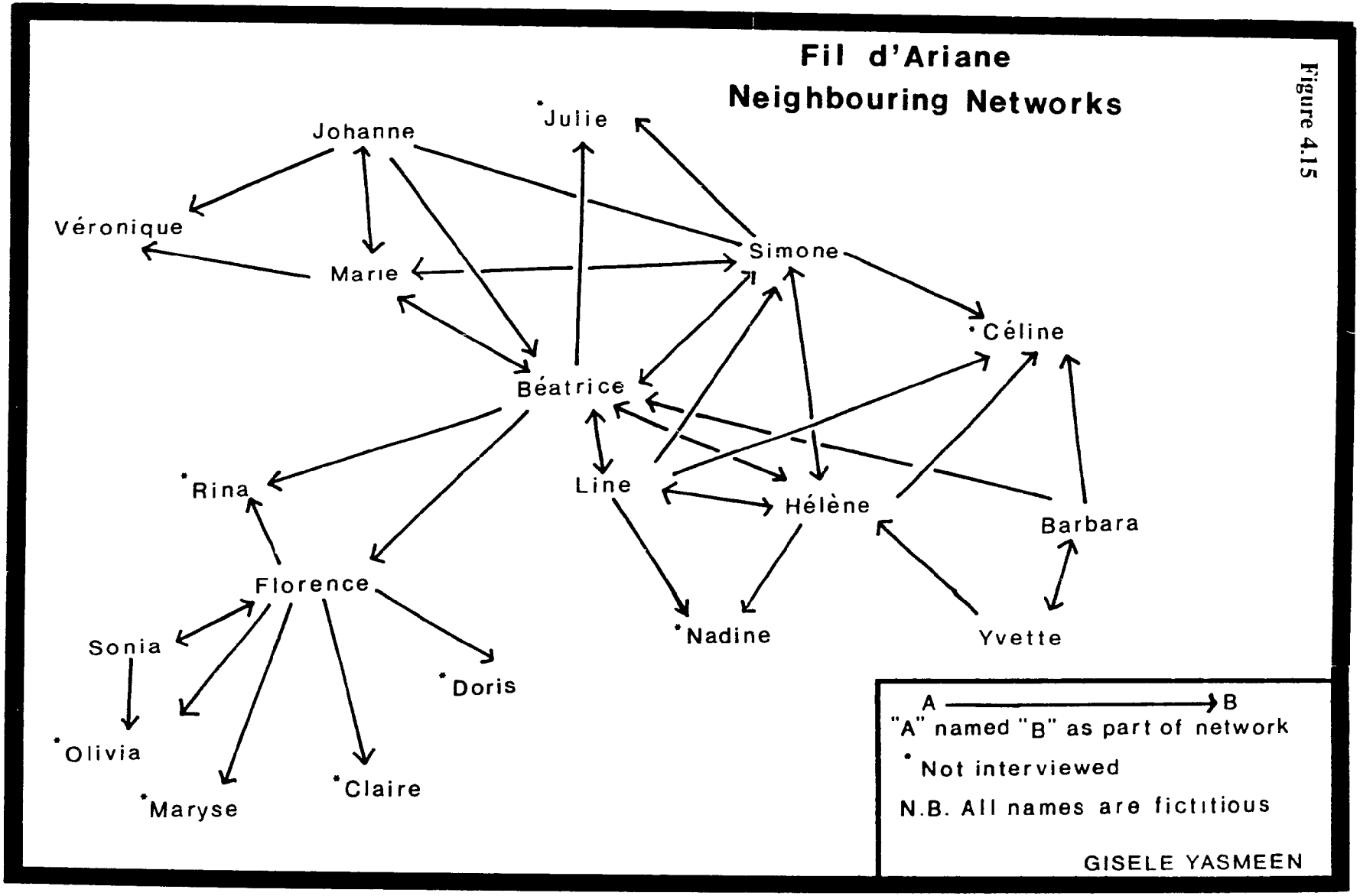

Fil d'Ariane
Neighbouring Networks
Julie
Johanne
Véronique
Simone
Marie
Céline
Béatrice
Rina
Line
Hélène
Barbara
Florence
Nadine
Yvette
Sonia
Doris
Olivia
Claire
Maryse
A → B
"A" named "B" as part of network
Not interviewed
N.B. All names are fictitious
GISELE YASMEEN

Figure 4.15

-Chapter Five-

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter will apply the concepts of conflict and co-operation to the two case studies: Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane housing co-ops. Conflict and co-operation are inherent to any human organisation including co-operatives. Within co-ops, attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, are constantly emerging in an effort to promote individual and group interests. Uncovering these interests and the types of control strategies being exercised is thus a central goal of this research. Finally, the theoretical implications of the analysis will be discussed in the third section of the chapter. This section will deal with the concepts of private and public space, identity and its relation to place and the meaning of 'community' and community development.

5.1 Conflict

The conflicts which divide the members of both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane can be classified under the following rubrics: power struggles, privacy concerns, and inflexible policies and living environments. These conflicts are often obstacles to developing collective identity. Instances of co-operation within both living environments can be classified as security, companionship, and various economic benefits. The greatest advantage of living in both environments, I shall argue, is the pedagogic nature of both co-ops; members not only learn skills necessary for managing a housing project but often develop the outlook and necessary confidence to establish and achieve

objectives pertaining to their personal development.

Power struggles

Like all human organisations, housing co-operatives are the sites of power struggles between individuals and groups of individuals. Both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane have rich and varied political lives; struggles for control manifest themselves in different ways. Many members interviewed openly communicated their perceptions of power distribution within the co-op while others merely alluded to these issues. I was also able to observe interaction between members at general meetings which permitted me to identify interaction related to the decision making process and group dynamics.

Tournesoleil

At Tournesoleil, despite the fact that the co-op has no official executive but rather a committee-based system of organisation, certain members seem to exert more influence on decision making than others. This is no doubt due to less-involved members having greater family responsibilities and less time, the timidity of certain residents, lack of communication skills and, of course, apathy. Members with small children at home are less mobile and can have difficulty attending meetings, even if they are held next door, due to the lack of a babysitter. One woman, for example, has an autistic child and for this reason has trouble obtaining childcare and feels uncomfortable about taking her daughter to co-op meetings because many members

do not understand autism and are sometimes ill at ease with the girl's behaviour.

Others do not voice their opinions at meetings due to shyness in large groups, language difficulties, or lack of familiarity with procedures at meetings no matter how informal they may be. Those who are quiet during meetings however, are often quite active 'behind-the-scenes', sorting correspondence, doing accounting work or assisting with maintenance.

Groups of friends, relatives and 'friendly' neighbours tend to congregate in the same committees and share similar opinions about the co-op and its management and form sub-groups within the co-op. Certain sub-groups are considered overly influential by members of other sub-groups. Many members mentioned there were certain 'cliques' that controlled the affairs of the co-op and this was viewed as unfair to the others. These so-called cliques are often composed of siblings, old school friends and their partners which appear to function as 'neo-extended families'. The most powerful sub-groups are those whose members have been living in the co-op a relatively long time compared to other members. Those who are excluded from these tight-knit groups whose members are more familiar with the co-op and its affairs may feel dis-empowered.

Conflicts have arisen and been aggravated by issues such as the 'need' for repairs in a given person's dwelling, persons being accused of not doing their fair share of co-op work, making too much noise and destroying property and, finally, discrimination due to being 'different' in terms of sexual orientation or social class. A few members perceived themselves as victims of exclusion and sometimes even

hostility as a result of these interpersonal conflicts. Group boundaries, often based on perceptions of 'otherness' - in terms of class and sexuality - are important aspects of Tournesoleil's political life. One woman claimed to speak a higher 'level of language' than other co-op members (ie. 'better' French), due to her identification with a certain social class.[1] Similarly, one woman in the co-op felt that she was socially excluded from the co-op because of her sexual orientation which is different from those who 'control' the affairs of the co-op.

Despite some of the problems facing Tournesoleil, most members state that they are very happy living there. The fact that the co-op opened in 1982 means that many tensions which presented themselves in the first few years of co-op existence have been. The only major problems the co-op now has to confront, occasional power struggles aside, are related to building maintenance. The triplexes were built in the late 19th century and, despite being renovated, sometimes require major work, especially in terms of electrical wiring and plumbing. Determining whose dwellings are most in need of repair at a given time is therefore potentially conflictual because of varying definitions of what is 'necessary'. The needs of the individual in terms of dwelling space have to be balanced with the financial capacities of the co-op as a whole.

Fil d'Ariane

Fil d'Ariane, on the other hand, is ridden with internal conflicts, largely due to its youth. I undertook most interviews in the summer and fall of 1988, not quite a year

after the co-op opened. Although the units were ready for occupation at this time, the immediate vicinity of the co-op was still under construction one year later; the road was not yet paved, grass had just been planted and required a lot of daily attention, the street was not properly lit making women afraid to walk after dark and the large shopping mall across a small field was still under construction. Many women hoped to get jobs at the mall and looked forward to the landscaping of a park on the field behind the mall for the use of themselves and their children.

A few conflicts arose directly from this chaotic neighbourhood situation. The steps and hallways of the buildings were forever needing cleaning because dirt and mud were being tracked in by the children from the unpaved road and unlandscaped surroundings. When some people didn't cooperate in the maintenance of these collective areas, conflicts developed. Tensions also developed when certain members did not do their 'fair share' when it came to watering the newly sown lawn.

Power struggles were, therefore, taking place between those invested with the authority of managing the co-op (ie. the executive members), and the remaining members. Those who did not get involved in performing tasks related to 'domesticating' the co-ops immediate surroundings were accused of not doing their share of the work. Certain members considered it a priority to maintain a high level of order in a disheveled environment. One woman remarked how she thought it ridiculous that so much rivalry had developed a lawn; an issue she considered unimportant.[2]

Power struggles were therefore <u>spatially</u> based since they involved disputes

over how to intervene in the co-op environment (in particular, lobbies, stairways and yards), the determination of priorities concerning the maintenance of these areas, and the organization of co-op labour to perform various tasks in these spaces.

It is perhaps not a co-incidence that members who most meticulously considered maintenance and aesthetics of the co-op environment a priority are those who want to make Fil d'Ariane their long-term home. These women have a vested interest in the maintenance of a quality home environment for themselves and their children. Many women in the co-op, however, intend to move out of the co-op as soon as financially possible. Many would like to purchase private property or move back to a more familiar neighbourhood. For these women, the condition of hallways and landscaping the adjacent yards are minor details in the trajectory of their lives. In addition, women who were full-time homemakers were also those who placed much more importance on the maintenance and improvement of the co-op in general and of collective spaces in particular. These women spend practically all of their time in the co-op and seem to want to control and domesticate their private space and shared spaces.

The ethnic composition of Fil d'Ariane has also been elicited by some members of Fil d'Ariane as problematic. One haitian woman interviewed stated that although overt instances of 'racism' were rare, the haitian women were 'subtly' rejected by the other residents. She mentioned that the haitian women were accused of being vain. She stated accusations were made because the haitian women have nice clothing and care for their appearance. It was stated that haitian women tend

to know how to find a good bargain and often sew their own clothes. One does not necessarily have to spend very much money to obtain nice clothing.

Working 'under the table' has also been blamed on the haitian women and is connected to a broader set of concerns. From one perspective, undeclared revenue is a form of fraud and therefore wrong. From another perspective, to paraphrase one member, "So what if a woman goes to clean another woman's house in Outremont to make some extra money? In fact, good for her. Who can raise a family decently on welfare?". Opinions on what is right or wrong in such a case is disputed. Of greater importance however is the fact that certain members of the co-op wish to control the 'illicit' activities of other members.

The struggle to control other members is manifested spatially. One woman stated that haitian women were being observed by some members when they left and entered their homes in an effort to try and 'prove' who was working illegally. This surveillance was considered to be an infringement on privacy.

Surveillance is related to other privacy issues. Monitoring the presence of men in the co-op is particularly contentious. Some women, especially those of haitian origin, have been accused of having 'live-in' boyfriends. This is considered wrong by some since the co-op is officially reserved for single-parents. Some fear that certain women are taking advantage of the 'rent-geared-to-income' feature of the co-op by declaring only one income (ie. the woman's) and in fact living as a married couple. Some of these women feel that 'transgressors' should be exposed and stopped or evicted from the co-op. Others view such questions as private matters. In the words

of one member, "Who do some of these people think they are, the police?". From either perspective there are questions related to the definition of what type of behaviour constitutes 'living-together'. When do 'visitors' become permanent members of a household? This makes any policy regarding house-guests potentially contentious.

Other 'problems' have been blamed on the Haitian women, according to some members. For example, the fact that the Haitian women speak Creole among themselves at co-op meetings is considered 'improper' by some. Since these women do know how to speak French, the language of the majority, it is thought that they should speak French among themselves at meetings. From another perspective, the haitian women always speak Creole among themselves. When people are accustomed to speaking a certain language with one another, switching to another language may seem contrived and unnecessary, if not ridiculous. Certain non-haitian members, however, want linguistic conformity at meetings so that everyone can understand, even if a discussion is informal and private. There is a desire to control the activities of non-conforming members (ie. the Haitians) within a certain organizational and spatial context; that is, at general co-op meetings held in the 'community-room'.

Childrearing practices have also been the object of power struggles and are related to the ethnic duality of the co-op. The Haitian women have been identified as being 'too-strict' with their children by not allowing them to go outside and yet are 'too liberal' with corporal forms of punishment. Childrearing is usually considered

the sovereign 'domain' of the family and the mother in particular. For women whose role is solidly grounded in that of homemaker and mother, any encroachment on their sovereignty in childrearing matters by friends, neighbours, or local authorities is often viewed with contempt (see Dyck 1989). In a co-op however, where the boundaries between neighbours are altered, maternal sovereignty in childrearing matters is perhaps challenged. Is this example of conflict an indication of a more collective view of childrearing? Feminists have advocated a greater socialisation of domestic work, particularly the time and energy consuming work of childrearing (Hayden 1981 and 1984) in order to permit women to participate more fully in society. At Fil d'Ariane we see members trying to control the manner in which other people's children are raised; when this collective intervention is unsolicited, it is met with resistance by mothers.

The haitian women at Fil d'Ariane did not know one another prior to moving into the co-op. They have come to know one another and now form a distinctive block within the co-op due to a common language, shared customs and the fact that they occupy the better part of two 'blocks'. They have also been viewed and treated as 'other' by some non-haitians. Differences between haitians and non-haitians have been reinforced and sometimes created. Generalisations based on ethnicity have created greater cleavages than were perhaps necessary.

Only one member of Fil d'Ariane mentioned both haitian and non-haitian women in her network of social relations within the co-op. This woman can be viewed as a 'bridge' between the two ethnic groups. The two children of mixed

'québecois' and haitian heritage are also potential bridgepersons who could play a strategic role in the forging of a collective identity within the co-op.

Privacy

Many members interviewed in both co-ops cited 'lack of privacy' as one of the main disadvantages of co-operative living. Unfortunately, the issue of privacy is often mentioned in co-op studies but is not often specifically analysed. This discussion is an attempt to fill that need.

If one defines privacy as "the control of unwanted interaction" (Rappoport 1981, 296) it is the process of identifying with whom one does not want to associate and distancing those persons both spatially and socially. Given this definition, several theoretical and substantive points can be made about the nature of privacy within co-operatives in general and both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane in particular.

By definition, a housing co-operative is collectively owned and managed. As the member of a co-op one will meet and interact formally with other members at meetings where decisions are made. This interaction may lead to the development of pleasant, supportive relationships. The potential for the development of unpleasant, unsupportive (or counter-supportive) relationships also exists. Even within supportive relationships, there are times when one party does not wish to interact with the other member of the relationship. The question then is how to a) reduce the potential for negative relationships and b) create the conditions necessary for individuals to avoid unwanted interaction.

In terms of reducing the potential for the development of harmful relationships and resolving conflicts, many co-ops have held workshops on how to conduct meetings effectively, undertake committee work, elicit member participation and foster 'good neighbouring'. Professionals and resource group employees are usually identified as those who can help educate co-op members in these matters by applying principles of psychology, sociology and management theory to a particular housing environment. Co-operative education is therefore an important aspect of inducing co-operation between members.

It is unrealistic, of course, to expect any human organization to be devoid of conflicts no matter how aware its members are of co-operativism. Personality conflicts and power struggles are a part of everyday human existence. The question is how to enable people to control unwanted and unnecessary social interaction. Co-op members cannot completely ignore one another completely for they must work together or else the housing is mis-managed. Co-op meeting spaces, soundproofing, 'view-proofing' and the use of interaction 'filters' such as (security buzzers, peep-holes and telephones) become paramount features in highly interactive living environments such as housing co-operatives. Both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane make use of one or more of the above mentioned features.

A common room is considered an asset for housing co-operatives because it can be a meeting place, serve a recreational function and if designed flexibly can be used to provided needed services to members, such as daycare. Fil d'Ariane has a 'community' or common room in a basement where it holds meetings, parties and

where office work can take place (there is a telephone, typewriter and filing cabinet). Tournesoleil does not have such a room. The only common area in the co-op is the backyard, which can obviously not be used most of the year due to Montreal's inhospitable winter.

Members of Tournesoleil, lacking a common room, have general meetings in one another's homes. In addition to reducing the potential for members to control who enters their abode, hosting a meeting involves a lot of work such as cleaning-up both before and after and preparing refreshments. The hostess of the meeting I attended spent much of her time back and forth to fetch supplies such as coffee. Members of Fil d'Ariane therefore have a distinct advantage over residents of Tournesoleil since they have greater control over who can enter their homes. The work required to host meetings can be more easily delegated since they are always held in 'neutral territory' where all members have equal access.

Unwanted interaction in the form of noise is also a problem in both co-ops. This was a problem mentioned by members of Tournesoleil, especially with regard to one particular family which was identified as having a particularly rowdy youngster. Sometimes even proper soundproofing is not enough to filter out excessive noise. A noise control policy is of crucial importance in any living environment, given adequate soundproofing but is of particular importance in a co-op where members must officially regulate themselves as a group.

In Fil d'Ariane, the walk-up architectural design of the co-op is conducive to noise generation since six households share the same general entranceway and

staircase. The noise made by the access doors closing is so acute in the summer that they are often kept permanently open during the day, despite potential security problems. The activities of children in the summertime should have been kept in mind when designing collective entranceways. Policies on 'noise management' should be an important aspect of a co-operative's decision-making structure and process.

'View-proofing' is an issue which, although not often discussed in the literature, arose when I questioned members of both co-ops. The issue of the visibility of movement to and from one's apartment is not an important issue in Tournesoleil but is definitely of concern to members of Fil d'Ariane. This is directly related to the design of both co-ops. The units of Tournesoleil all have private entranceways, typical of Montreal's triplexes. An eight-year old child living in the co-op told me that her favourite aspect of Tournesoleil was that her family now had its very own door. Private entranceways reduce noise and therefore visibility of those entering and leaving a dwelling. In Fil d'Ariane, on the other hand, the issue of surveillance is of prime importance to many members. The walk-up design means that neighbours are obliged to cross one another's paths more often and hear each other enter and leave. Of course, the fact that the co-op is officially a single-parent venture and is inhabited mostly by women who are at home with small children also explains the high level of surveillance between residents.

Interaction 'filters' are also of great importance for the control of social interaction, whether wanted or unwanted. The telephone, of course, has probably become the most important technological device for average individuals to screen out

potential visitors by either refusing to see the caller or not even answering the phone. The telephone answering machine has further enhanced this screening role and new developments in communication technology (such as flashing the incoming caller's phone number on a screen, or programming the phone not to accept calls from a certain number) are all intended to filter out unwanted interaction. Telephones are used as a medium of communication between co-op members and are also used to inquire about the possibility of face-to-face interaction. Members who are on 'good-terms' often drop-by informally at one another's homes, but for many members, prior permission to visit obtained over the telephone is the best way to maintain privacy.

Tournesoleil does not have security buzzers or peep holes since entranceways are private (each dwelling has a doorbell) and doors have windows allowing the occupant to see who is outside. Fil d'Ariane has security buzzers which allow residents to find out who it is that wishes to see them.

Managment policies

The issue of flexible membership policy is not of particular concern to Tournesoleil co-op. Tournesoleil admits members regardless of household competition and gender rather than being exclusively for one clientèle although it does stipulate that two-thirds of its members must be women. In terms of design, the design of units with the typical Montreal "pièce-double", or double living-room, offer flexibility in that rooms are suitable as living rooms, offices, or children's bedrooms (see floor plan).

The situation at Fil d'Ariane is quite different. As was previously mentioned,

the co-op only admits lone-parent families. This poses a problem for co-op members on several levels. Women who have lovers are subject to surveillance because of the possibility that they may not be de facto single parents and 'cheating' the co-op.

The fact that the co-op is exclusively for one household type poses problems for Fil d'Ariane in the long term. Single-parenthood is for some a transitory, rather than permanent, condition. Women who have separated or divorced sometimes find another partner. In principle then, if a member of Tournesoleil wants to live with a partner, she must leave Tournesoleil. This puts residents in a potential dilemma; moving and uprooting themselves and their children once more (not to mention the expense involved) or abandoning the idea of beginning a domestic life with a new partner. Similarly, once a woman's children have left the home, she must also quit the co-op.

Members of Fil d'Ariane are already suffering from having been uprooted several times prior to moving into the co-op. The phenomenon of uprootedness and the resulting lack of identification with the co-op and neighbourhood (which is itself in a state of chaos) is already a source of conflict. The potential long-term problems associated with an inflexible policy reserving the co-op for single-parents could aggravate conflict and inhibit the development of group identity and the community development process. Such a policy does not conform to the dynamics of the human life-cycle which naturally involves changes in household composition.

5.2 Co-operation

Exchanges of goods and services

Members of both co-ops exchange goods and services on an informal basis with other residents of the co-op. Babysitting, either on a regular or sporadic basis, is exchanged by residents, as are meals, books, household items and labour (painting, renovations, maintenance etc.). Information on community events, jobs, and other local knowledge is also circulated between residents.

In both co-ops there are a few interesting examples of 'extended family' type situations developing between members of two or more households whereby circulation takes place very freely between dwellings, meals are often shared, leisure time is spent together and so on. Although intense exchange is usually related to the emotional closeness of the parties involved it is not necessarily so. There are plenty examples of mutual aid between co-op residents during a crisis, such as following a spouse's death, the serious injury of a resident in an accident, or major surgery. In such instances, those with cars have acted as 'community chauffeurs', residents have aided each other with housework such as cooking, cleaning and laundry, and children have been welcomed into the homes of neighbours. There are also regular, important exchanges taking place between households with shared economic, but not necessarily emotional/psychological, interests. For example, clothing 'pipelines' have developed between co-op families with young children.

Security and companionship

Another important benefit associated with living in a housing co-operative according to members interviewed was the social integration experienced by residents. The security of 'knowing' one's neighbours, companionship, and feeling less isolated were frequently mentioned by members. Getting together with co-op neighbours for the occasional 'cup of coffee' was the expression most often used by members to describe the nature of their relations with other co-op residents with whom they felt 'close'. For others, their best and often life-long friends live in the co-op. This, however, is an unusual situation in both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane. For the most part, residents have 'good neighbours' but not necessarily their best friends in the co-op and many state they are quite content with such a situation. This evidence points to importance and strength of 'weak ties' for the exchange of goods, services and emotional support (Boissevain 1968; Granovetter 1973). Adequate levels of social support seems to be related to having many acquaintances, who are not intimate friends. Women, who are traditionally, more home bound than men develop such acquaintances close to home. Housing co-ops are a good environment for the development of acquaintenances. As evidenced in the two case studies, with a few exceptions, members of both co-ops maintain their closest social ties with people outside the co-op. They do, however, obtain goods, services and support from their co-op neighbours and are particularly comforted by the fact that in times of emergency they can call on them. Building trust between co-op residents, therefore , should be a priority for women's housing

co-operatives.

Learning environment

Authours on the subject of housing co-ops have often mentioned the pedagogic nature of co-operative living; members learn how to work with others and develop various skills related to co-op management and maintenance. This definitely holds true for both Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane where member are directly involved in making and executing decisions related to both living environments.

There is another pedagogic issue, however, that is particular to both these co-ops which house mostly women and their families and which have involved committed feminists. The co-op environment with its various social and economic benefits, has facilitated a major shift in life 'trajectories', especially those of middle-aged women who have children. Many of these women have rooted their adult identities in their primary roles of mother and housewife. They view the move to the co-op as an opportunity to develop themselves due to an increased disposable income, adequate living space, a supportive social milieu and the fact that they can control their living space to a much greater extent than in the private rental market. Residential stability is directly related to improvement in quality of life for recently separated lone-mothers (see Mondor 1989). Most of the women I talked to were involved in some type of self-improvement activity (training or schooling) or were working outside the home for the first time in many years. In essence, the co-op itself, the work it entails, and the interaction it promotes between members but also between members and the

'outside world' (architects, resource groups, etc.) have all contributed the enlargening of the scope of possibilities for many of these women who formerly saw themselves as 'nothing but mothers and housewives'.

In principle, housing co-ops are neighbourhood organisations that aim to promote local control and community development. The pedagogy associated with co-ops corresponds to the notion 'humanistic pedagogy' which is "concerned with the development of humanistic territorial consciousness (Hasson 1985, 337). Co-operativism also envisages a transformation of society; its relations of production and consumption. Social awareness combined with self-growth and actualisation are both pedagogic aspects of co-operative living. As a result of the stability, skill development and social support gained by living in Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane, members have embarked upon a process of self-actualisation but it is as yet unclear whether awareness of the social project of co-operation is being appropriated by members.

5.3 Theoretical issues

The preceding discussion of conflict and co-operation between members of both case studies sheds light on several issues related to feminist urban theory: 'private' versus 'public' space; the 'stucturation' of identity and its relation to place; and, the meaning of 'community' and community development.

Private and Public Space

Gender sensitive views of the city often touch upon the issues of private versus public

space and tend to encourage a 'blurring' of the boundaries between these two domains (Hayden 1984, Wekerle 1981 and 1988). Feminist urbanists often promote the creation of semi-public (or semi-private) places, such as community dining clubs, co-operative nurseries and courtyards, to accommodate the needs of women and families. Such spaces promote the collectivisation of domestic work, making it possible for mothers to participate as full members of society.

Distinction between a private and public place is usually based upon the use of a particular place. If a place, such as a shopping mall, is open to the public, it is considered a public place, even though it might be privately-owned property. Conversely, publicly-owned property, such as the residence of the Prime Minister, is not necessarily a public place. Use, therefore, does not necessarily correspond to ownership. This discrepancy between use and ownership is precisely because, in contemporary capitalist society, users of space are not customarily the owners of those spaces. A housing co-operative, however, redresses this discrepancy because the users, or residents, of the co-op are by definition its owners.

With reference to the semi-public places, the question then becomes, "Who owns such spaces and who has access to them?". Also, who determines the 'rules' or 'social code' regulating the use of these spaces; who enforces the regulations? In the context of a housing co-operative, property is private in the legal sense but collectively owned and managed by the member-owners. Within the co-operative itself, there are varying degrees of access to certain places: members presumably have greatest control over their dwellings. As we have seen from the two case

studies, however, control over space is shared and must be constantly re-negotiated. For instance, repairs and renovations to individual units must meet the approval of the co-op as a whole. Certain changes can and are made at the occupants discretion but are therefore at the owners expense if the rest of the co-op considers such changes to be unnecessary. Conflicting views over what is or is not necessary can lead to tensions between members. Resolving these conflicts would ideally be the result of a consensus between all members, but, struggles for power between co-op sub-groups is always a 'threat' to the achievement of consensus. To strive toward consensus decision making involves a struggle to develop collective identity for co-op members as a whole.

Secondly, there are places within the co-op that are used and maintained by all co-op members, at least in principle (examples are yards, stairwells, and common rooms). These places have been the sites of conflict in both case studies. In terms of ownership, these places are private. In terms of use, they are for the use of co-op members and their guests. Unfamiliar visitors are viewed with suspicion because of their potential to harm co-op residents. Within a housing co-operative then, what potential semi-public places could be created? Is this feasible?

Identity and place

Human beings do not interact independent of place. Self-identity is based on a complex interplay of activities and events which take place in and through space. There is therefore a recursive relationship between human beings (and all living

creatures) and the environment (Kobayashi 1989).

Throughout one's life, one attributes meanings to the various places one has experienced. The home environment and the neighbourhood, for many people, is a very meaningful and emotionally charged space. The term 'home' itself is a term which implies a strong sense of identity with a specific dwelling, neighbourhood and/or city.

Despite the fact that we live in a mobile society, moving to another dwelling is an experience which involves physical and psychological trauma. Like the plant which is uprooted and replanted, people require time and energy to adjust to new and unfamiliar surroundings. Moving into a housing co-operative is, therefore, a 'disturbing' experience and the establishment of a new co-operative is, consequently, even more traumatic. In the case of Fil d'Ariane, which is a newly built housing co-op surrounded by other newly built housing projects in a newly developed sub-division, stress levels must be very high. Unfortunately, most people do not recognize the stress generated by people living in a newly created, chaotic environment. To aggravate the situation, members from two distinct ethnic groups, namely 'native' french-speaking Quebecers and recent Haitian immigrants, are sharing this newly emergent subdivision and are surrounded by more well-established and comparatively wealthy Italian-Canadian families who own their own single-family homes. There is obviously much fuel for potential conflict in this neighbourhood until the environment is 'domesticated', residential attachments are developed and patterns of interaction emerge.

The development of an attachment to and identification with a residential place requires that people remain there long enough to do so. Commitment to a place involves an investment of both time and energy. When residents are obliged to move following a change in household composition or in the lifecycle, as is the case with Fil d'Ariane, attachment to home and neighbourhood is threatened. The co-op members who were most committed to the maintenance and improvement of the co-op were those who intended to stay there indefinitely. These women will also be forced to relocate after their children eventually leave home unless the co-op develops a more flexible policy.

For upwardly mobile co-op residents, rent-geared-to-income is an incentive to leave the co-op and invest in private property. This is the intention of many residents of Tournesoleil who envisage the possibility of buying their own homes in the near future. Without a fairly stable residential population, residential attachment - and resulting investments of time, energy and money toward maintaining and improving the quality of home and neighbourhood life - is crippled at worst, and seriously threatened at the very least.

'Community' and Community Development

We hear the word 'community' mentioned in very different contexts today: the European Community, the Montreal Urban Community (M.U.C.) or the Academic community. We often refer to various ethnic groups as communities or refer to individual neighbourhoods as communities. What then <u>is</u> community?

The term community is frequently used but is not ill-defined. The concept has a geographical connotation because it refers to specific places, albeit at various scales, such as the 12 states of the EC or the jurisdiction of the M.U.C. The term signifies more than this. As illustrated by the phrases Academic community or Italian community, there is the implication of shared interests or identity in this concept. Both place and identity, then, are important defining elements of community.

Housing co-operatives have been identified as organisations that foster the development of a sense of community and, consequently, promote local economic development through increased collective effort. Both co-ops, as we have seen, are the sites of conflict and co-operation to varying degrees. Co-operation is the manifestation of the perception of shared interests, whereas conflict reflects cleavages of interests and identities.

Tournesoleil's conflicts, relative to those experienced by the members of Fil d'Ariane, are quite minor. This is no doubt due to Tournesoleil's longer duration, the fact that it is located in a neighbourhood with a well developed sense of identity that contains many services, and the fact that the co-op is relatively culturally homogeneous.[3] Tournesoleil is generally composed of Québecois urbanites who are fairly well educated and who nearly all have French as their mother tongue.

The situation at Fil d'Ariane is an excellent case in the study of cultural politics. As was mentioned, many 'differences' between Haitians and non-Haitians have been constructed. It is nonetheless very difficult, if not impossible, for members of one ethno-cultural group to 'integrate' with another without some trauma and

conflict. With time, however, these 'differences' tend to lessen, shared experiences and identities develop, and members of formerly 'strange' backgrounds are no longer considered 'other'.

The community development process is one that necessarily implies a sense of community, or belonging. This 'belonging' is based on the perception of a shared identity and shared interests. For the women of both co-ops, conflicts arise as a result of power struggles often related to the management of collective spaces and the control of interaction within those spaces. Conflict can, however, be viewed as socially beneficial rather than destructive. Conflict is " a form of social interaction, defining and cementing group boundaries" (Jackson and Smith 1984, 206). If properly 'harnessed,' conflicts may have beneficial outcomes for co-op residents and the quality of neighbourhood life. A conflict, or crisis situation, can be viewed as a 'dangerous opportunity' in which new group identities can be forged -- potentially uniting all co-op residents.[4]

NOTES

1. This woman stated she was from a part of Quebec where people speak 'proper' French and that she had problems communicating with other members of the co-op who speak 'improper' French.

2. It is interesting to note than lawns are an important aspect of middle class suburban landscaping. A well manicured lawn is often considered a symbol of achievement which is displayed to the public rather than used extensively by household members.

3. I define 'culture' as a system of shared meanings in this context (Jackson and Smith 1984, 205).

4. The chinese character depicting the idea of 'crisis' is a combination of the ideograms for 'danger' and 'opportunity'.

-Chapter Six-

CONCLUSION

This thesis has analyzed the social interaction and related 'spatial micropolitics' within two feminist-inspired housing co-operatives in Montreal. Both co-ops were initiated by individuals and/or organisations aligned with the women's movement. Both co-ops adhere to some of the design principles cherished by feminists such as the integration of children's play space, designing for security, and the promotion of egalitarian social relations. The co-ops differ significantly from one another in terms of their age, location, membership, organisational structure and admission policies. The co-ops also differ in terms of the type of co-operation and conflict exhibited between residents.

Chapter One introduced the specific aims of the study and explained my philosophical orientation, methodology and precise research questions. Chapter Two reviewed the relevant literature which guided the research. Studies of the co-operative movement and the evolution of housing co-operatives internationally and in Quebec formed the first part of the chapter. The literature on women and the urban environment and on women and housing co-operatives was then reviewed. Chapters Three and Four introduced the two case studies, Tournesoleil and Fil d'Ariane housing co-operatives, and Chapter Five was a comparative analysis of both co-ops with respect to my specific research questions.

The central purpose of the study was to employ the analytical tool of 'social network' to the two case studies from an interactionist perspective. Patterns of

interaction between residents were depicted graphically and verbally and later analyzed using the concept of control, especially as it relates to space. More specifically, the notions of surveillance, privacy and 'otherness', were particularly useful for explaining power struggles within the co-op -- especially those struggles which revolve around the control of interaction within specific spaces in both co-ops.

Many instances of co-operation were also described. Goods and services, security and companionship, as well as information are all circulated between members. It was argued that the pedagogic benefits of living in both co-op environments are of pivotal importance to members by providing them with the necessary skills, stability and confidence to alter their life trajectories.

Issues of theoretical importance, such as the creation of private and public spaces, identity and its relation to place and finally the meaning of 'community and community development' were discussed in relation to the empirical findings of this research. It was concluded that in spite of the fact that co-op members own, use and therefore collectively control their living space, there are nonetheless varying degrees of 'privacy' within co-ops. Conflicts have arisen over how to control the private spaces (ie. individual dwellings) and collective co-op spaces within both case studies.

It was argued that identity is closely linked with habitat. Developing an identity with a place is often related to the length of time one has lived there. The commitment to improve a neighbourhood, then, is directly related the stability

of the residential population. 'Community' is therefore a place-bound concept related to the perception of shared interests and identities. The process of community development is intimately tied to the development of group identity within a specific spatial context. If a housing co-op is viewed as a 'community', identity is a useful concept for the analysis of such a living environment. Conflict and co-operation are both part of the process of identity creation within housing co-ops.

Fil d'Ariane housing co-op was criticised for its inflexible policy which restricts membership exclusively to single-parents. This policy requires members to quit the co-op once they cease to be lone-parents which will lead ultimately to weakened residential stability in the co-op and a lack of collective identity between members. The need for flexibility within feminist-inspired housing co-ops, such as Fil d'Ariane, is necessary for the community building process. Future research should focus on the relationships between women's housing co-ops and their neighbourhoods. The dynamics between co-ops in general and recent economic restructuring also need to be addressed, particularly with respect to then changing nature of women's interaction with the urban environment. Finally, the 'interco-operation' or potential for federation between feminist-inspired housing co-operatives and other democratic 'community' intiatives need to be studied.

APPENDIX

This appendix contains the original interview guide and an english translation. Each interview was divided into four parts. Part one was designed to gather factual data such as occupation, age, number of children and duties performed in the co-op. Part two traced the residential trajectory of the interviewee by asking questions related to the former neighbourhood and its services, former housing type, reasons for move and previous relationships involving mutual aid. Part three dealt with residential satisfaction: the candidate was asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of co-operative living and was asked to foresee her length of stay in the co-op. Finally, part four dealt with social networks within each co-op. Each interviewee was asked to name those members who were part of her 'personal network', that is, other co-op residents with whom she exchanged goods, services, information or emotional support on a regular basis. Members were asked to the describe each relationship in detail by commenting on how and where the initial meeting took place, the meaning of the relationship, types of resources exchanged and, finally, the frequency and locus of interaction.

The interviews were all conducted by myself and usually lasted approximately one hour. Each candidate was interviewed once. With the exception of one interview which took place in the community room of Fil d'Ariane, all candidates were questioned in their homes. In two cases, two residents were interviewed at the same time, the remaining candidates were interviewed by themselves.

I was the person who filled out Forms 1 and 2 while posing questions to the candidates. Observations were recorded in a notebook and later compiled and quantified. I decided not to use a tape-recorder in order to elicit freer responses from the candidates, especially with regard to delicate issues such as power struggles, privacy and complaints about co-op management.

Much information was obtained informally, outside of scheduled interviews, while chatting with members after the interview was 'officially' over or on subsequent visits to the co-op. These valuable tidbits were often the most interesting but, as they were often shared with me 'off the record', it was sometimes difficult to know how to process this information. Likewise, some information about life in the co-ops had to be omitted from my analysis following the wishes of the residents. For ethical considerations, therefore, this thesis sometimes did not deal with certain sensitive questions out of respect to the residents of both co-ops.

Questionnaire

FORMULAIRE 1

PREMIERE PARTIE - Identification

n.b. Les informations personnels (nom, addresse, occupation) demeureront confidentiels, elles sont demandées pour des fins d'analyse seulement.

Nom: _____.

Addresse:_____.

Groupe d'age: 15-25; 26-45; 45-55; 55-65; 65 et plus.

Nombre d'enfants à la maison: _____. Ages des enfants:

_____.

Avez vous un(e) conjoint(e)? oui non

Quelle est votre occupation? _____.

Quel poste occupez-vous dans la co-op? _____.

Commentaires supplémentaires:

DEUXIEME PARTIE - Historique

1. Depuis quand êtes-vous membre/résidente de la coop?

2. Nom du quartier antérieur / type d'appartment (eg. 4½)

3. Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé de chercher un autre logement?

4. Discutez l'accès aux services dans le quartier antérieur versus présent quartier. (distances aux écoles, commerce etc.)

5. Relations avec les voisins dans l'habitat antérieur?

6. Principaux liens d'entraide dans l'ancien quartier?

TROISIEME PARTIE - Satisfaction

1. Pouvez-vous résumé votre expérience dans la coop jusqu'à présent?

2. Quels sont les avantages et les inconvénients de la vie en coopérative?

3. Pensez-vous demeurer longtemps dans cette coopérative?

QUATRIEME PARTIE - Liens d'entraide

1. S.V.P. définir votre 'réseau de sociabilité' dans la coop (liens sociaux et routiniers).

2. Remplir un exemplaire du Formulaire 2 pour chaque relation.

3. Quelle est l'importance de ces relations face à votre vie sociale en générale?

QUATRIEME PARTIE - Liens avec d'autres membres de la cooperative (continué)

FORMULAIRE 2

1. Nom de la répondante:_____. No. d'app:_____.
2. Nom de l'autre résident-e:_____. No. d'app:_____.
3. Comment connaissez vous cette personne?
   Réponses possibles: a) à travers la coop
   b) au travail
   c) à l'école
   d) lien de parenté
   e) mère ou père d'un(e) ami(e) de votre enfant

autre(s) circonstance(s)? Précisez s.v.p.

4. Qu'elle est la nature de votre relation?
   Réponses possibles: a) amitiée intime
   b) compagne/compagnon
   c) voisine seulement

Commentaires:

5. Qu'est-ce que vous échangez de cette personne?
   Réponses possibles: a) des biens (voiture, articles domestiques ...)
   b) des services (garde d'enfants; déclaration d'impôt...)
   c) information (emplois, activités culturels)

Précisez s.v.p.

i. Qu'elle est la fréquence de cette ou ces échange(s)? (par exemple, une fois par semaine/mois/année?)

ii. Où est-ce que vous faites vos échanges? (par exemple, à votre appartement, salle communautaire)

Translation

Questionnaire

PART ONE - Identification

FORM 1

* N.B. Personal information (name, address, occupation) will remain confidential and are asked for analytical purposes only.

Name: _____.

Address:_____.

Age group: 15-25; 26-45; 45-55; 55-65; 65 and over.

Number of children at home: _____. Ages of the children:

---.

Do you have a spouse/partner? yes no

What is your occupation? _____.

What position do you occupy in the co-op? _____.

Supplementary comments:

PART TWO - Housing history

1. Since when have you been a member/resident of the co-op?

2. Name former neighbourhood / type of apartment (eg. 4½)

3. Why did you seek a new place to live?

4. Compare access to services in your former neighbourhood versus your new neighbourhood.

5. What types of relations did you have with your former neighbours?

6. With whom did you engage in mutual aid in your previous setting?

PART THREE - Residential satisfaction

1. Please summarise your experience in the co-op.

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with living in a co-op?

3. How long do you expect to live in this co-op?

PART FOUR - Mutual aid linkages

1. Please list those persons in your personal co-op network (people with whom you have regular contact and meaningful exchanges).

2. One Form 2 filled out per relationship.

3. What is the relative importance of your social relations with other co-op residents with respect to your social life in general?

PART FOUR - Links with other residents of the co-op (cont'd)

FORM 2

1. Name of the respondent: _____. Apt. _____.

2. Name of the other resident: _____. Apt. _____.

3. How did you meet this person?
   Possible answers: a) through the co-op
   b) at work
   c) at school
   d) relative
   e) parent of child's friend
   other circumstances? Please specify.

4. What is the nature of your relationship?
   Possible answers: a) intimate friend
   b) companion
   c) neighbour only
   d) colleague (co-op)
   Comments:

5. What do you exchange with this person?
   Possible answers: a) goods (car, food, domestic tools)
   b) services (babysitting, help with taxes)
   c) information (jobs, cultural events)
   d) emotional support
   Please be specific.

   i. What is the approximate frequency of these exchanges? (for example, once a week/month/year?)

   ii. Where do these exchanges take place? (for example, in your apartment, in the backyard, in the community room)

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