BREAD AND ROSES, SHELTER AND COMMUNITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL SENSE OF COMMUNITY FOR SINGLE MOTHERS IN HOUSING

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Abstract

Bread and Roses, Shelter and Community: Psychological Sense of
Community for Single Mothers in Housing

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The relationship between empowerment and sense of community
was explored by investigating how they are related to the degree of
self-management and problem-solving available in different forms of
housing.   One hundred and one single mothers from public housing,
co-op housing, and private rental units completed the Sense of
Community Index (SCI), the Personal Power (PP) Scale, and the
Masculinity Scale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory.   Analysis of co-
variance indicated sense of community was significantly higher for
co-op residents even when education levels, age, income, length of
residency, expected length of residency and level of participation in
neighbourhood organizations were controlled statistically.
Implications for development of housing forms that facilitate sense
of conmmunity are discussed.

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A news report during the Gulf Crisis in the Fall of 1990 praised efforts of the mothers whose spouses who were away at sea, saying what a tremendous job they were doing as 'single parents'. It is interesting that this kind of praise is seldom directed towards the hundreds of single mothers who face the difficult and demanding task of raising their children on their own--day after day, year after year--without adequate resources or supports. Single mothers not only lack public support but are more likely to be poor. In 1986, in Nova Scotia, nearly 20% of all children lived below the poverty line, and 70% of those children were children of single mothers (Blouin, 1989). They face discrimination since in Nova Scotia a landlord is allowed to refuse to rent to single mothers. When they do find shelter it is usually too expensive and inadequate, or in Public Housing.

A recent study conducted in the United States (Dubrow & Garbarino, 1989) paints a grim picture of violence and fear for mothers and children in public housing. The authors outline possible interventions that include ways for residents to express their feelings about the violence and call for mental health outreach programs sensitive to the effects of trauma. They present the mothers as a group in need of service. As a result, the interventions are designed only around service delivery and not based on self-help.

An alternative is to view the mothers themselves as a resource, one that has been wasted but can be tapped so they can find their own solutions. This would be an example of an

empowering intervention Rappaport (1985) defines as an intervention which communicates to the participants that they have the ability to solve their own problems.

To understand empowering housing options, it is necessary to study the nature of settings and how they develop or inhibit empowerment. Anecdotal reports coming from the co-op housing sector in Canada document successes and advances by women in gaining control over their living environments and their lives. Boberg, Elderfield, Hansen, Lord and Procek (1988), in a paper they presented to the International Co-operative Alliance Housing Committee Conference in Stockholm, state:

> Single parents have found that living in and assuming leadership roles in housing co-operatives enhances their control over their environment and provides security and stability for their families......By taking control of their living environment, these co-operative members acquire an enhanced sense of self-sufficiency, self-worth, responsibility, competence and achievement. These gains and personal growth are especially meaningful to individuals who are financially or otherwise disadvantaged and for whom such opportunities are rare(p.9).

Simon (1986), writing on the leadership roles women play in housing co-ops, suggests exercising the skills necessary for running a co-op, helps women in the job market. Simon describes how volunteering in a co-op, being motivated to gain more control over their lives, often leads women to develop self-confidence and gain leadership skills. In fact, within the co-op sector women have become development experts and occupy more consultant

and management positions than in similar private or government offices (Doyle Farge, 1986 & Simon, 1986).

Since single mothers are a particularly disenfranchised group they are an obvious choice for studies in community development. They have much to gain from an increased sense of community, social support and empowerment. The reported successes of women in housing co-ops may indeed be the result of gains in sense of community and empowerment through the experience of an altered sense of personal power and a belief they can affect change.

Purpose of the Research

To understand empowering housing options, it is necessary to study the quality of the relationship between the individual and their community/environment, and how the structure of certain settings may serve to develop or inhibit empowerment. The following research will begin to examine the possibility that housing co-ops empower those living in them through the exploration of the contextual domain or person-environment interaction. In Women's Housing Projects in Eight Canadian Cities, Wekerle (1988) suggests the costs involved in self-managed housing may be outweighed by the benefits gained in the opportunity to learn new skills and develop competencies in new areas. Her conclusion points to "the lack of research on non-profit housing co-operatives as a new form of social organization" (p.160) and the importance of assessing how self-management is working over the long term. This area of inquiry can be

addressed from an ecological view, asking how social conditions facilitate individual action and development (Heller, 1989).

Rappaport (1987) describes empowerment as "both individual determination over one's own life, and democratic participation in the life of one's community, often through mediating structures such as schools, neighbourhoods, churches, and other voluntary organizations." (p.121) Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman (1986) describe communities which serve to increase the members' sense of influence and responsiveness to their community. According to Heller (1989), while community life is not conflict free, a formal structure does provide a medium through which problems may be addressed, the process of which further strengthens the community.

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between psychological sense of community and empowerment with reference to the degree of self-management and problem-solving available in different forms of housing. Since housing co-ops offer an experience containing both self-management and problem-solving, they could be described as community building. It was predicted that inhabitants of co-ops would show a greater sense of community than those from other forms of housing.

The relationship of empowerment to sense of community was explored through the use of a measure developed to indicate a belief in personal control, the Personal Power scale (O'Neill, Duffy, Enman, Blackmer, Goodwin & Campbell, 1988). Use of the Personal Power Scale in this research investigates how experiencing control

in the living environment may serve to foster a belief in personal control.

The Approach: Incorporating gender sensitivity and substantive theorizing

Logical positivism is defined by Stanley and Wise (1983) as a way of seeing and constructing both the social and physical world as if there was one true and discoverable set of events. Such an approach assumes that a researcher can then find this true reality by maintaining objectivity through distancing themselves from what they study. Wicker (1989) outlines an ecologically oriented approach to research that is offered as an alternative to the logical positivism paradigm. Substantive theorizing incorporates multilevels of analysis to ensure context is represented. It also emphasizes the selection of domain of study and the conceptual/theoretical approaches more than the choice of methodology. He states that the social significance of the domain should take precedence over the conceptual to increase the potential social benefits of the research by gaining new insights into practical issues.

Feminist researchers argue research does not reflect and analyze social context when it ignores how knowledge is context dependent. Kirby and McKenna (1989) state that research done in an uninvolved and objective manner is not able to represent the experience of marginal groups, and that the thinking behind such an approach serves to perpetuate and maintain the status quo rather than offering new insights or understanding. Eichler

(cited in McLaren, 1988) describes how belief systems influence the research process by determining what questions are asked. Such an argument supports the qualitative approach which is more appropriate for subjective experiences and for gaining enough basic knowledge to formulate a hypothesis.

A balance may be struck in the qualitative versus quantitative arguments by incorporating elements of substantive theorizing and feminist theory. The following research attempts to meet the criteria of both by blending subjective experience with the researcher's knowledge gained from working within one sector of the housing market, using this to develop hypotheses. At the same time, this must be grounded in theory. Community psychology, emphasises empowerment within ecological settings (Rappaport, 1987). It offers a theoretical base from which to explore and develop theories on how empowering housing options may influence single mothers. Hence we might empirically demonstrate the link between empowerment and the remarkable successes women (Simon, 1987) seem to be having within the co-op housing sector.

Single Mothers

Single mothers not only lack public support, but as a household configuration are seen as somehow deviant or temporary, despite that 30% remain single (Leavitt, 1985). Walters, Carter, Papp and Silverstein (1988) describe how the single parent family has been pathologized by research that ignores "...such factors as income, lowered standard of living, geographic dislocation, and lack of

child-care facilities, or by not taking into account the critical and pejorative social attitudes that surround the single-parent family..."(p.297). In addition, for those single mothers who have gone through the struggle of improving their situation and building or rebuilding a life for themselves and their families, there is little recognition for their strengths.

A careful examination of the research reveals a stronger link between negative consequences for children and poverty, than between negative consequences and the family structure (Klodawsky, Spector & Rose 1985; MacKillop & Clarke 1989; Nelson, 1989). In other words, poverty and poor living conditions are better predictors of problems for children than membership in a single-parent family. This link to poverty is important since nationally, 41.8% of female single-parent families lived below the poverty line in 1986, and of those, half had incomes that were 50% of the median for the poverty line. It is not surprising then, that low-income separated women show the highest levels of life strains in the area of financial concerns (Nelson, 1989).

Compas and Williams (1990) examined stress, coping and adjustment in mothers and young adolescents in both single and two-parent families. Through a review of literature they concluded that while research supports the short term adverse effects of divorce on children, the long term findings are mixed. It may be that long term adjustment difficulties are more related to ongoing stressors associated with the ways they need to cope in a single parent family (Compas et al, 1990). The results from their research were controlled for income and found no differences in

adjustment or self-reports of problems between the children in single and two-parent families. In the face of such findings, it becomes clear that the long term adjustment of children in single parent families may be more closely linked to the economic stressors and ongoing daily hassles that are more prevalant in those families.

Many single mothers are employed full-time outside the home, and their children are 'latch-key' children. Galambos and Garbarimo (1984) found overall adjustment to be the same in both supervised and unsupervised groups of children in a rural setting. A review of previous research had suggested that unsupervised children experienced more problems. However this research had been carried out in urban areas, and in the light of Galambos and Garbarimo's results new explanations for their difficulties are needed. They suggested the differences between rural and urban areas have more to do with the settings, than the level of supervision.

In addition to the financial strains, single mothers who are employed outside the home experience role overload as they juggle work and home without the support of a partner to share the work, concerns, decisions and joys of parenting. Barry (cited in Campbell & O'Neill, 1985) found that single mothers felt greater responsibility for their children after separation than before. Single mothers were more likely to feel like failures, suffer from loss of self-esteem, and to question their own competence and ability to cope (Schlesinger 1969). Compas and Williams (1990) found the higher rates of stress reported by single mothers do not

seem to affect the children and suggest this is because the single mothers are more protective of their children.

The lack of support single mothers experience for their childrearing may make it difficult for them to feel satisfaction about the job they are doing. Maternal role satisfaction has been linked to self-fulfillment and enhancement of self-esteem in the mother, qualities which help her to be a more sensitive and responsive mother (Lerner & Galambos, 1985). The Lerner and Galambos study found no relation between a child's school adjustment and competence, with the mother's work status, the significant predictor was the mother's comfort or congruence with being a working or a stay-at-home mom. Researchers in a parenting support project designed to intervene in lives of adolescent welfare mothers, found evidence in their follow-up studies to suggest that the program, while designed to support their parenting role, had also positively affected the young mothers in other ways (Hayes, 1987). They were more likely to have realized educational and employment goals and to both plan and limit their family size.

Results from both studies argue for the importance of both the well-being of the mother and the support for her in her parenting role when we are concerned about the future well-being of children. It also suggests that feelings of competence in one very important area, may have a ripple effect of benefits that extend to other areas in their lives.

In considering the special needs of and strains on single parent families, it may be easy to forget that they are not a monolithic

group (Anthony, Weidemann & Chin, 1990). Single mothers may be divorced, separated or never-married. They may differ in income, education, parenting styles and family support (Leavitt, 1985). Their child care needs differ according to the ages of their children. What they do share is a dependence on resources from outside the immediate family unit to obtain the same support a spouse or partner would provide in a two parent family. The availability of these supports can make a single mother's life easier or harder (Saegert, 1985; Wekerle, 1985). The difference community can make in their day to day lives is more marked than in two parent families since they are more reliant on outside supports.

Single Mothers and Housing

Over the past several years there have been several reports documenting a severe housing crisis for single mothers in the Halifax area (Blouin, 1989; Bosma-Donovan & Blouin, 1988; Gillett, 1986). It is not uncommon for single mothers to move themselves and their children several times a year, in the process changing neighbourhoods and schools, while searching for affordable, safe and decent housing. In their search, they experience discrimination because they are single mothers with children, they are on Social Assistance or they belong to a minority group. Gillett (1986) describes their search for housing as a "continuous struggle which occupied much of their time, energy and thoughts" (P.95). She quotes one mother as saying:

> No one wants you. I have been looking now for six months. It's almost impossible. It's like they just don't want to know you. No one wants kids and once they hear you are on assistance you can forget it. What's wrong with people? Weren't they ever kids? I mean they'd rather have animals than kids. It's like you don't exist or something. (p.105)

They face discrimination from landlords, frequent moves and unsafe neighbourhoods. Gillett (1986) found the average number of moves by the participants in her study was 3.9 per year.

Single mothers make frequent moves, often in an attempt to reduce housing costs, while trying find a better fit between the families circumstances and their living environment (Cook, 1989). Weiss (cited in Wekerle 1985), explains these frequent moves, as partly due to a lack of awareness on the part of the single mothers of the importance of a supportive neighboring community.

Saegert (1985) and Cook (1989) outline the ways in which traditional cities and the relocation to suburban areas fail to address the needs of women, including single mothers. Single mothers are often forced to choose between distance from work and affordability. When they do chose to live in suburban areas, distance from services and social isolation are common complaints.

Single mothers are more sensitive to the effects of a poor fit between their needs and the living environment. Like the canaries used in mines to test for air quality, single mothers are a sensitive indicator of supportive communities making them an obvious choice for this research. Included in the methodology of this research were questions concerning features of their living

environment. The questions centered around safety, play areas for children, transportation and availability of services to determine whether these related to their sense of community.

Forms of Housing

Since, for many single parents, low income makes home ownership unlikely, they must choose one of several housing options. They can rent from a private landlord, apply for a unit in a housing co-op or, if they qualify, apply for public housing. Each form operates under different sets of rules or guidelines, and therefore the experience of living in each is quite different.

A non-profit *housing co-op* is an independent and legal association formed for the purpose of providing its members with affordable, good quality accommodation. The members of the co-op jointly own and control the housing they live in. Ownership of the project rests with the corporation, which is owned by the members, who then lease their unit from the co-op at cost. Members of a housing co-op enjoy security of tenure and the opportunity to become part of a community. Membership in a co-op involves a commitment to serve on committees (usually a minimum of four hours per month) and each member has one vote providing direct and equal control by all members over the running of their home and neighbourhood. Co-op housing was developed out of a need for affordable housing providing for long term needs. The projects are usually developed by resource groups, which provide initial support and education in setting up the structure and operation of the project.

Housing in *private rental* varies considerably in cost and quality. A tenant is usually required to sign a lease, in which the landlord may outline additional provisions around rules and responsibilities for the tenant, but beyond those the tenant is independent of the landlord. Problems between the tenant and landlord can be brought before the Residential Tenancies Division, or if not settled, taken to court. There is no structure for working out difficulties between tenants in the same apartment building, except through the landlord or legal action. A landlord has the right to refuse to rent to a family with children.

In Metro Halifax, *public housing* provides housing for seniors and low-income families. The rent is based on income, so as not to exceed 25% of income. For a single mother to be eligible for a unit she must be over the age of 19 and have dependent children living with her. She must have resided in Halifax for at least twelve consecutive months and be debt-free to previous landlords. Applicants must be paid up to date with the Nova Scotia Light and Power Co. Prospective tenants must fill out an application to assess their current accommodation in terms of inadequacy in meeting their present needs. (Housekeeping is also assessed.) Tenants sign a lease, similar to that of the private rental agreement.

All of the described forms of housing offer varying degrees of self-management. Public housing offers virtually none, while private rental offers more independence from outside authority, but no formal structure for problem-solving. Co-op housing offers the greatest opportunity for self-management as well as a process

for problem-solving which also serves to bind the community together. Participatory decision-making is an intergral part of co-op housing thus insuring each member influence in the running of the co-op. The availability of these various forms of housing, offer the opportunity to investigate empowerment and sense of community in single mothers as a function of the degree of self-management and structure for problem-solving in their living environment.

Empowerment

Rapapport (1987) identifies empowerment as an important concept in community psychology, as it is through empowerment that community psychology strives to address issues around prevention and social change. Descriptions of empowerment include competency, a sense of being invested with legal power, mastery over one's own affairs, political and legal rights, political power, self-efficacy, and personal control or influence (Rapapport, 1985, 1987; Zimmerman & Rapapport, 1988). A theoretical link between participation and empowerment has been suggested (Rapapport, 1987) and empirically supported (Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich & Chavis, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Rapapport, 1988). Participation may begin to explain the link between empowerment through the context of settings which foster skill acquisition, experience, and knowledge.

Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1982) as the mediator between knowledge and action. Central to self-efficacy theory is how self-referent thought is interwoven with action and affect.

Changing circumstances or different situations, can change the pattern. Self-perceptions of efficacy influence how a person will choose to act, more than actual ability or knowledge. Four sources of information that determine how self-judgements are formed as outlined by Bandura (1982) are actual mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states. Most influential is the actual mastery experience or experience of success, and secondly the vicarious experience or observance of successful performance by someone similar to themselves. Less influential, but still important, is the use of verbal persuasion, as long as the individual finds the argument or appraisal to be realistic. Information from physiological states may partly influence perceptions of self-efficacy by signaling possible vulnerability in stressful situations. Social learning theory explains behavioural change through these modes of influence as they strengthen or weaken the self-perceptions of self-efficacy.

Zimmerman (1990) recently proposed a theory of learned hopefulness which explains how experience of success can serve to further enhance one's sense of psychological empowerment. He, like Bandura, emphasized the importance of lived experience. However he focused on natural settings since they were not deficit-oriented and thus were more likely to empower. The results from his research on participation, psychological empowerment and alienation show a direct and positive effect of participation on psychological empowerment, lending support to the theory of learned hopefulness.

According to Rapapport (1986) prevention implies experts fixing variables so things will come out right, while his view of empowerment explains difficulties as stemming from a social structure that makes impossible use of existing resources or competencies. When new skills need to be learned or competencies developed, they are best learned, and most empowering, when set in the context of lived experience. Skill acquisition, experience and knowledge gained through participation in community may be an example of change through direct mastery experience. Development and experience of self-efficacy, then, is an important component and descriptor of the empowerment process, and it would seem, this process is an essential component of co-op housing structures.

Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988) establish a link between participation and empowerment. They then direct future research to examine the relationship between the development of psychological empowerment and different types of voluntary organizations in order to determine those mediating structures which foster empowerment. The differences in these housing forms that are of interest include the goals, activities and the organizational structure of the decision making. Zimmerman (1990) suggests participatory decision-making as a strategy related to empowerment. While a voluntary organization can be an effective way to obtain the skills and confidence that lead to empowerment, this process is mediated by the person/environment fit (Prestby et al, 1990). The incentives or rewards (goals) must be important to the members and the costs

not so high as to discourage participation. Florin and Wandersman (1990) distinguish between *empowering* organizations which foster competencies and confidence in its members and *empowered* organizations which may weild a greater influence over the environment or community, but do not necessarily empower their members.   In order to survive and to foster empowerment in it's members,   an organization must offer elements of both.   Housing co-ops accomplish this by providing a real function to the members, shelter, through participation by the members.

Cognitive social learning variables were found to be greater determinants of participation in a neighbourhood organization than the demographic variables usually considered (Florin & Wandersman, 1984).   Discussion of these variables highlights the importance of considering not only the experience, but also the belief and value systems concerning the environment, expected outcomes, and self-imposed standards of behavior by which the participant will judge themselves and their performance.   Florin and Wandersman begin the process of separating out self-efficacy (individual effort) from collective efficacy (group effort).

Terms like self-efficacy and competency building have connotations about individual attributions that may not completely explain participation in groups.   Empowerment will look different in different settings (Rapapport, 1985) and so too will the motivations and perceptions of control that determine participation.   That is, what one person alone could not hope to do, they may be able to accomplish as a group.   Does this mean that

one person does not feel a sense of self-efficacy? Bandura (1982) posits the view that self-efficacy is not necessarily a global measure, but tied to the situations. There may be a sense of collective efficacy that is related to the experience of group efforts.

Research on participation in community has linked it with personal and political efficacy (Florin & Wandersman, 1990) and with greater psychological sense of community (Perkins, Florin, Rich, Wandersman & Chavis, 1990). Measures of empowerment often address the individual aspects, but fail to account for the collective aspect of empowerment. The link with psychological sense of community may place levels of participation in context that will be addressed in the next section.

This research examined the differences in housing organizations that empower members compared to those that do not. Housing co-ops serve as an example of voluntary organizations with a clear goal, decent affordable housing, and a participatory decision-making process, as all members have a vote in matters concerning the group. They offer the opportunity for members to develop new skills and competencies from other members and outside resources in the day to day running of the co-op. The influence members have within their co-op is real, since they determine the rules and regulations for members and even determine the housing charge, taking into account what they decide is needed to maintain the units.

Private rental, on the other hand, leaves most of the power in the hands of the landlord or owner, who determines the rent and

the rules and regulations for living there. Public Housing, is more affordable than most private rental and non-subsidized co-op housing, and offers security of tenure, but the actual running of the development is still in the hands of the local housing authority. Tenants have very little say in the running of their development.

Choosing a Housing Alternative--Individual Differences

While it seems that most likely people choose their housing on the basis of affordability and availability, it is possible that single mothers who choose to live in housing co-ops are already different in some other personality or behavioural characteristics. Inclusion of single mothers from a general housing co-op waiting-list in the study will allow for some comparisons between the groups on these individual characteristics. A confounding variable in this study could be that those with a problem-solving or action oriented style chose to live in co-ops. Hence it would not be that the housing experience had influenced the individual's experience of personal power or social support, but rather that these were existing personal beliefs and dispositons.

Bachrach and Zautra (1985) found an increased sense of community to be positively correlated with problem oriented coping. One way this has been viewed in the women's literature is through gender role adherence. It has been suggested that the masculinity score on the Bem Sex Role Inventory may be less a measure of masculinity, and more a reflection of instrumentality and independence or a pro-active style of behaviour (Hall and

Taylor, 1985; Taylor & Hall, 1982). The behavioural style associated with the masculinity style has been found to moderate life stressors (Frank, McLaughlin & Crusco, 1984; Roos & Cohen, 1985). There is an intuitive similarity between the problem-oriented coping style described by Bachrach and Zautra and the pro-active or instrumental characteristics suggested in the masculinity scale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. A comparison of the masculinity scores between the housing co-op group and the co-op waiting list provides an indication as to whether any difference in dependent measures are due to the settings or to individual characteristics. The masculinity measure will be refered to as Instrumentality in the remainder of this text.

The differences in the degree of self-management in these housing organizations make them opportune for exploring whether the experience of certain settings do empower single mothers. This research will address also whether the experience of control or influence in their housing translates to a belief in personal control in other areas.

Sense of Community

Raeburn's (1986) work in community development rose out of a conviction that living in a good community is better for health and well-being. This conviction of the importance of community is echoed by a sign seen in the window of a housing co-op in Saint John, N.B., which reads "Housing co-ops build communities". Sense of community is a phrase used to describe the relationship between individuals and their environments. Sarason (1974) first

described it in mostly affective terms as a feeling that one is similar to others and a part of a larger structure, and while difficult to define, "....you know when you have it and you know when you don't" (p.157).

Chavis and McMillan (1986) outline a theoretical description of psychological sense of community. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, they developed a four-dimensional model which includes membership, influence, fulfillment of needs and a shared emotional connection. *Membership* is defined as including boundaries concerning who is a member along with common symbols, emotional safety, a sense of belonging, and a personal investment through participation in group activities. *Influence* stems from the belief members can affect the community along with the belief their community also has influence in the larger systems. The *fulfillment of needs* is the reinforcement dimension as it covers the experience or sense that an association with the community is rewarding to it's members. The *shared emotional connection* is based on experience over time of shared struggles and successes by the community which serves to further bind them together. This model is the basis for the Sense of Community Index developed by Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman (1986).

Chavis and Newbrough (1986) review research supporting links between the strength of community and child abuse, quality of child-rearing, lowered crime rates and adoption of a problem-oriented coping strategy. The benefits of sense of community have been established (Dunne, 1986; Glynn, 1986; Hughey &

Bardo, 1987; Pretty, 1990) and research has associated it with political participation and participation in community activities (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990) and with an increase in neighbouring (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Unger & Wandersman, 1985). Sense of Community has been found to be negatively associated with burnout (McCarthy, Pretty & Catano, 1990).

Chavis and Wandersman (1990) found sense of community to be related to four domains relevant to community development; perception of environment, social relations, control and empowerment, and participation in local action. Their findings validate McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of community Index by demonstrating the role of SOC in stimulating satisfaction with one's community (membership), encouraging neighbouring (emotional connection) and enhancing a sense of group and personal empowerment (influence) to affect their environment. The fulfillment of needs element in the original model is demonstrated in that the sense of group and individual empowerment motivates the community to act collectively to face the problems in their community.

Influence as a conceptual link between sense of community and empowerment is obvious when the relationship is seen as interactive rather than linear. A sense of community develops when citizens perceive an ability to influence events in their community on their behalf. At the same time, a sense of community also serves to increase their perception of influence. The results of Chavis and Wandersman's (1990) research support

the catalytic role of sense of community not only in enhancing the individual's perception of personal and group empowerment, but as a cause and effect of local action. That is, the lived experience of having had influence, changes the individual's and the group's perception of their ability to influence. Sense of community is an important catalyst for social change since it is through participation and the experience of success that the self-perceptions about the ability to influence events is changed. As described in Social Learning theory, the actual mastery experience (Bandura, 1982) powerfully influences not only on behavioral change, but, and perhaps more importantly, the belief that action on the part of the citizen or group will bring about change.

Saegert (1985) places the work of women in co-ops in the context of women's values of community and support. The women she interviewed viewed their buildings in the same way they viewed their families and gave them the kind of 24 hour attention their families received. Ahrentzen (1989) describes the life of the single parent as one consumed by the responsibilities of child care, domestic responsibilities and financial concerns, making social support a necessity. Thus, single mothers view their housing as more than just shelter, but as a social support network and an opportunity to establish security of tenure.

Expected length of residency has been established as one predictor of sense of community (Glynn, 1981; Perkins et al.,1990). Since security of tenure is sought by single parents and

moving is more difficult for the single parent (Birch, 1985), a firmer commitment to working through difficulties within the community might be expected. A high burnout rate is noted for women who are grassroots leaders (Frit & Peterson, 1985) because their accomplishments are often bought at an unbelievable personal cost.

Housing co-ops are not without their share of conflict, but they do offer a structure for problem-solving that is participatory and democratic. Such a structure is similar to Levine's (1986) "working it out" which builds strategies for action and promotes understanding within the community. Hence the conflicts within the co-ops co-exist with the opportunities (MacLeod, 1990; Saegert, 1985). In spite of the difficulties, the experience of being supported and encouraged led Doyle Farge (1986) to state that: "Co-op housing, in fact, appears in many ways to be beneficial to the development of women's leadership" (p.15).

On the basis of this literature it was predicted that participation in a housing co-operative would foster membership, influence, fulfillment of needs and a shared emotion connection, and therefore psychological sense of community would be significantly greater for single mothers in housing co-ops.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between empowerment and psychological sense of community. This was accomplished by investigating how they are related to the degree of self-management and formal structure for

problem-solving available in different housing forms. It was expected the measures of personal power and sense of community would be significantly greater for the residents of housing co-ops than for the other groups. The independent variable was the type of housing. The dependent variables were Psychological Sense of Community and Personal Power (empowerment). The co-variates were the self-reported behavioural characteristics as measured by the Bem Sex Role Inventory.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference between housing forms in the amount of psychological sense of community(SCI) reported by residents. It is expected that residents in the housing co-ops will have the highest level of sense of community.

2. There will be a significant difference between the housing groups in the measure of Personal Power. It is expected that residents of co-op housing will have the highest level of Personal Power.

3. Significant differences in empowerment or Personal Power between groups living in different housing forms will not be attributable to differences in residents' behavioural styles or instrumentality, as measured by the masculinity scale of the Bem Sex Role Inventory. It is expected that Instrumentality as a co-

variate will not change the significance differences between the groups in Personal Power.

4. There will be a significant positive relationship between sense of community and Personal Power. Those residents with a high sense of community will also report a higher belief in Personal Power as indicated by the PP scale.

Method

Participants

One hundred and one single mothers, predominantly white, participated voluntarily in this study, resulting in ninety-five questionnaires that could be used. Table 1 contains demographic information on participants' age, income and number of children over the various housing groups. Most waiting list respondents were living in private rental housing. The mean yearly income for all the participants was approximately 17,500. Educ$\ldots$ion levels ranged from completed grade four to graduate degrees. Table 2 outlines the levels of education completed by the participants over the housing groups. The differences in the n's in the tables within each group are because some respondents chose not to answer some of the questions. All were single, separated or divorced and all had children living with them. The majority (n = 59) had one child, while thirty mothers had two children, and the rest of the mothers had from three to four children currently living with them. Fifty-four of the ninety-five women were employed outside of the home either full or part-time.

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Instruments

Sense of Community Index (SCI)

The short form of the Sense of community Index (SCI) was developed by Chavis (see McCarthy & Pretty, 1990) from the longer form of the SCI (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman 1986). The twelve item SCI (see appendix) has a true/false format to provide a total psychological sense of community score for each participant. Construct validity is reported by Pretty (1990), McCarthy, Pretty and Catano (1990) and Chavis and Wandersman (1990). The SCI has been established in various environments including neighborhoods, corporate settings (Pretty & McCarthy. In press) and university residences (McCarthy, Pretty & Catano,1990 and Pretty, 1990).

Chavis reports a coefficient alpha of .71 and Pretty (1990) .69. The cronbach apha for this research was .25. Of the twelve questions in the scale, four are negatively worded, meaning respondents would reply false to a negatively worded statement in order to affirm a positive reply. Therefore these statements may have been difficult to understand. Taking this into account, along with concern about the literacy level of the participants, a reliability check was done using only the eight items that were positively worded. The cronbach alpha for the eight items was .77. The results from both the twelve item scale (SCI) and the revised eight item scale (SCI-R) are presented.

Personal Power Scale

The Personal Power (PP) scale developed by O'Neill, Duffy, Enman, Blackmer, Goodwin & Campbell (1988) consist of eleven belief statements to which respondents respond agree or disagree (see Appendix). The PP indicates a belief in personal power or causation and a willingness to think that conditions can be unjust. O'Neill et al (1988) report test-retest reliabilities for the PP as .66 to .85 in two studies. The cronbach alphas for the present research were .03 for the PP. O'Neill et al (1988) did not use internal measures of consistency because they expected a low internal consistency with questions that draw on a wide range of experience. Since the same issues concerning literacey apply to the PP as they did in the SCI, the negatively worded statements were removed, which increased reliability for the PP-R to .43.

Bem Sex Role Inventory

The short form of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) consists of a list of 30 characteristics (adjectives). The respondent indicates on a 7 point scale how well each describes them (See Appendix for examples). The BSRI manual reports separate coefficient alphas for the femininity and masculinity scores as ranging from .75 to .87. Bem reports correlations from .85 to .94 between the original and the short form. Only the Masculinity score was used in this research and is refered to as Instrumentality. The cronbach alpha for the Instrumentality scale in this study was .89.

Procedure

Single mothers were contacted through various groups and agencies, including: parent resource groups, Community Service workers, tenant's associations, women's groups, community groups (ie: One Parent Family Association), day cares, housing co-op boards of directors and committees, a public health nurse and a housing resource group. The latter provided the researcher with a list of names and addresses of single mothers currently on their waiting list for units in housing co-ops.

Some of the groups allotted time during a regular meeting to fill out the questionnaire (see Appendix), while others were only able to provide enough time for the researcher to introduce the study and give out copies of the questionnaire in self-addressed stamped envelopes. Each envelope included a letter outlining the study with phone numbers to call if they had any questions or difficulties concerning the questions. The questionnaires remained anonymous, and separate post cards were included in the envelopes so that participants could send their name and address separately to receive a summary of the results of the study when completed. The participants who completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher provided their name and address on a separate sheet of paper. In some cases the participants knew of other single mothers who might be interested in completing the questionnaire. They were provided with a self-addressed and stamped envelope containing a cover letter introducing and outlining the study (see Appendix), the address post card, the questionnaire and a card with phone numbers to call if they had any questions or concerns.

The single mothers on the waiting list for co-op housing were contacted by mail with a letter introducing the study and asking for their assistance. The letters were followed by a phone call asking if they were interested in participating in the study. If they were willing to participate, the questionnaire package, as described above, was sent out to them. Twenty-one agreed to participate, but the actual return rate is not known since in the data these participants were included with other participants who answered yes to being on a co-op waiting list.

All participants were provided with the opportunity to provide their name and address separately from the questionnaire in order to receive a summary of the results to maintain anonymity. The researcher had difficulty finding single mothers living in public housing who were willing to participate in the study. Consultation with the tenants' association for one of the public housing developments led to the researcher going from door to door in the housing development to seek out single mothers willing to participate. If they were willing to participate, they were left the same questionnaire package described above. As an added incentive for the public housing tenants, those who participated and sent the address card, and indicated interest, were also sent a copy of "The Single Mother's Survival Guide", a manual compiled by a Nova Scotia single mother. The researcher and the tenant's association felt this was a way to offer some meaningful return to the participants for their efforts. (Cost did not permit this to be sent to all participants.) Thirty questionnaire envelopes weregiven out in the door to door campaign and six copies of the Survival Guide were requested.

Of the one hundred and one questionnaires completed, three were returned too late to be included in the analysis and three were not complete enough to be used. Two hundred and thirteen questionnaires were sent out, 65 were returned by mail or delivered in envelopes to the university, and 36 were filled out in the presence of the researcher. The return rate for the questionnaires overall was 47 %.

A summary of results was sent out to all participants who provided their name and addresses (see Appendix J). The survival guide was sent out to six public housing participants. The various groups and agencies who helped contact single mothers were also sent summaries of the results. They were also contacted by phone to see if they were interested in having the researcher return in person to discuss the results.

Results

Descriptive Results

Before testing the hypotheses, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed on the data for of all the major variables. The intercorrelations are reported in Table 3. Significant positive relationships were found between SCI and length of residency ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) expected length of residency ($r = .40$, $p < .01$) and level of activity in neighbourhood activities ($r = .40$, $p < .01$). these correlations remained substantially unchanged when SCI-R was substituted for the SCI. (see Appendix) Examination of the variables showed a significant positive relationship between Personal Power and Instrumentality ($r = .22$, $p < .05$) Instrumentality was also positively related to Education Level ($r = .25$, $p < .05$) and to level of activity in neighbourhood ($r = .28$, $p < .01$). Expected length of residency was also positively related to level of activity in neighbourhood ($r = .40$, $p < .01$).

Analysis of Variance found significant differences between the housing groups for several demographic variables. With housing form as the independent variable, the following dependent variables were significant using an ANOVA: Education level ($F(3,82)=6.92$, $p < .05$) Income ($F(3,86)=4.77$, $p<.05$) Number of Moves ($F(3,88) = 8.22$, $p = <.05$) and Age ($F(3,78) = 6.47$. $p = < .05$). These variables will be examined further, later in the results section of the appropriate hypothesis.

The means and standard deviations of participants' responses from each housing group on measures of Sense of Community, Instrumentality, Personal Power, and Injustice are reported in Table 4 and described below at the appropriate hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis stated that there would be significantly greater psychological sense of community for residents of housing co-ops compared to other forms of housing. This hypothesis was tested using an analysis of variance with SCI as the dependent measure and the housing groups as the independent variable. As predicted, the ANOVA showed a significant difference between the housing groups ($F(3,88) = 7.78$, $p < .001$). Student Newman Keuls tests showed that pairwise group differences were in the predicted direction with residents in housing co-ops ($\overline{X} = 8.36$) reporting significantly higher levels of SCI than all the other groups ($\overline{X} = 5.44$). Private rental and the waiting list groups were not significantly different from each other, but the public housing group ($\overline{X} = 3.56$) was significantly lower than all the other groups.

Since the intercorrelation matrix showed a positive association between SCI and length of residence, expected length of residency, and the level of activity in neighbourhood organizations, an ANCOVA was performed to control for the possibility that those three variables may explain a significant portion of the variance between groups for the SCI. The results of the ANCOVA for SCI over the forms

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of housing with the co-variates length of residency, expected lengthof residency and activity level, replicated the results of the previous ANOVA ($F(3,82)$ = 8.76, p < .05). Since age, number of recent moves, income and education level of the participants did vary significantly over the housing groups as discussed earlier in the descriptive results, though they were not significantly associated with SCI, they were included as possible co-variates. The results of the ANCOVA showed that SCI still remained significantly different over the forms of housing when the length of residency, expected length of residency, activity level, age, education level, number of moves and income were controlled as co-variates ($F(3,63)$ = 5.43, p < .05). All of the ANOVA and ANCOVA's reported her were recomputed using the SCI-R as the dependent variable. There were no changes in the outcomes. The results of those analysis for SCI-R are presented in Appendix.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2, stated that there would be a significant difference in levels of personal power in favor of housing co-ops. The results were not significant ($F(3,87)$ = .58) and failed to support the hypothesis. Recomputations using the PP-R did not change the significance levels substantially ($F(3,87)$ = .67).

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that a significant difference in Personal Power between the residents of the housing groups would not be attributable to resident's instrumentality. This hypothesis is linked

to finding support for Hypothesis 2. Although hypothesis 2 was not supported, instrumentality was still explored, since Instrumentality was related to Personal Power and neighbourhood activity (see Table 3). Instrumentality varied significantly over forms of housing ($F(3,89) = 4.35$ $p < .01$). T-tests for Instrumentality between the co-op and the waiting list groups failed to show a significant difference ($t = -.73$, df = 55).

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 predicted there would be a positive relationship between SCI and PP, that is those with a high SCI would also report a higher PP. Pearson Correlations (see Table 3) found no significant association between SCI and PP ($r = .05$). These results fail to support hypothesis 4. Pearson Correlations for SCI-R with PP also found no significant association ($r = .02$).

Exploring other relationships with Sense of Community

As noted earlier, SCI was positively correlated with length of residency ($r = .24, p < .05$), expected length of residence ($r = .40$ $p < .01$), and level of community activities ($r = .40, p < .01$). T-tests of SCI between dichotomous variables linked SCI with respondents' statement that they lived in a safe neighbourhood ($t = 2.51$, $df = 2$, $p < .01$) and SCI with living in an area that has adequate play areas for children ($t = 6.08$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). These results remained substantially unchanged for the SCI-R (see Appendix).

A Pearson Chi Square for safety between the housing co-op residents and those in public housing was siginificant ($X^2 = 14.58$, $p < .01$), further clarifying where differences occur in the belief that they

live in a safe neighbourhood. These results suggest that both feelings of safety and accommodation for the needs of children may be associated with sense of community. They also further corroborate earlier construct validations of the SCI as a measure of sense of community.

Qualitative Results

Included in the questionnaire were several open-ended questions concerning the participant's housing experience. The questions on what they liked most or least about their housing, gave them the opportunity to comment in their own words. No attempt was made to categorize or analyze the comments, however selections from the responses appear to demonstrate how the residents feel they benefit, or suffer, from the experience of their housing.

Comments from residents in housing co-ops reflected an awareness of the balance between the costs and the benefits of participation. They recognize the long term gains that come from living in such a community. An example from one co-op resident,

"(what I like most)..Sense of community--friendliness, willingness of people to help each other in time of need; playmates and secure area for children."

The same mother,

"(what I like least)...Some loss of privacy, sometimes feel overwhelmed by co-op experience when members are having problems/difficulties with one another. Almost like dealing with large extended family at times. However, this is also one of (a) co-op's strengths--this sense of family/community."

Another mother from a co-op wrote,

> "(Like most)...I can afford to live in a nice flat in a good neighbourhood. There is no landlord and the house will not be sold out from under me.

> "(what I like least)... I am paying monthly and not getting any equity. I do not own this house."

But she goes on to say,

> "I feel my situation is far better than other single parents."

Finally, another mother in a co-op contributes,

> "(like most)...There are plenty of other children for my son to play with, babysitting co-op, very close to university, daycare in same building, very convienent."

> "(like least)...There are too many rules I feel may impact on my personal freedom. Too close a community, people always aware of what you are doing. A bit claustrophobic socially."

But sums up her experience by writing,

> "I am lucky to live in a very unique setting that not many single parents have the benefit of."

Many of the comments made by the mother focussed on how well their neighbourhoods met the needs of their children. One mother living in a co-op said,

> "With children we need this close knit environment."

Another co-op mother wrote,

> "Co-op housing has provided myself and my children with a clean and decent home to live in at an affordable price, this is very important to children when growing up in a single parent home."

The previous comments are a sharp contrast to those from a mother in an apartment (private rental),

"The neighbourhood is transient with no yard and surrounded by parking lots with no other children in the area. My children suffer because they must always be taken out to play with their mother and never get to interact and play outside without me."

Or another from private rental,

"...(like most) It is affordable and there is enough space. (like least)...The general neighbourhood. Parents let their kids run wild--gang in my area, lots of drugs........If I could afford better housing I would be in a better neighbourhood."

The positive relationship between safety and SCI as reported earlier are supported by the mothers' comments. Their comments provide anecdotal evidence that supports not only the presence of sense of community, but the lack as well in the various forms of housing. Many of the comments from the single mothers living in housing co-ops reflect an awareness of their good fortune compared to other single mothers. The following statement from one single mother in a co-op sums up one mother's experience.

"...(Like most) That its a house (duplex) and not a large apartment building anymore. I can paint, grow flowers, have my own lawn, my own patio to sit on and no one telling my children to get into their own apt. and off the grass. ....I like the least, that I can not own my home some day, because it is a co-op housing house.......(further comments) After having a huge house for several years and losing it through divorce, I thought I would never have a house again, mainly because I am at a very

low income and realize I could never buy one, the mortgage payments being so high. After hearing about co-op housing through other single parents, I looked into it and worked at getting one...."

Discussion

The results of this research lend some support to the theory that the characteristics of a setting can contribute to residents' psychological sense of community. The relationship with empowerment or personal power was not established, thus the last three hypotheses were not supported. There were problems with reliability for the Personal Power scale as discussed in the results section, however the failure to establish a relationship with sense of community may also be for other reasons. The PP scale may indeed measure personal power, but not in a way appropriate to this group. That is, the questions may not make instrinsic sense to them. For example, one question on the PP scale, "If I plan carefully enough, I'm sure I can achieve my goals", does not take into account the lived experience of a single parent raising children on their own. Sometimes, no matter how carefully they plan, single mothers run out of money, the electric bill is more than they expected, kids get sick and cars break down. Sometimes all at the same time!

It is also possible that not everyone within co-ops becomes personally empowered. Some members may not experience mastery when others within the co-op seize power, then monopolize it as they become personally empowered. Those who chose to participate in this study could be mostly from an 'outgroup', or those not experiencing power within their co-op.

Also, the Personal Power measure may be focused too much on the individual to be related to sense of community as it exists in housing. Working in a group, such as a co-op, may not increase

personal power, especially if part of the process in the group involves compromise to have both individual and group needs met. A recognition of the balance between privacy and participation, implies a giving up of one thing to contribute to something else. A measure that assesses group and individual empowerment separately, would begin to explore the possibility that empowerment is situation specific.

The lack of a significant difference in the Instrumentality measure between the co-op housing and the waiting list groups, dispite the overall difference, indicates Instrumentality does not appear to develop as a result of living in a co-op, but is already present. That is, in this sample, those who chose to live in, or apply for, co-op housing are already different from those in the other forms of housing in this particular measure.

Benefits of Housing Co-ops

The benefits of living in housing co-ops are clearly reflected in some of the comments made by the participants. The mothers appear to be aware of the costs of participation in their neighbourhood in terms of loss of privacy and conflict, yet, in spite of the disadvantages, they still seem to feel quite positive about their living environment. While several co-op residents mentioned they enjoyed having a vote or a say in the running of their co-op, the majority of the comments focus on how where they live meets their family needs and the social or community aspects of their housing.

Sense of community was positively associated with adequate play areas for children. This association is interesting in several ways. It

supports the importance the single mother's place on the well-being of their children and may increase the mother's sense of belonging. (This may be especially true when the rental market is unfriendly to families and single mothers in particular.) Cook (1989) related neighbourhood satisfaction for single mothers to areas seen as good for children.

The association between feeling safe in their neighbourhood and sense of community further highlights the benefits of co-op living. The results indicate significantly more residents of co-op feel safe in their neighbourhoods than do residents of public housing. These findings reflect the research by Dubrow and Garbarino (1988) on violence in public housing developments. The violence may not be so obvious in this sample, but the fear is present.

Theoretical Implications

The positive relationship of sense of community to length of residency, expected length of residency and level of participation are supported by previous research (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Glynn, 1981; Perkins et al 1990; Prestby et al, 1990). These findings further establish the importance of these variables to sense of community. That they do not completely account for the differences in sense of community over the housing groups, suggests that something else about housing co-ops, beyond these variables, is contributing to sense of community. Further research is needed to tease out what else is occuring.

The results relating both feeling safe in the neighbourhood and having enough play areas for children to sense of community further corroborate earlier construct validations for the SCI as a measure of

sense of community. Cook (1988) related a lack of areas for children and safety to dissatisfaction with the neighbourhood. Chavis and Wandersman (1990) found that as residents feel safer, they are more likely to interact. They suggest increases in neighbouring lead to an increased sense of community which may contribute further to feelings of safety.

The results of this study linking participation and sense of community support previous research (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). However, where Chavis and Wandersman establish sense of community as leading to participation, the results of this research suggest the mediating role a setting can play in developing a sense of community in residents when it provides roles for participation and problem-solving. In this study, not only was sense of community significantly greater for the residents of the housing co-ops than all the other groups, it was significantly lower for the public housing residents when compared to all other groups. These two housing groups represent the extremes in levels of self-management and participation for the groups.

Perkins et al (1990) established a relationship between sense oı community and both the physical and social environment. By introducing a variety of housing forms or neighbourhoods in which to compare sense of community, the results of this research begin to explore the role of the setting in this person/environment interaction. They also suggested that organizing communities around crime issues may not be the most effective way to increase participation. Since participation has been associated with personal and political efficacy (Florin & Wandersman, 1990) and with sense of

community (Perkins et al. 1990), the inclusion of neighbourhoods where participation is required as part of the self-management, may begin to define more clearly the role of participation in developing a sense of community. Further research along the lines of this study will begin to establish the effects of participation as one way to improve community conditions, through sense of community, such explorations should support community organizations as one solution to social problems.

Rappaport (1981) defines empowerment as enhancing the possibilities for people to control their own lives, and suggests we look to settings where people are handling their problems in living. The results of the current study have raised the issue of how measures of personal control in research on single mothers in housing may reflect a bias that implies a value on control. Such an emphasis reflects the source of problems as personal failure and not society's failure (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). On the other hand, if we begin to value the nurturing, collectivistic, peaceful, democratic, intuitive, and emotional attributes, usually considered female (McLaren, 1988), then participation in organizations where they are important, reveals a resource on the part of the women. The focus then, may not need to be on encouraging a sense of 'personal power' in single mothers, but instead providing opportunities where existing qualities and values are nurtured.

Methodological Limitations

Since the sample used in this study was predominantly white, the results cannot be generalized to non-white populations. The difficulties with the measures also indicate the conclusions that can be drawn from this study are quite limited. The findings are however, a beginning. The increased reliabilites for both SCI and PP when negatively worded statements were removed, may be a strong indication of the difficulties faced by persons with limited literacy.

The difficulties with the measures for this population demonstrate the need to develop scales that can be used for marginal groups with varied levels of literacy. If we are to expand research in community psychology to include a wider portion of the population this is necessary. These difficulties also highlight the need for qualitative research with marginal groups, to further explore and develop more suitable, as well as valid and reliable measures.

In developing this type of qualitative research, future efforts might analyze the qualitative responses in terms of participants' references to power issues or power referenced language.

Future Research

The results of this research reflect the importance of living in a safe neighbourhood and for having enough play areas for their children for this sample of single mothers . This emphasis on the importance of the needs of their children may influence their level of participation when the opportunity is available to them. Perkins et al (1990) found those with a greater vested interest in property were more likely to participate. Single mothers bring a vested interest to the neighbourhood environment out of concern for the well-being of their children. As outlined earlier, this may reflect women's values around community. Future research should address the component of "vested interest" in terms other than that of property, by exploring personal meaning for individuals as to what their 'interest' may be. This has implications for community development or collective empowerment of disenfranchised groups. In a review of social psychology, Brickman (1987) suggests, "The way to solve common problems....may be to instill a sense of commitment among individuals to a collective solution that has personal meaning for each individual" (p. 141).

The results of this study failed to establish a relationship between personal power and sense of community. While problems with the scale appear to be the reason, it is possible that personal power is not a value at work for this population. The notion that gaining power as a goal is not a construct that reflects the values of this population. Werkle (1985) outlines the gender differences in what is considered desirable in neighbourhoods. Men tend to seek privacy and clear

division of property lines, while women seek access to services and supportive environments. As outlined in the theoretical discussion of this study, further research must take into account differences in meaning or beliefs and values concerning the living environment.

Conclusion

The results of this research provide enough evidence to support continued effort in developing housing co-ops. The nature of their organization offers an opportunity for community development and support. They provide more than just basic shelter, but community which meets human and family needs in ways that four walls and a roof alone, cannot.

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Appendix A

Sense of Community Index

<u>Sense of Community Index</u>
Chavis 1987

The following statements are things people might say about the 'block' where they live. If you live in an apartment building or a house, 'block' refers to the people who live near you and your neighborhood.

Please circle **T** for **True** or **F** for **False** after each statement if it is either mostly true or mostly false about your block.

1. I think my block is a good place for me to live.   T   F

2. People on this block do not share the same values.   T   F

3. My neighbors and I want the same things from this block.   T   F

4. I can recognize most of the people who live on my block.   T   F

5. I feel at home on this block.   T   F

6. Very few of my neighbors know me.   T   F

7. I care about what my neighbors think of my actions.   T   F

8. I have no influence over what this block is like.   T   F

9. If there is a problem on this block people who live here can get
   it solved.   T   F

10. It is very important to me to live on this block.   T   F

11. People on this block generally don't get along with each other.   T   F

12. I expect to live on this block for a long time.   T   F

Appendix B

Personal Power and Injustice Scale

Attitude Scale

Please respond to each of the following belief statements and indicate whether, in general, you tend to <u>agree</u> or <u>disagree</u> with it. Respond to all of the statements. Do not take too long over any one.

<u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>

___ ___   1. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as deciding to take a definite course of action.

___ ___   2. People usually get what they deserve in this world.

___ ___   3. Many times I feel that I might as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

___ ___   4. Many people suffer through no fault of their own.

___ ___   5. What happens to me is my own doing.

___ ___   6. People who are lonely should have learned to get along with others.

___ ___   7. I don't like to plan too far ahead because I usually cannot tell how things will turn out.

___ ___   8. Our courts often let the quilty go free while they convict innocent people.

___ ___   9. My misfortunes usually result from ℏ mistakes I make.

___ ___ 10. People who suffer from depression are too easily hurt by events.

___ ___ 11. Sometimes I think that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

___ ___ 12. Political candidates who stick up for their principles often fail to get elected.

___ ___ 13. If I plan carefully enough, I'm sure I can achieve my goals.

___ ___ 14. Those who protect themselves adequately are rarely victims of crime.

___ ___ 15. Luck has played an important role in my life.

___ ___ 16. Many careful drivers die in accidents that were not their fault.

___ ___ 17. I can get people to do what I want them to do, if I use the right approach.

___ ___ 18. Parents often overlook the most admirable qualities in their children.

___ ___ 19. Often I feel that I have very little influence over the things that happen to me.

___ ___ 20. People are often hurt by bad reputations that they did nothing to deserve.

___ ___ 21. Bad things that happen to me are often the result of bad luck.

___ ___ 22. People are often victims of crime just because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Appendix C:

Sample adjectives from the Bem Sex Role Inventory--
Masculinity Scale.

1. Defend my own beliefs.

2. Independent.

3. Have leadership abilities.

4. Willing to take risks.

5. Dominant.

6. Willing to take a stand.

Appendix D

Introduction letter to Tenant's Association

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: Home 454-9766
        Work 420-5848

April 16, 1991

Dear Mulgrave Park Residents,

   I am asking for your assistance in a research project I am conducting on Single Mothers and Housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided me with a scholarship to investigate the kinds of housing that do or do not meet the needs of single parents as part of my graduate studies. As a single parent myself, I understand how difficult it can be to find a place to live that is satisfactory.

   I am aware that you have been asked to participate in numerous research projects and studies. I cannot promise any direct changes, but I am more than willing to return when I am finished to review the results of my research with you. My aim is not to further document the problems in housing--that has been done extensively !--but to offer some suggestions as to what is already working out there.

   The questionnaire takes about 10-20 minutes to complete and most people find the questions interesting. The results are completely anonymous, that is, there will be no way for anyone to know the answers you give. Participants who would like to hear about the results of my research can send a separate post card with their name and address so they can receive a brief summary when I am finished.

   If your group is willing to assist me in this project, there are several ways we can do this. I could come to one of your regular meetings and describe my research, then give out the questionnaire to single mothers who are interested. Or those interested in participating could fill it out after the meeting, or take it with them in a postage paid envelope they would simply mail to me later.

   This research is being supervised by Dr. Grace Pretty in the Psychology Department at St. Mary's University.

Sincerely Yours,

P.S. Ms Upshaw,
   Thank you for agreeing to present my request to the Tenant's Association. I look forward to speaking with you later this week.

Appendix E

Enclosure letter for Day Care envelopes

Saint Mary's University

Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3H 3C3

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: Work 420-5848
          Home 454-9766

April 1991

Dear Single Parent,

I am asking for your assistance in a research project I am conducting on Single Mothers and Housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided me with funding, in the form of a scholarship, to investigate the kinds of housing that do or do not meet the needs of single parents as part of my graduate studies. As a single parent myself, I understand how difficult it can be to find a place to live that is satisfactory.

The questionnaire takes about 10-20 minutes to complete and most people find the questions interesting. The results are completely anonymous, that is, there will be no way for anyone to know the answers you give.

Instructions on how to fill out the various sections of the questionnaire are at the beginning of each section. When you are filling out the first three parts, do not take too long over any of the questions, just give the first answer that comes to you. When you have completed the questionnaire, simply place it back in the envelope and put it in the box outside of the Day Care Office. The questionnaire is anonymous, but if you are interested in hearing about the results of my research, fill out the enclosed card with your name and address and place it in the box separately so I can send you a summary of the results when I am finished.

Thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do hesitate to call me at home or at work.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Grace Pretty in the Psychology Department at St. Mary's University.

Sincerely yours,

Pam Swainson

Appendix F

Letter of introduction to Co-op Boards of Directors

Saint Mary's University

Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3H 3C3

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: Work 420-5848
    Home 454-9766
April 8, 1991

Dear Housing Co-op Members,

  I am writing to ask for your assistance in a research project I am conducting on Single Parents and Housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided me with funding to investigate the kinds of housing that do or do not meet the needs of single parents as part of my graduate studies. Since housing co-ops are a unique form of housing, I am especially interested in the views of single parents who live in them.

  I have a questionnaire I am asking parents to fill out and return to me. It takes about 10-20 minutes to complete and most people find the questions interesting. The results are completely anonymous.

  I am writing to the housing co-ops in the Halifax area to see if there is some way I can meet with or contact single parents currently living in co-ops who would be interested in filling out my questionnaire. I am willing to come out to a regularly scheduled co-op meeting (ie: membership committee) or to meet someone in their home to collect the questionnaire. It is also possible to mail out the questionnaire to those who would prefer it.

  I am asking someone from your co-op contact me at either of the above phone numbers, or by mail, if you can help me with this project. It is important for this research that co-op members are represented in the sample. I would like to be finished collecting questionnaires by mid-May, so a response soon would be very much appreciated.

  This research is being supervised by Dr. Grace Pretty in the Psychology Department at St. Mary's University.

  Thank you very much for your time. If you have any questions or concerns, please do hesitate to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Pam Swainson

Appendix G

General enclosure letter to introduce study

Saint Mary's University

Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3H 3C3

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: Work 420-5848
          Home 454-9766

May 1991

Dear Single Parent,

    I am asking for your assistance in a research project I am conducting on Single Mothers and Housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided me with funding, in the form of a scholarship, to investigate the kinds of housing that do or do not meet the needs of single parents as part of my graduate studies. As a single parent myself, I understand how difficult it can be to find a place to live that is satisfactory.

    The questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete and most people find the questions interesting. The results are completely anonymous, that is, there will be no way for anyone to know the answers you give.

    Instructions on how to fill out the various sections of the questionnaire are at the beginning of each section. When you are filling out the first three parts, do not take too long over any of the questions, just give the first answer that comes to you. When you have completed the questionnaire, simply return it to me by mail in the envelope provided. The questionnaire is anonymous, but if you are interested in hearing about the results of my research, fill out the enclosed post card with your name and address and mail it separately so I can send you a summary of the results.

    Thank you very much for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do hesitate to call me at home or at work.

    This research is being supervised by Dr. Grace Pretty in the Psychology Department at St. Mary's University.

Sincerely yours,

Pam Swainson

Appendix H

Letter introducing study to mothers on co-op waiting list

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Saint Mary's University

Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3H 3C3

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: Work 420-5848
         Home 454-9766

March 26, 1991

Dear Ms.

I am writing to you to ask your assistance in a research project I am conducting on Single Parents and Housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has provided me with funding to investigate the kinds of housing that do or do not meet the needs of single parents as part of my graduate studies. As a single parent myself, I understand how difficult it can be to find a place to live that is satisfactory. Since you have recently expressed an interest in Co-op housing as a place to live, I would be especially interested in your views.

I have a questionnaire I am asking parents to fill out and return to me. It will be completely anonymous, that is, there will be no way for anyone to know the answers you give. It takes about 20 minutes to complete and most people find the questions interesting. I will be contacting you by phone within the next two weeks to answer any further questions you may have and to see if you are willing to assist me in this project.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Grace Pretty in the Psychology Department at St. Mary's University.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely yours,

Pam Swainson

Appendix I

Enclosure letter for waiting list participants

Saint Mary's University

Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada
B3H 3C3

Single Parents and Housing
Pamela Swainson
Phone: work 420-5848
home 454-9766

April 1991

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project on single parents and housing. Please find enclosed a copy of the questionnaire.

Instructions on how to fill out the various sections of the questionnaire are at the beginning of each section. When you are filling out the first three parts, do not take too long over any of the questions, just give the first answer that comes to you.   When you have completed the questionnaire, use the enclosed large brown, stamped and addressed envelope to return it to me by mail. The questionnaire is anonymous, but if you are interested in hearing about the results of my research, fill out the enclosed post card with your name and address so that I can send you a summary of the results.

Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at home or work if you have any further questions. Again, thank you very much for your participation.

Sincerely yours,

Pam Swainson

Appendix J

Summary of Results
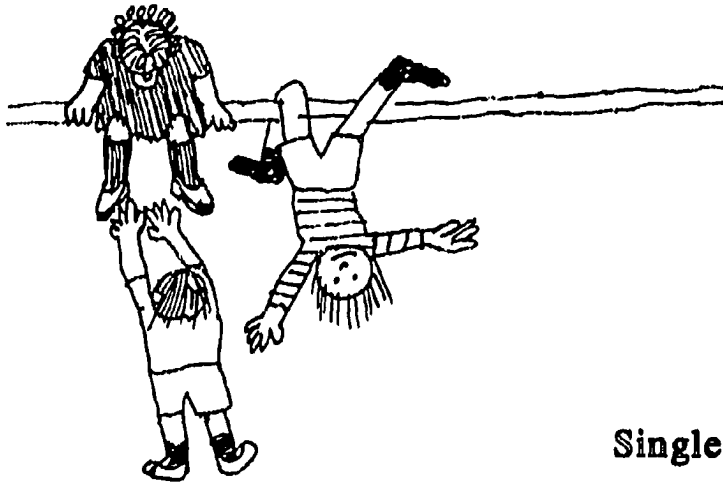
Single Mothers and Housing
Summary of Results

First of all I wish to extend a sincere thank you to all the mothers who completed my questionnaire. Without you, I would not have been able to complete my study. I hope you will find the results interesting.

One hundred and one single mothers participated in my study from co-op housing, private rental and from public housing units. The purpose of my research was to investigate sense of community in these different forms of housing. From my own experience of having lived in both a housing co-op and in private rental, I had found living in a housing co-op to be a more positive experience. Co-op living makes demands on a member's time, but the benefits from working together and knowing your neighbours more than make up for those demands.

The results of my research did indeed show a significantly greater sense of community for residents living in housing co-ops, over all other groups. Residents in public housing were significantly lower in sense of community than all the other groups. This significant difference held up even when education level, age, income, number of recent moves, length of residency, expected length of residency, and level of involvement in neighbourhood activities were accounted for. This research was not designed to determine exactly why sense of community is so different for these groups, but I would suggest that some is from some of the differences in how they are organized, or not organized.

Sense of Community was significantly associated with how long a resident had lived there and with how long they expected that they would live there. A greater level of involvement in neighbourhood activities was also associated with a greater sense of community.

Some other interesting findings from my research were that sense of community was related to whether or not residents felt they lived in a safe neighbourhood. There was also a significant relationship between sense of community and the availability of play areas for children. In their comments, mothers often mentioned the importance of how the neighbourhood met the needs of their children. This emphasizes how important it is for this group of mothers to know that their children's needs were met in the areas of safety and adequate play areas.

The experience of living in a housing co-op may offer a supportive environment that is especially important for single parents. Mothers raising children on their own must look to community and outside resources more than a two parent family, so that a supportive neighbourhood plays an important role.

If you have any questions, or would like to know more about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to discuss the results with you or your group.

Pam Swainson
c/o Dr. Grace Pretty
Dept. of Psychology, Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 3C3

Thank you
Pam Swainson

Appendix K

Recomputations of ANOVA, ANCOVA and T-tests for SCI-R

Analysis of variance recomputed with SCI-R as the dependent measure and housing forms as the independent varible maintained a significent difference $(F(3,88) = 4.82, p < .05)$. Student Newman Keuls tests also showed the same pairwise differences in the predicted direction with residents in housing co-ops (X = 5.75) reporting higher levels of SCI-R than all other groups. Private rental and waiting list groups were still not significantly different from each other, but public housing (X = 2.44) remained significantly lower than all other groups.

Recomputation of ANCOVA for SCI-R with the co-variates length of residency, expected length of residency, level of neighbourhood activity, age, number of moves, income and education level replicated the results of the previous ANOVA $(F(7,61) = 19.99, p < .05)$.

A recomputation of T-tests with SCI-R between responses as to whether or not residents lived in a safe neighbourhood remained significant $(t = 6.39, df = 2, p < .05)$. The T-test for SCI-R over the response as to whether or not there were adequate play areas for children also remained significant $(t = 2.44, df = 2, p < .05)$.

Appendix L

Qualitiative and Demographic sections from questionnaire

Does your housing meet your needs for

Enough space?   .....yes .....no

Availability or access to –

      transportation .....yes .....no

      shopping   .....yes .....no

      recreation   .....yes .....no

      close to schools .....yes .....no

Is your home in a safe neighbourhood   .....yes .....no

Are there enough play areas for children   ......yes .....no

Now that you've been thinking about your experience in your housing and neighbourhood, overall what do you like most about your housing?

....

....

What do you like least?

....

....

Any other comments?

....

....

If you live in a Housing Co-op, how did you decide to live here?

check as many as needed

.....affordable

.....familiarity with other co-operatives

.....like the neighbourhood

.....heard about them from friends

.....knew someone in a housing co-op

.....lived in one before

.....long term security in housing

other reasons(specify)...

....

If you are on the waiting list for a co-operative housing unit, how or why

did you decide to get into a housing co-op?

.....affordability

.....familiarity with other co-operatives

.....like the neighbourhood

.....heard about them from friends

.....knew someone in a housing co-op

.....lived in one before

.....long term security

other reasons (specify)...

....

Marital Status: .....single   .....divorced

                    .....widowed   .....separated

Age...........

How many children do you now have living with you? ....

What is the highest level of formal schooling you have completed?

....

What is your family's yearly income?

....less than 5,000 12,000-14,999 25,000-29,999   ....more than

....5,000-9,999 15,000-19,999 30,000-34,999   40,000

....10,000-11,999 20,000-24,999 35,000-39,999

Are you currently employed outside the home? .....no   .....yes

    If yes, are you full-time......   part-time.....

Do you live in-

......apartment .....townhouse(row-house) .....semi-detached .....house

.....duplex(over/under)

Is your home part of-

.....public housing   ....Private Rental (landlord)

.....Co-op Housing   .....Other(specify)..

How many units or apartments in your building or co-op?

.... Does not apply ☐

How long have you lived here?...

Do you see yourself living here

.....less than one year   .....for 1 to 5 years or .....longer than 5 years

Who decided you would live here?

.....self   .....family .....social agency .....only place you could find

other(specify)..

How many times have you moved in the past two years?.....................

Do you participate in any block or neighbourhood activities? ......yes ......no

If yes, how often? ....once a year ....few times a year ....monthly ....weekly