Enablement and the Community: A Policy Approach for the Future

a discussion of the enablement concept
applied at the level of community

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper describes community enablement as a process whereby neighbourhoods or similar small social groups are facilitated in their efforts to identify for themselves their priority issues, to develop solutions they believe are appropriate and, if necessary, building their own capacity in order to implement solutions. Community enablement has the potential of tapping the capacity of local groups to address concerns which have, until recently, been addressed primarily through public expenditure. It is written in the hope that those involved in the development of public policy may be encouraged to explore ways in which they can foster community capacity.

The paper reviews some of the philosophical considerations on the use of the terms community and neighbourhood, suggesting a focus on low-income neighbourhoods as a instrument of public policy. A review of sociological theories on community and neighbourhood suggests that a prevailing notion in our society is that the neighbourhood is no longer an important arena of social life. Yet studies on housing and neighbourhood satisfaction show that the social fabric of residential areas is the single most significant contributor to satisfaction. The conclusion is that the neighbourhood continues to be a vital locus of collective action, particularly for those with lower incomes.

The paper also looks at the implications of density and scale, the first from the perspective of its mythic link to social pathology, and the second as a re-interpretation of density which may have important implications for community participation and satisfaction. The dominant view that the higher density living associated with low-income areas stands in the way of collective action is challenged.

Next, the literature on voluntary organizations and participation is reviewed with a view to establishing the potential of voluntary organizations as an instrument of collective action among marginalized groups.

A brief review of CMHC involvement in support of local communities is provided to suggest some of the historic roles of a housing agency in this area, underscoring the reciprocal means-ends/ends-means relationship between housing and community. This review of previous CMHC involvement in community organization and development may provide some context to these issues, from a Canadian perspective.

Finally, an outline of a model of community enablement, the process and its scope in addressing needs of residents is provided. This describes both the range of activities in which low income communities have been involved as well as some of the factors bearing on their success and suggests some of the potential roles of government in their support.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce document, la responsabilisation des collectivités, s'entend du processus permettant d'aider les quartiers ou autres petits groupes sociaux à définir eux-mêmes leurs enjeux prioritaires, à mettre au point des solutions qu'ils jugent appropriées et, au besoin, à se donner les moyens d'appliquer les solutions. Ce processus pourrait faire appel à la capacité des groupes locaux à régler des préoccupations qui, jusqu'à tout récemment étaient surtout résolues à l'aide des fonds publics. Ce document a été rédigé dans le but d'inciter les responsables de l'élaboration d'une politique publique à chercher les moyens d'encourager les collectivités à résoudre leurs difficultés.

On y examine certaines des considérations philosophiques portant sur l'utilisation des termes collectivité et quartier, en suggérant que les quartiers de résidents à faible revenu sont un instrument de la politique publique. L'examen des théories sociologiques sur la collectivité et le quartier suggère que dans notre société on juge que le quartier n'est plus un lieu important de la vie sociale. Pourtant, des études sur la satisfaction liées à l'habitation et au quartier révèlent que la structure sociale des quartiers résidentiels est le facteur le plus important contribuant à la satisfaction. On en conclut que le quartier continue d'être un lieu vital d'action collective, surtout pour ceux dont le revenu est faible.

Dans ce document, on étudie aussi les effets de la densité du point de vue de son lien mythique avec la pathologie sociale et de l'échelle en tant que nouvelle interprétation de la densité pouvant avoir des effets importants sur la participation de la collectivité et sa satisfaction. On y remet en question la notion importante qu'une densité élevée associée à des secteurs de résidents à faible revenu entrave l'action collective.

On y examine ensuite la documentation relative aux organismes et à la participation bénévoles afin d'établir la possibilité que les organismes bénévoles sont un instrument d'action collective au sein des groupes marginalisés.

L'aide que la SCHL apporte aux collectivités locales y est brièvement examinée pour suggérer quelques uns des rôles historiques d'un organisme de logement dans ce secteur et souligner les rapports réciproques moyens-fins/fins-moyens entre l'habitation et la collectivité. Cet examen de la participation antérieure de la SCHL dans l'organisation et le développement des collectivités peut apporter un contexte à ces enjeux, dans une perspective canadienne.

Enfin, ce document présente un modèle de responsabilisation de la collectivité, le processus et son importance pour répondre aux besoins des résidents. On y trouve la description de toutes les activités auxquelles participent les résidents à faible revenu ainsi que certains des facteurs contribuant à leur succès et les rôles que pourrait éventuellement assumer le gouvernement pour les aider.

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Introduction to Community Enablement

The mid 1990s have seen the rise of several terms with a common theme: empowerment, enablement, self-sufficiency. A number of forces are at work which are compelling those involved in the development of public policy to reconsider an approach which, to many, is at the very heart of liberal democratic philosophy - that people have the right to identify for themselves their priorities and to develop and implement solutions which meet their needs.

The World Commission on the Environment and Development (1987) called for dramatic changes in the way development is pursued, in order to avoid environmental collapse. In doing so, the Commission also called for resources and authority to be transferred to the local level, particularly so as to provide the disadvantaged members of society the opportunity to participate in the decision process. What has not been elaborated is how this can be achieved and at what level. Given that those who have been marginalized in our society - often by limited education, disabilities or some social stigma - are frequently concentrated in specific local areas characterized by their economic depression, one avenue to involve these people in the decsion-making process would be to focus on these neighbourhoods. There are particular barriers the disadvantaged will face in taking part, including perhaps the resistence of those who are more priviledged, the lack of social-political skills, and a low sense of personal efficacy. These too can be tackled, it is suggested, at the neighbourhood level, within which there will likely be less invidious comparison and real potential for residents to identify shared interests and concerns which arise out of their common experiences of life and of their environment.

Today, governments at every level are finding they do not have the fiscal capacity to continue approaches to addressing many social problems through program approaches which appear to reinforce dependency. There is as well a movement towards decentralization. At the same time, rising dissatisfaction with government and a declining belief in the established system's capacity to meet human needs have been documented (Ekos, 1994). These combine to suggest the merits of looking to self-help approaches within the immediate local community, what might be referred to an enablement.

For the purposes of this paper, enablement is taken to be a process which is driven and controlled by those being enabled, in which barriers to their action are removed or overcome, they have access to a broader range of alternatives, and their capacity to choose and act upon those choices is enhanced. Perhaps implicit in this definition is the notion that those becoming enabled begin the process from a position of disadvantage relative to the majority of the population.

Much of the discussion of enablement has taken place within the debate on welfare policy reform. The argument here has been that existing income-support programs discourage individual efforts and re-inforce the very conditions they are supposed to cure. Unconditional entitlement programs have resulted in the so-called welfare cycle of intergenerational dependency. The thrust of enablement discussion in this arena is on themes of self-reliance and reciprocity - clients are expected to do something to move towards self-reliance as a condition of receiving assistance.

Many jurisdictions have undertaken demonstration programs to explore possible changes in social programs to address these problems, with mixed success. The focus of most of these has been on attaching conditions to the receipt of assistance - for example, a family may be

required to sign a contract stimpulating the counselling they will undergo and the training they will get or even what steps will be taken to obtain employment. Some experiments simply require recipients to work for their assistance - the so-called "workfare" approach. Others provide income supplements or other incentives to encourage recipients to develop their skills and take employment by ensuring their after-tax income will be greater than staying "on the system".

The focus of the other thrust of work on enablement is on community factors - how small groups of people, usually living together in limited geographic areas, can be facilitated in their efforts to improve their living conditions through collective endeavours. A major issue in community enablement is that of capacity. One argument for enabling approaches is that a group of people can achieve far more than each individual working alone. This is particularly true perhaps for segments of the population which experince some disadvantage in the market place. Individuals who have a high degree of self-efficacy are less likely to see a need for the help of others and may, in fact, see collective efforts as involving unnecessary compromises. In any complex task, a variety of skills and abilities are needed to achieve success. Communities of disadvantaged people in particular, it is argued, can gain from collective action. In pooling their capacities, they can discover symbiosis and synergy - what one cannot do, another can, and the whole is much stronger than the parts. The process of collective action also provides for skill transfer.

Enablement in the community context, it is suggested, involves three aspects: collective decision making, the availability of choices between alternatives and capacity-building. Each of these presents potential roles for government - in equiping potential participants for democratic processes, in ensuring that real choices are available, and in supporting community efforts to increase their capacity to act effectively.

One focus of community enablement is certainly on the residential community or neighbourhood, in the area of urban management. Some of the most notable early efforts in what clearly amounted to community enablement, such as the work of Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation, focused on poor neighbourhoods. The mistakes of the urban renewal "bulldozing" era gave rise to community activists seeking a larger say over their neighbourhoods and this in turn lead to initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Improvement Program in Canada or the Block Grants Program in the United States, in which there was a requirement of resident involvement. Since that time, citizen participation has been madated in a number of areas.

Housing is the physical, economic and social background of community structure and is often the catalyst for other community development initiatives related to business or job creation. Accordingly, housing plays important roles in the converging focus of many recent public policy efforts, in particular those involving sustainable development and healthy communities. One definition of sustainable communities reinforces this perspective:

"Sustainable communities are those that aggressively manage and control their destiny based on a realistic and well thought through vision. ... The process must be comprehensive and address social, economic, physical and environmental concerns in an integrated fashion while maintaining central concern for the present and future welfare of individuals and the community." (Dykeman, 1992)

A definition of community development by the United Nations in 1963 identified the two essential elements of community development: "the participation by the people themselves in

efforts to improve their level of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective."

The facts that marginalized people are often congregated in areas characterized by run-down housing and they have limited geographic mobility further emphasize the important links to be made between housing and community enablement.

There are some biases commonly found among bureaucrats in government which reflect their usual middle class origins. Two of these are particularly intriguing, in that they may deter those in a position of influence from pursuing community enablement.

The first of these is that the local, geographically-defined community - the neighbourhood - is no longer an importnant aspect of daily life. Middle class status carries with it the capacity to enjoy what has been called the Liberated Community, social networks that are spread over space and which lack important features of the traditional community - social sanction and control. The Liberated Community is supported by the mobility offered by private automobiles and offers socializing oppoortunities without significant social restraints. For many of those who enjoy the Liberated Community, it may be difficult to believe that the more traditional form continues to be important, especially for those who do not have the same degree of mobility.

A second bias, despite the lack of any scientific evidence to support it, is that density causes social pathology. Again, the middle class person who has sought out low density living in suburbia and who regards people living in dense, inner city areas, may be inclined to hold to the cause-effect notion and reject enabling approaches as the approach of choice for these individuals - they live in higher densities, therefore they will suffer social pathologies which cannot be overcome.

These two biases are linked by a social value system which, to a large degree, depends on private transportation and which favours suburban living in low density, single detached family houses. They need to be challenged.

There are other common perceptions which might suggest that there is limited potential of community enablement, especially among disadvantaged populations. These range from the expectations on rates of participation, among people in general and among disadvanged members of society in particular. Many people sense that alientation and sensed powerlessness are growing across all population groups, that political participation is at an all time low, and that these conditions are particularly evident among those who are marginalized.

On the other side of the coin, there is a considerable body of literature on the nature and role of voluntary organizations, which indicates how these may be the mechanisms to encourage and support collective action. This work includes a significant focus on marginalized local areas.

There are many challenges on the road to "enabled communities". These include the development of an organization, the need for inclusion, the sharing of responsibility and the transfer of leadership skills so as to ensure the long-term viability of the machinery of collective action. Of course, there is likely to be a need for tapping resources beyond the community and, in a time of fiscal restraint, this presents a particular hurdle for many local efforts. A look ahead might focus on the tools which are available to assist local communities as well as at various ways in which local communities - particularly disadvantaged or marginalized groups - can be facilitated in their efforts.

The aim of this paper is to set out the potential of community enablement, and the major issues and challenges in empowering neighbourhoods or similar small social groups to identify for themselves their priority issues, to develop solutions they believe are appropriate and, if necessary, building their own capacity in order to implement solutions. Its motivation is to suggest the potential of community enablement as a means of tapping the capacity of local groups to address concerns which have, until recently, been addressed primarily through public expenditure. It is written in the hope that those involved in the development of public policy may be encouraged to explore ways in which they can foster community capacity.

The structure of the paper is as follows:

- It begins by providing a review of some of the philisophical considerations on the use of the terms community and neighbourhood, suggesting a focus on low-income neighbourhoods as a instrument of public policy.

- It then looks back to the social theories on community and neighbourhood and subsequent evolution of our collective thinking on the topics, including how this has been informed by studies on housing and neighbourhood satisfaction. This section seeks to show that the neighbourhood continues to be a vital locus of collective action.

- It looks at the implications of density and scale, the first from the perspective of its mythic link to social pathology, and the second as a re-interpretation of density which may have important implcations for community participation and satisfaction. The dominant view that the higher density living associated with low-income areas stands in the way of collective action is challenged.

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What is community?

"Community" is becoming a key word in a number of topical issues. One hears of "community development", "community economics", "community policing", "community health", and so on. The word itself conjures up warm fuzzy notions with great popular appeal with roots in the most cherished traditions of western culture at least, and this perhaps explains in part it's popularity. Literature reviews have identified hundreds of definitions of community, many of which go to great lengths to establish a legitimate use of the word which is not limited geographically.

One usage of particular popularity is the term "community of interest". This term is used in the discussion of the "legal community", the "medical community", the "feminist community" and so on. What these usages have in common is the sense of interest group, that is, a segment of society which shares an interest in certain values or regulatory provisions which serve their collective ends. The members of these "communities" do not necessarily know one another and do not meet a significant portion of other members on a regular basis co-incidental to their daily lives. Their common interests are generally fairly narrow and do not range across a number of life's major concerns, nor are these interests a product of a shared environmental experience. Until recently, these collectivities would have been categorized as "interest groups", a terminology which refects the self-interests of sub-categories of the population in contrast or perhaps in conflict with the interests of society at large. What this use of the word "community" does not reflect is any of the traditional notions associated with the idea of community as a "common union", a focus which is consistent with the current popular attention to the idea of community as a means of better serving the interests of disadvantaged segments of society.

Over forty years ago, Hillary (1954) found 94 different definitions of community. Two main categories in the usage have been identified (Gusfield, 1975), those of relational definitions - those dealing with social links - and those of territorial definitions. In the United States, the National Research Council examined the community as a territorially-bounded social group and offered the definition of community as "a grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid". The Council concluded that community in this sense consisted of at most a few hundred people.

In reviewing all these efforts, Hallman (1984: 34) went a step further to define a *Neighbourhood Community* as "a people within a limited territory possessing shared values, common interests, and norms of conduct, engaging in social interaction and mutual aid, and having their own groups, associations and institutions to help meet their basic needs." This does not deny the possibility of there being individuals living within the territory who are not "members" of the community, or indeed of there being more than one community occupying the same territory.

In its theoretic heritage as well, community clearly refers to a geographically and numerically limited population which shared a common set of values and traditions and which shared as well the consequences of a common local environment. In the context of pluralistic and urban societies, it is akin to if not synonymous with neighbourhood. Whether ones goes back to Tonnies' use of "gemeinschaft und gesellschaft" or Durkheim's "communauté et societé", the idea of comunity refered to a limited group of individuals who shared a common origin, space and set of conditions, and, through these, developed a common interest in a broad range of

matters critical to their quality of life. Community in these terms was clearly geographically and numerically limited - it was a group of people living contiguously who looked to each other for mutual supports and who collectively sanctioned or censured the behaviour of its members. It provided a defense against outside forces. Again, in historical theory, it did so out of habit and "affect" - emotional attachment - rather than out of short term rational self-interest.

These early theorists predicted the demise of community in the aftermath of the industrial revolution, as people shifted from belonging on the basis of affect and habit to affiliating with others on the basis of rational self-interest. Ironically, over one hundred years later, people still bemoan the loss of neighbourhood remembered from their youth. Hallman (1984) provides a poignant history of his personal experience of "neighbourhood" which captures in a few lines how our approach to neighbourhood changes over our life cycle.

There are those as well who view the traditional neighbourhood or its small town equivalent as overly restrictive - they focus on the social control aspect in which "everybody knows everybody else's business". For these people, one of the lures of urban and suburban living, particularly as experienced in suburban sprawl, may well be the anonymity it offers, the freedom from unwelcome intrusions of others. Reflecting this bias, Wellman (1977) characterized geographically dispersed social networks as *Liberated Communities*.

The term "neighbourhood" is commonly used to denote a larger area than that inhabited by one's neighbours. A neighbourhood is often taken to be a named subdivision of the city, having a population of perhaps several thousand, while the term "neighbour" is generally reserved for those living within the immediate few doors. Hallman (1984: p 258) distinguishes between the immediate personal neighbourhood and the *functional neighbourhood* - typically a territory encompassed by a neighbourhood association and defined by municipal officials for planning purposes. He sees this latter manifestation of neighbourhood as "being large enough to provide an effective base for activities and services responsive to basis human needs".

This division in the meaning applied to the two words "neighbours" and "neighbourhood" may be traced to urban planning models which have largely failed to reinforce small scale social structures through limited catchment areas for a wide range of public services. As more and more institutions persue growth, their expanded clientele is less likely to know one another in order to form a basis for a meaningful neighbourhood. On top of this, the lack of common catchment areas for schools, shopping, and other services and of meaningful boundaries around small local areas further undermines the potential of creation of communities.

The concepts of community and neighbourhood share the notion of being relatively small social groups featuring face to face interaction and having primary significance in the life of members. Since modern sociology first dealt with the concept of community, it has gone through some significant transformations. To the earliest sociologists it expressed the experience of small groups imbedded in a larger society with which it shared many common elements of history, language, culture and economy. It was distinguished in terms of a largely closed group interacting within a limited geographic area on a co-incidental basis - as a natural by-product of daily life. In the traditonal use of the terms, there is little to distinguish between community and neighbourhood - they are virtually synonmous.

Connerly and Marans (Huttman and van Vliet, 1988: 37) describe the varying importance of the neighborhood "as places in which people experience the surrounding built, natural and social environment, socialize with neighbors, invest in property, receive or use local public services, organize to protect property values and otherwise defend the neighborhood from forces

that affect the neighborhood's collective welfare, shop or work, and generally develop a sense of neighborhood identity ". Clearly, this description covers a broad range of what might be referred to as human 'needs', from physical, through social and psychological, to economic.

Armitage (1988: 65-73) identified the functions of community as including social control, socialization, mutual support, social participation and integration/stabilization. Weenig et al (1990) attempted to tap five aspects of neighbourhood life: interaction, social support, identification or belongingness, solidarity, a shared sense of relatedness, and influence (i.e. social control). They saw the first two elements as constituting neighbouring and the last four distinct aspects of "sense of community". They found evidence of two related components, one dealing with the quantity of interaction and social supports and the other dealing with the qualitative aspects of identification and social control.

The most recent examination of this issue (Taggart, 1995) found one factor which subsumed both aspects of identity - identified by elements with the highest loadings - and mutual support (See next page). This examination of the independent components of the meaning of neighbourhood included items dealing with housing satisfaction as well as other items focusing on the social context. Yet housing satisfaction items dealing with social aspects - the type of people, common spaces, opportunities to meet, etc. - had higher loadings on this first factor than any of the aspects of the dwelling itself. The second factor was identified by negative loadings on respect for privacy and a positive loading on a desire to move, perhaps suggesting the rejection of social controls implicit in strong communities.

It is tempting to suggest that there is need for balance between belonging and independence, between identifying oneself through one's affiliations with others and maintaining a strong sense of self. Given that the need for human interaction is a general one which can be met in a variety of settings and that mutual help in some cases will rest on the immediacy of that help, it would be premature to subsume these two elements. Likewise, each individual has many identities, depending on their setting. For instance, the employee identity is usually quite distinct from one's identity within the family or in a social setting where membership is open and voluntary. One can expect that membership in a low status group will have quite a different value than membership in a high status group. Finally, social control within the neighbourhood setting is only part of the process by which people are socialized to behave within certain norms and these too vary from setting to setting.

At the very least it should be recognized that the neighbourhood concept involves several significant social components, reflecting different human 'needs'. These include, but are not necessarily limited to: a. mutual aid; b. socializing; c. social control; and d. identity.

While a renewed interest in community might be developing across all socio-economic categories, the focus here is in addressing the needs of less advantaged groups within society. Once again, the notion of geographical limitations emerges, as these sub-populations are often concentrated together geographically by economic forces. In virtually every city, there are areas where those who are in many different ways disadvantaged in the market place are forced to locate by their economic circumstances into low rent areas featuring substandard housing.

If one defines common interests narrowly - that is, in terms of specific disadvantages - one may find several distinct yet separate communities, overlapping each other within the same boundaries. However, there are many examples where such groups joined forces to addressing their underlying common disadvantages, such as their lack of market capital or political influence, to improve their situations.

FACTOR STRUCTURE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD ORIENTATIONS

	Housing Satisfaction Scale	1	2	3
1	The home and its setting, overall	0.56	0.39	-0.22
2	The amount of indoor space	0.29	0.47	0.33
3	The home's interior finishes	0.37	0.48	0.39
4	The facilities	0.32	0.42	0.26
5	The home's outside appearance	0.46	0.31	0.16
6	The private outdoor space	0.49	0.23	-0.24
7	Common outdoor space	0.58	0.22	-0.18
8	Sound proofing and privacy	0.43	0.33	-0.12
9	Nearness of shopping	0.22	0.28	0.56
10	Nearness of schools	0.19	0.13	0.58
11	Traffic control in the area	0.27	0.37	0.34
12	Nearness of recreation facilities	0.3	0.32	0.57
13	The feeling of safety in the area	0.44	0.32	0.27
14	The type of people in the area	0.67	0.2	0.04
15	Opportunities to meet neighbours	0.65	-0.12	0.03
16	Influence on local decisions	0.51	0.03	-0.15
	Neighbourhood Satisfaction Scale			
1	I know most neighbours by sight	0.35	-0.51	-0.04
2	People here get together socially	0.41	-0.54	-0.07
3	People watch out for each other	0.58	-0.43	0
4	I often have trouble with neighbours	-0.3	-0.1	0.08
5	I'm ready to help neighbours in trouble.	0.37	-0.22	0.17
6	People here borrow from one another	0.35	-0.49	0.01
7	This neighbourhood is important to me.	0.57	-0.1	0.13
8	I would rather live in a different area.	-0.63	-0.18	-0.04
9	I have many friends in this area	0.55	-0.52	-0.05
10	I know many of the neighbours by name	0.54	-0.52	-0.05
11	I feel I belong in this neighbourhood.	0.75	-0.2	0.06
12	People respect each others' privacy	0.61	0.16	-0.06
13	People will help if I am in trouble	0.71	-0.3	0
14	People often talk to each other	0.64	-0.42	-0.08
15	People here respect each others' property	0.62	0.13	-0.02
16	I am proud to live in this area	0.81	0.1	0.09
17	This area is known as a good place to live	0.7	0.11	0.2

Taggart, 1995: 125

In the final analysis, the concept of community may be reduced to a social organization based on interaction between individuals with shared interests. The development of community is enhanced by proximity which contributes to increased face-to-face interaction and thus increases the likelihood of people coming to recognize their shared interests. It is for this reason that communities are expected to occur within geographically defined neighbourhoods. People who share a space are more likely to come to know one another and to share interests arising from the conditions of that space.

A focus on enablement as an element of public policy also supports a focus on areas which are limited geographically and in population scale. Those who are less advantaged are also less capable of maintaining relationships over distances which require transportation or other communication technologies. It has been found that persons with lower incomes are more likely than the more affluent to become involved in voluntary organizations and more likely still to participate in joint efforts where the organizations are relatively small.

It is this possibility of collective, organized efforts which provides the community defined in limited geographic and population terms it's potential. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) provide a powerful description of how such groups have come to be seen by public service providers as pools of need and deficiencies. They, however, view them as pools of talent and capacity. What skill or ability one member of the community does not have, another might, and collectively the group has far greater capacity than it's members acting in isolation. In the process, members will also develop new skills and become more self-sufficient.

This focus on marginalized populations also carries with it specific problems. The very forces and sets of experiences which bring people to live in run-down areas of our cities can be powerful teachers of all the wrong messages. If life has ingrained distrust of others and has failed to provide strong social skills and people with such an experience are living in proximity to each other, there may be real impediments to the emergence of community.

Having attempted to make the case for geographically-limited small scale groupings as the ideal case of community, one should recognize that there may be instances of true community which do not meet all of the suggested criteria. It is suggested that, at a minimum, community (in contrast to interest groups) requires that each member know a majority of the others, that they interact frequently on a co-incidental basis, and that the members offer each other mutal support. This is clearly not within the expectations of those who have adopted the *Liberated Community* as their model of choice.

The focus of this paper will be on social organizations with limited populations which are bounded geographically - what have been referred to as *Active Neighbourhoods* (Taggart, 1995), ones characterized by social interaction, mutual help and collective decision making. To the necessary and sufficient conditions of *Neighbourhood* - that it is a geographically-limited, small scale residential area, within which there is a high degree of social interaction and mutual help - is added the feature of collective democratic decision-making. Its realization rests on its authority to decide, if not on specifics of governance, then at least on the activities the collectivity will take to influence more specific decisions impacting on the neighbourhood. This focus will ensure that enablement is considered as an approach to facilitating disadvantaged segments of society to collectively discover their capacity to identify their needs and to effect solutions.

Community Theory

If local community or neighbourhood-based groups are to be an effective agent of public policy, they must first of all be important forms of social organization. Many adult Canadians today will report low levels of neighbouring and will instead rely on a geographically extended network as the basis of their social lives. If community enablement is a useful approach for public policy development, there must first of all be some basis to expect that communities - especially geographically-bounded residential communities - do and will exist as the basis of collective action.

Our current understanding of community is to some degree influenced by social theories dating back over one hundred years. The earliest sociologists attempted to understand the concept of community and its role in our lives and social structure. Their theories have formed the basis of the most popular contemporary interpretations of traditional primary groups such as the family and the neighbourhood. These ideas have endured many fundamental changes in societal values and a dramatic shift from primarily agrarian and rural societies to ones that are, today, overwhelmingly urban and pluralistic.

Against the theoretical efforts stands a body of research conducted in the area of housing satisfaction, which suggests that social relationships within the residential area continue to be powerful contributors to satisfaction.

The Sociological History

The social and industrial revolutions which swept Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dramatically transformed a class-structured and kinship-based society.

From the birth of modern sociology, its treatment of primary groups has been influenced by the sense of loss felt by early theorists, such as Tonnies in 1887 (1957) and Durkheim in 1893 (1960). They contributed to an image which is shared by many contemporary sociologists as well as members of society at large. The image they provided was of a world featuring small populations in local areas with shared blood, shared history and shared interests. The story they told was of the effects of the Industrial Revolution, with young people across Europe leaving small agricultural communities where their families had lived for generations, to find their fortune in the burgeoning cities. There they found themselves adrift in a sea of strangers, separated by their pasts and by their new specialization in the workplace.

Tonnies and Durkheim both suggested that the natural re-organization of society following the industrial revolution would mean that people would no longer form their most important relationships within close-knit groups like the family and neighbourhood. Instead, they would select relationships rationally, in terms of their own best interests.

Tonnies and Durkheim saw this transition as largely inevitable yet their writings display regret over the loss of primary groups based on emotional bonds built in face-to-face interactions. They saw urbanization in largely negative terms and laid the foundations of what came to be known as the *typological tradition* (Cousins and Nagpaul, 1970: 63-72). In this train of sociology, various writers used the opposing extremes on particular continua to provide a clearly contrasting picture of the past and future patterns of social organization. It should be recognized, however, that these theorists were describing "ideal types" to emphasis the contrast rather than to describe actual conditions at any point in time.

During the early phase of theory development on the community, the discovery of new communities developing within the ethnic mix of the New World was largely overlooked. The French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville visited the United States in 1831-1832 and remarked on a new form of community based not on a shared heritage of place but on voluntary association. In his book, Democracy in America, he described these associations as small groups of ordinary people who took three powers upon themselves: *the power to identify a problem; the power to identify a solution; and the power to effect it.* These same three powers are widely accepted as the essential elemenets of enablement.

In the 1920s and 30s, the Chicago School (Park et al, 1925) emphasized the continuing strength of local communities within large urban areas, focusing particularly on ethnic or cultural groups. A leading member of the school, Wirth (1938) came to define the city as a relatively large, dense and heterogeneous settlement. Members of the school borrowed many of their ideas from the natural sciences, viewing the social organization of a city in terms analogous to the competition between species for dominance. They investigated the notion of "natural areas" within the city, each defined by the common ethnic origins and economic status of residents.

Janowitz (1967) added another dimension to the concept of community in elaborating the notion of partial involvement in his concept of the Community of Limited Liability. In this view, city people still maintain interpersonal relations within and identify with small residential areas, but these areas do not serve the full range of human needs and most had associations with others beyond the neighbourhood boundaries.

Suttles (1972), who shared the research tradition, made an important distinction. He described the Defended Neighbourhood as a new form of community, based on intentional, voluntary, and especially partial and differentiated involvement. This distinguished it from the traditional community based on habit as described by Tonnies. In the Defended Neighbourhood, local residents responded to threats from the surrounding area with delinquent gangs, forbidding reputations, sharp boundaries and restrictive covenants. All these were used to preserve their community. Suttles felt that such neighbourhoods were most likely to be seen in the inner city where the poor were concentrated by economic forces.[1]

Janowitz and Suttles provided a way of understanding the narrow interests in contemporary neighbourhoods as hinging, for example, on phases in the family life cycle. Nevertheless, in their theories, local attachments remained, even if the residents were positioned to 'write-off' their investment when a 'better risk' presented itself.

Castells (1976: 37) summed up the perspective of sociologists in both the typological tradition and the Chicago School, describing the city as a "permanent settlement of a human population of high density and with a sufficient degree of heterogeneity [so as to result] in the emergence of a new culture, characterized by the transition from primary to secondary relations, role segmentation, anonymity, isolation, instrumental relations, the absence of direct social control, the diversity and transience of social commitments, the loosening of family ties and individualistic competition".

While the Chicago School largely focused on low income areas, other (e.g. Litwak, 1960; Litwak and Szelenyi, 1969) examined the social ties of the middle class. After the Second

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[1]   Suttle's Defended Neighbourhood may recall the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) syndrome, in which upper or middle class area organize to prevent the intrusion of undesirable elements into their privileged residential areas.

World War, many North Americans were moving across the continent pursuing career advancement. Litwak found that primary group relationships were kept up even when members were moved great distances, most particularly for mutual aid. This is not surprising in a society which values upward economic mobility yet still holds the family responsible for providing such help. By the time of Litwak's studies, the ideal of suburbia was well-established as an escape from the worst features of inner city living, real or imagined.

Network theorists such as Wellman (1977) built on Litwak's work. They studied the networks of personal relationships among primarily young adult, middle class and suburban populations. Wellman termed the dispersed networks he observed Libertated Communities. he observed represented the Liberated Community. They are geographically dispersed over-lapping sets of relationships, social "groups" created by the members according to their personal tastes and usually for social recreation. The Liberated Community does not usually exercise social control, offers no collective security and has no collective identity. The distance between members limits many forms of mutual aid as well as the range of shared experiences derived from the immediate environment. Instead of occurring as a by-product of daily life, meetings are planned and undertaken at some effort. While most of these networks are based on affect, they are for the most part *socializing* groups- they function largely as entertainment.

Wellman (1993) reported that network studies have looked at only a small subset of the most intimate ties, tending to consist of equal numbers of family and friends.[2] The only role of weaker ties which he recognizes is in information transfer. Other limitations of Network Theory are due to the emphasis on middle class adults. A dispersed network implies mobility, which is greater for these subjects than for those who are less well-off or are otherwise limited in their personal range, such as the young and the very old.

The Liberated Community, if it is a community at all, is one with an emphasis on rights. It offers opportunities to socialize but makes few demands on members. It does not require that members assume the broad range of responsibilities inherent in the traditional notion of community. Further, as a spatially-dispersed grouping, it is not available to everyone and it lacks many of the benefits of the traditional community, benefits which are the product of member responsibilities.

While the earliest community theorists predicted the decline of small, geographically bounded groups as a primary form of association, the Chicago School dealt with a far different circumstance. The example of community Tonnies and Durkheim saw was a small and isolated agrarian settlement. The neighbourhoods the Chicago School investigated were set in the midst of a pluralistic society where residents with differing personal histories and occupations were nevertheless drawn together, often by a single characteristic, such as language or ethnicity, which set them off from those living beyond the neighbourhood boundaries. But the group was no longer closed, as members belonged individually to other groups extending beyond the geographic limits of the neighbourhood. Still, interactions within the group were co-incidental to daily life.

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[2]   Ironically, a number of studies (Burnside, 1993) have found kin-dominated networks to exhibit relatively high levels of psychological problems. This has been attributed to the fact that membership is based on ascribed (unearned) versus achieved (earned) roles.

Network theorists transformed the community concept again, removing from it the notions of geographical limits and the broad range of shared experience. The members of the Liberated Community no longer interact as a group on the basis of daily living.

Many people today bemoan the loss of neighbourhood as they remembered it in their early years, whether real or imagined. But several generations have passed since Tonnies first theorized that the neighbourhood would cease to be an important part of our social organization. One obvious explanation is that the changes of which he wrote are as much a part of growing into adulthood - with its broader range of activities and extended mobility - as of the Industrial Revolution. Each generation since Tonnies will have felt the passing from the neighbourhood to the larger society and, with that, a sense of loss, the same loss Tonnies attributed to societal changes.

Yet the Liberated Community still appeals to many people who see it as fulfilling their socializing needs without requiring the commitment and compliance associated with the traditional neighbourhood.

Evidence from Housing Satisfaction Studies

The development of social theory relative to the neighbourhood appears to have stopped with the Network theorists but the study of the neighbourhood continued within the investigation of housing satisfaction. Although this work the research tools of sociology and found evidence of significance to the issue of community's place in contemporary society, it does not appear to have been systematically applied towards the development of social theory.

Galster (1987) suggests that the very concept of 'housing satisfaction' has not been defined with any consistency and suggests that this is because the research has not had a single goal - each study may be undertaken as an evaluation of the success of housing developments; as an indicator of incipient mobility, altering demands and neighbourhood change; or as an input to public policy. He reports that it has most often been applied in the interests of urban planning and housing developers.

Housing satisfaction studies have relied heavily on self-reports but some have also investigated the relationship between design features of housing developments and empirical measures of selected psychological and social variables. Two very different approaches have predominated the work. One is the 'purposive' approach in which people's behaviours (including house selection) are seen as efforts to meet implied goals. The other approach measures the 'actual-aspirational gap', the difference between individuals' perceptions of salient environmental features and their aspirations.

North American housing satisfaction studies have demonstrated that the suburban model represents a widely-accepted ideal in housing design and neighbourhood character. In many of its features, this is true in Europe as well. This ideal has shown up with remarkable consistency for over twenty years, in the features of the residential environment which are widely agreed upon as desirable and healthy.

Early housing satisfaction studies (e.g. Michelson, 1969; Michelson and Garland, 1974; Norcross, 1973; Bell and Constantinescu, 1974) reinforced the vision of suburbia has having the ideal housing and social characteristics. The single family detached house with significant separation between dwellings appeared to be the positive ideal on a single continuum of both physical and social amenities.

Other studies emphasized neighbourhood qualities which were not necessarily associated with suburbia. It was found that two distinct aspects contributed to satisfaction: the amenities of the dwelling unit itself; and its context, the neighbourhood. While the former is focused on resident assessments of physical features relative to household needs and aspirations, the latter is as much a matter of social factors (such as neighbouring, perceived threats from others, density of stresses and status) as it is of physical factors (such as the condition of the structures, landscaping, traffic planning, and area amenities).

Ferdandez and Kulik (1981) found that the social setting of residence had important effects on personal satisfaction as distinct from residential satisfaction. Social structural features such as the degree of social interaction and the number of friendship or kinship ties had the most significant effects. Social comparison had only a weak effect (those with incomes below their neighbourhood average reporting somewhat lower satisfaction), raising some question as to the importance of having "like" neighbours.

Ermuth (1974) suggested ways in which urban planning contributes to the weakness of the neighbourhood. He found low levels of social activity, weak area identity, and feelings of low esteem and isolation to be associated with long commuting distances, poor vehicle-pedestrian separation, inadequate public transportation and high noise levels. His evidence which suggest that it is not that people no longer seek local communities, but that they cannot find them, due in part at least to urban design features themselves. On the other side of the coin, it has also been suggested that there are ways in which the physical design of and the features included in the built environment can have very importnant positive effects - the placement of doors and the inclusion of communal facilties, for example, can encourage people living in an area to come to know each other, a prerequisite of community.

Michelson (1975: 40) attempted to bring together work on housing from three perspectives: mobility and choice, user needs, and environment and behaviour, with view to addressing the debate between self-selection and environmental determinism. Reflecting much of the thinking on "behaviour settings" developed in Ecological Psychology, he wrote of housing environments as providing "opportunity fields" within the context of his concept of congruence. He described these fields as providing the "opportunity for a certain (usually wide) range of behaviours to occur, although making difficult or precluding others".

Michelson conducted longitudinal research involving two groups, one moving into high rise apartments and the other into single family homes. His approach was intended to allow for assessing the subjects' expectations of their new settings and how the experience effected their satisfaction and behaviour. Unfortunately, he assumed that the high rise and detached home where at opposite extremes of all relevant conceptual continua and rejected the need or potential of including subjects living in housing forms offering intermediate densities[3].

Michelson's high rise subjects demonstrated that people will express satisfaction in environments which do not fulfill their long-term priorities, provided that they can see the situation as a 'stop along the way'. This reflects the continuing strong view of suburbia as the ideal residential environment. However, Michelson's most important findings concerned the

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[3]   Clearly, medium density housing such as row or townhousing features some of the aspects of each extreme. The social density is closer to that of the high rise, in terms of opportunities to meet neighbours. But this intermediate form also features the same ground-orientation as detached housing. Galster (1987) demonstrated the threshold effects which can occur on any dimension of housing satisfaction, in which a further increase in any one quality "consumed" does not necessarily result in an increase in satisfaction.

residents of suburban single houses, which are central in the debate between advocates of the traditional neighbourhood and those supporting the Liberated Community.

Women and teens who had moved to suburbia were dissatisfied and expressed a preference for central locations. For them, suburbia meant isolation. He suggested that the unidimensionality of the suburban "solution" provided an ideal setting for young children, but failed to meet the hopes of many others. Suburbia often lacked what Michelson called "local channels to friendship", as a result of which families typically relied on channels associated with communities of interest rather than those of physical proximity.

Michelson (1975: 413) concluded that the preference for the single detached house was based, not on "the ornate features of the house that serve as the major attraction to the respondents surveyed, but rather some of the most basic characteristics associated with control of the premises, relative economic security, self containment, and private open space...". Despite his evidence, the failure of suburbia to provide community was not pursued.

A later housing satisfaction study focused on those living between the densities considered in Michelson's study. Over a fifteen year period, Keller (Huttman and van Vliet, 1988: 63-71) followed the development of Twin Rivers, New Jersey, a planned unit development (PUD) with a mix of owners and renters in townhousing. She viewed the PUD as an attempt to foster a new sense of collective responsibility. She noted that suburban privacy and self-containment too readily became suburban isolation, vulnerability to crime and loneliness.

Given that initial residents of Twin Rivers generally aspired to the conventional free-standing single-family home on a substantial plot of land, Keller's (Huttman and van Vliet, 1988: 63-71) study of resident housing satisfaction focused on the acceptance of the townhousing form over time. She found that newcomers' fears of higher density housing, such as loss of privacy or troublesome neighbours, did not materialize.

After a decade, a follow-up survey found that two thirds of the residents expressed satisfaction with their housing, compared to under 2 percent who were dissatisfied. In the initial survey, a third of the residents rated privacy as "bad" but this declined to 24 percent a decade later. Residents gave their neighbours very positive ratings during both surveys, although there was a clear social division, with owners tending to confine their socialization to other owners. Still, for these people, who were largely satisfied by middle-density living, the ideal of the single detached housing remained potent - 21 percent mentioned "detached housing" first as the key ingredient of an ideal community.

But the idea of there being one ideal housing and urban form has been called into question. Michelson (1975: 415) provided an early warning:

"The creation of a given environment or environmental practice may reflect actions taken in self-interest by relatively few people, actions taken by persons attempting to speak for the public good although not themselves necessarily affected by the situation, by perceptions (sometimes indirect) of how things are thought to work, by existing practices in government, economics and social structure, and by the existing state and supply of natural and man-made resources, at a minimum".

From housing satisfaction studies, it appears on the surface that owners of detached housing are happier than renters of high density housing. This might be attributed to the higher status they enjoy under the dominant value system of our society. But one of the intervening

variables is likely economic in nature[4] - the income of owners not only provides them greater protection from environmental "stresses", but enhanced security of tenure and the mobility to escape, to create social groups independent of locale.

A recent study (Taggart, 1995) controlled for housing form, researching the neighbourhood orientations of townhouse occupants under four different forms of tenure - free-hold, condo, co-op and rental.

These tenure groups displayed the socio-economic status one would expect, with declining incomes and education levels generally, from freehold owners through condo owners and co-op members through to tenants. There are three particularly noteworthy findings here. Tenure forms which explicitly involve collective action display higher rates not only of local participation but general participation - co-op members and to a lesser degree condo owners are more involved than the higher status freehold owners. With the exception perhaps of freehold owners, housing satisfaction and neighbourhood satisfaction reflect participation. And finally, the relatively low satisfaction of tenants cannot be explained by socio-economic status alone - the absence of structural opportunities for participation has a price.

TABLE 1: TENURE, PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION

Tenure	Above average Local Participation	Above average General Participation	Above average Housing Satisfaction	Above average Neighbourhood Satisfaction
Freehold owners	4%	40%	53%	53%
Condo Owners	24%	43%	43%	46%
Co-op Members	57%	53%	53%	59%
Tenants	8%	28%	19%	36%

Taggart, 1995: 102-110

One question of particular relevance to the issue of neighbourhood's place in our lives today was straightforward - respondents were asked to state how they felt about the statement "This neighbourhood is important to me". A majority of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, ranging from 61% of tenants (not co-incidentally perhaps, also the lowest in satisfaction and participation) to 83% of freehold owners.

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[4]   This was suggested by the findings of an Italian study (Bonnes et al, 1991) in which higher income residents of dense neighbourhoods reported higher satisfaction.

TABLE 2: NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPORTANCE BY TENURE

Neighbourhood Importance		Freehold	Condo	Co-op	Rental
Strongly Disagree	%	0	2	3	8
Disagree	%	6	6	6	9
Undecided	%	12	13	9	21
Agree	%	62	62	54	43
Strongly Agree	%	21	16	27	18

Taggart, 1995: 104

One of the most recent reported studies on the topic of community is that of Wilson and Baldassare (1996). They found that 68% of residents of Orange County in California lived in place which they described as having a sense of community. In support of earlier studies, they found that the sense of community was higher when there was higher satisfaction with the amount of local participation in the community. However, in an argument for the suburban sprawl model of development, they reported that the sense of community was associated with the sense of privacy - their subjects were more likely to view community positively if they could control the degree to which theri neighbours intruded into their lives. This is an intriguing reflection of the arguments against the traditional community, in which everybody knows everybody else's business. Wilson and Baldassare also concluded that city size, density and ethnic heterogeneity worked against the sense of community.

Summary

Theories on the neighbourhood began with the prediction of its demise, shifted to attempts to explain its continuing but limited role and finally suggested that community had been freed of its geographic limitations. For almost twenty years, there has been little theoretical re-examination of the neighbourhood as a potentially important element in people's lives.

The local community or neighbourhood has been found to be an important source of interaction, social support, identification or belongingness, solidarity, a shared sense of relatedness, and influence, although there is no clear indication as to whether any of these are independent of the others.

Housing satisfaction studies, in contrast to sociological theories, have provided evidence that the neighbourhood retains an important place in people's lives. But, despite a growing literature providing anthropological-type accounts of the specific neighbourhoods, little has been done to advance theory in this area to identify generalizations on the conditions which contribute to or work against the development of strong neighbourhoods with high levels of interaction between residents.

One of the prevailing notions that has had a profound influence on people making housing decisions has been that high density is bad - that living too close together causes physical, emotional and social pathologies. Urban planning and land developers have responded to buyer perceptions. One of the consequences has been that those who can afford to have opted for the lowest density housing, generally single family detached houses with significant open space around each dwelling. Those less fortunate find themselves in higher density housing,

often in older areas of our cities, often areas of disinvestment. At the heart of the issue is whether those who are disadvantaged (and that includes those with various "pathologies") are selectively delegated to high density areas or whether the density itself contributes to social dysfunction. Would the very fact of living in higher density areas stand as a barrier to realizing community and developing a program of collective action?

The issue of boundaries and how the definition of territory might have important implications for the well-being of residents of particular areas has not received the same attention as the issue of density. It might well be that the population scale of one's territory has a greater effect that density. An examination of these two issues - density and scale - may provide some insights into some conditions important to the development of strong neighbourhoods.

The Issues of Scale and Density

Population scale has significant effects on community and on participation in community. On the one hand, there must be a critical mass to support collective action. On the other, the scale must be limited if each member of the group is to be able to know the majority of others. The issue of population scale can be linked to that of density, the concentration of large numbers of people in limited areas. This has particular significance to the topic of community enablement since economic status carries with it the capacity to obtain space. Low income areas in urban settings are typically higher density areas. [5] Residents are frequently characterized in terms which would suggest limited capacity for community building. Thus, common perspectives on the effects of density can have a profound influence on the prospects one sees for community-based initiatives in marginalized neighbourhoods.

Density has long been seen as having an effect on urban social structure (Wirth, 1938). It either destroyed community by surrounding people with strangers or preserved community in providing a critical mass for sub-cultures. Only in the Liberated Community was the mass of people who are not members of one's own group seen as mere filler between oneself and other members.

Three decades ago, Calhoun (1960) found evidence that high density environments were associated with various pathologies - in Norway rats. Since then, there has been much scientific attention on the negative effects of density on human populations:

> "In some respects, this discussion is analogous to debates on romance. It is something which affects most of us, whether we want it or not. Although it is difficult to conceptualize [its] effects...we nonetheless feel that [it] is a real phenomenon with an active force." (Michelson and Garland, 1974: 4)

The dominant perspective (Ittelson et al, 1974: 243-302; Gillis, 1980) has been that high density contributes to social pathology and this in turn has supported the preference for low density suburbs. This is exemplified by a recent American study (Wilson and Baldassare, 1996) which agrued that suburban sprawl offered people greater privacy. The authors reportedly found a link between both satisfaction and sense of community and each of privacy, density, and scale.[6] The report on this research presents an argument for open spaces between houses, as if that were the only effective means of achieving privacy and without considering the barrier to community this could represent. It goes on to suggest that heterogeneous municipalities have a greater hurdle to overcome in providing a sense of community.

Urban planners measure density in terms of people per unit of area and, through zoning bylaws, effectively control the density in sub-areas of cities. These bylaws establish the housing forms which are allowed in specific areas and these forms in turn have significance for the social

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[5]   It should not be assumed that higher density necessarily means high-rise apartments. Most inner cities in Canada have low income areas which consist of former single detached housing which has been converted to much higher densities, including roominghouses. These areas are often characterized by absentee landlords and deteriorated housing conditions.

[6]   However, this study did not use a site-specific measure of density or scale (attributing city statistics to each respondent) nor an objective measure of privacy (using instead the respondent's satisfaction with the degree of privacy, whether this was objectively high or low). Further, there was no test of whether the attribute commonly taking to reflect community were present or not, relying instead on each respondent's internal definition, asking them if they felt a sense of community.

structure which might emerge. Low density single family designations, for example, require detached houses, usually with large front, side and rear yard set-backs from adjoining houses. As a consequence, there are space barriers between people and greater distances to so-called community services. These encourage the use of automobiles, thus further diminishing the opportunity for chance encounters, and, in fact, the distances are further exacerbated by the road width requirements to accommodate high two-direction traffic flows. In many cases, pedestrian traffic is further discouraged by the lack of sidewalks.

Higher density multiple family designations provide for houses to be directly connected to one another, often in developments with a distinctive character shared by the dwellings. Communal features are often included in the development, and the opportunities for social encounters are maximized. One of the design debates has centered on the limitations this housing form places on individual identity (Hourihan, 1984; Porteous, 1977: 64-65; Ittelson et al, 1974:357).

Much of the work investigating the effects of high density has echoed the idea derived from the work of the Chicago School that large, dense and heterogeneous urban areas tended to be socially dysfunctional. Heterogeneity is seen as playing an important role, depriving people of a critical mass of like individuals. (In the Canadian context, it would be particularly interesting to explore the prospects for neighbouring in ethnically-mixed residential areas.) However, another line of research (e.g. Freedman, 1975) suggests a cause-effect relationship in which heterogeneity plays no role - pathology is the result of density, without regard for structural features of social life.

Speculations on the subject of density have contributed to a common expectation that high density provokes physical, psychological and social problems. Following the adage that "where there's smoke there's fire", it is widely believed that humans thrive in low density settings and are harmed by high density living. Clinical psychology and psychiatry have recorded cases of breakdowns in personal and family functioning attributable to environmental factors such as density. This was found in housing satisfaction studies as well. However, some (e.g. Loring, 1956: 160-168) emphasized that high densities only aggravate or accelerate any tendency to disorganization.

Psychological explanations of the negative effects of density suggest that it acts as a source of stimuli overload - residents of dense areas experience stress in response to multiple and conflicting signals from their environment. Murray (1938) referred to this as 'environmental press' and Schoggen (in Barker and Schoggen, 1973) wrote of 'environmental force units'. Accordingly to these writers, not all stimuli are equally significant however - humans are capable of selective perception, and each input has its own "ecological clue validity" (Brunswick, 1949). The ecological clue validity is a function of how important a difference is for the individual in terms if his or her relationship to the setting.

Psychologists such as Lewin (1951) have emphasized a distinction between 'literal perception' and 'schematic perception' which contribute to distinct objective and subjective stimuli loads. Various parallel terms have been used to explain that the degree of attention an individual pays to different signals varies and that environmental stresses and human responses are modified by the individual personality as it has been socially conditioned.

This has particular significance in interpreting the stress of density and for the creation of community in a heterogeneous population. From the perspective that visible, socially-defined differences between residents of an area introduce added stimuli and that these in turn will have

varying objective and subjective significance, heterogeneous populations might be inferred to represent higher stimulus loads for individuals than homogeneous populations having the same objective density in terms of persons per standard area.

Cross-cultural comparisons have suggested that the environment and its effects are interpreted through culture. Schmitt (1973) found lower rates of pathology in Hong Kong at 2,000 persons per acre than in American cities at 450 persons per acre. Canter and Canter (1971) found similar results in a comparison between Tokyo and the United States. The cultural homogeneity of the Hong Kong and Tokyo populations, however, is much greater than in North America. This might go some way to explaining the difference levels of density 'accepted' in highly homogenous areas compared to heterogeneous populations common in North America.

A psychological study of prejudice (Tajfel, 1973) again used the concept of "stimulus overload" and provided some interesting insights which relate to the sociological study of urbanization and have important implications for the development of active neighourhoods in multi-cultural societies.

According to Tajfel, prejudice is an example of the human tendency for 'cognitive economy', the reduction of incoming stimuli to the most essential elements and basic categories (i.e. stereotypes) so as to permit the application of pre-developed behaviour patterns which are characterized as discriminiation. The strength of this tendency varies between individuals according to their capacity to deal with complex thought. The dangers to the individual of holding inaccurate perceptions are avoided because they are shared by a supportive group.

Tajfel (1973) found that prejudice is a strategic response to perceived threats, when one is confronted by large numbers of unlike others with whom there is no interaction[7]. This describes Suttles' Defended Neighbourhoods - subcultural areas or ghettos where internally homogeneous groups are surrounded by very different groups within a city.

Alexander et al (1977) considered building height to be the cause of pathology rather than density, citing several studies which found a relationship between the incidence of mental disorders and the number of levels people lived above the ground. Drawing on British, Canadian and Danish studies, Alexander contended that no dwelling should be built over four stories. For example, the Danish study found that children living in high rises formed social relationships in the larger community later than children in ground-oriented housing. This is contradicted by the low incidence of pathologies previously noted in Hong Kong and Singapore where densities are achieved through high-rise development.

Alexander did not explore alternative explanations before linking height and pathology. In fact, one of the studies he cited found that the time spent in the dwelling was a more powerful predictor of mental disorder than height. This finding, based in part on higher rates of pathology among women than men, more likely reflects social estrangement rather than dwelling form, height or density. Other findings might also be explained on the grounds of economic and self-selection factors: low income persons have fewer means of escaping the effects of isolation and people who are 'turned-off' of relationships may well isolate themselves on higher floors. None of this, however, is to deny the possible barrier height represents in finding ready opportunities to socialize.

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[7]   Tajfel also found that integration works to reduce prejudice, precisely because it provides people the opportunity to discover facts about the "strangers" which refutes the stereotype.

A more recent Canadian study (Gillis et al, 1986) tested the hypothesis that 'flexible' Asians, 'reserved' Britains and 'gregarious' Southern Europeans differed in the way they adapted to the physical environment. Specifically, the researchers expected to find that these three groups could be located on a continuum of susceptibility to stress from density, with the Asians being most adaptable and the British the least. All of this appears to be based on the stereotypes of the racial groups, however much their case rested on anthropological descriptions and historical interpretations.

Gillis et al collected various measures for a group of Toronto area highschool students. They chose students as subjects on the basis that they had a limited capacity to deal with stress by relocating. The measures included ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, psychological stress, and density, both in terms of persons per bedroom (room density) and dwelling form (design density). The researchers found significant relationships between the ethnicity of the subjects, density and stress, just as they hypothesized.

Unfortunately, the study did not include an objective measure of density in terms of space per person. It did no measure the heterogeneity of the surrounding populations, nor did it control for relative acculturation of the suibjects in the Canadian context - ethnicity was based on the fathers' ethnic backgrounds, regardless of whether the subjects were first or fifth generation residents or lived in cultural 'ghettoes'. The suggestion is left that the hypothesized differences were genetic.

Such findings call national space standards into question. They could be interpreted as a rationale for providing more space to different racial or cultural groups, according to some inbred 'need', and even for perpetuating ethnic ghettos. Conversely, the result can perhaps be explained in terms of the actual-aspirational gap (Galster, 1987), with the some groups having higher expectations of space and thus less tolerance for conditions which fall short of their hopes.

An Italian study (Bonnes et al, 1991) focused on the role of perceived crowding in residential satisfaction. Longer term residents tended to be more satisfied, as did higher income residents (who obviously enjoyed the means of 'escaping' crowded conditions). Dissatisfaction was associated with 'social openness', the degree to which strangers passed through one's territory. Most significantly, the researchers concluded that dissatisfaction was much more a product of the *social density* - the density of interaction- than the *physical density*.

Hourihan (1984) found that public housing residents were much less satisfied than others and attributed this to the 'monotonous' appearance of their housing, an apparent contradiction of the effects of stimuli. Two other studies have demonstrated that satisfaction in public housing is more complex and that it too involves important aspects of community and personal control, usually identified with home ownership.

Burby and Rohe (1989) evaluated a program of 'decentralization' in public housing in the United States, in which some families were moved out of large developments into scattered single dwellings, that is, from high density settings to lower densities. They focused on the residential satisfaction of the two sets of residents, relating levels of social interaction, employment, fear of crime, and urban-suburban location with the style of housing. They found no significant differences in social isolation between housing style or location and the only benefit of decentralization was reduced fears of crime.

Many of those who have written on the lure of the city have described the "push" of rural areas (e.g. the lack of economic opportunities) and the "pull" of the city, where there are jobs

and where there is the critical population mass to support a wide variety of activities. To writers such as Jacobs (1961) and Freedman (1975), the higher densities of urban areas have positive effects in terms of community and security. However, they envisage the densities associated with conventional three to four storey walk-ups over commercial uses at street level, rather than the densities associated with high rise apartments. They place a strong emphasis on an interesting street life and a mix of people and activities.

Still, the debate over the relationship between density and social and personal pathologies continues. It continues to be a subject of scientific investigation (e.g. Lepore et al, 1992, in which crowding is linked to psychological distress and lack of control). While it is generally accepted that high density can be associated with the occurrence of many problems, Freedman (1975) concluded that other factors accounted for so much of various pathologies that little was left to be attributed to density.

In Galster's (1987) study of housing satisfaction, he found evidence that consumption and satisfaction were not continuously related, that at a certain point in increasing consumption of a "good" such as privacy or space, satisfaction no longer increased proportionately. This highlights the importance of looking along the continuum of housing densities rather than merely at the extremes of low cost high rise apartments and high cost single detached housing. It may well be found that there are intermediate densities at which there is no loss of satisfaction nor increase in pathologies.

Today's city has its critics, many of whom relate the weaknesses they see to the increasing scale of municipal populations. At the heart of this debate is the conflict between the quest for personal independence, to be free of social sanctions and restrictions, and the need to belong and to find mutual support from neighbours. The challenge is to find what trade-offs our society is prepared to make between individual freedom and social support if the problems of the day, from crime prevention to economic renewal, are to be addressed

Critics of the city such as Chorney (1990) and Bookchin (1987, 1989) view the modern city as being alienating in its nature. Chorney views the modern city as bearing the seeds of its own destruction. The inauthentic nature of the modern city (that is, the alienating aspect of its failure to meet human needs as in Etzioni's theory) becomes evident as the state is increasingly unable to meet the needs of its citizens. In a critique of Neighbourhood Watch and similar programs, Chorney describes the state, faced with the rising costs of exerting social control, turning to fostering pseudo-communities while at the same time fostering inter-personal suspicions which are designed to prevent the emergence of class consciousness and class action. From his perspective, such efforts run counter to the realization of true communities offering mutual help and protection simply because they are based on mutual mistrust. A more balanced interpretation might recognize that mistrust within Neighbourhood Watch and similar programs is focused on strangers in the setting and knowledge of recognized residents and their patterns of behaviour.

As one of the founders of Social Ecology, Bookchin (1987, 1989) attempts to map out a 'revolutionary project', which he views as essential to our survival, in the face of the environmental crisis. His project echoes Etzioni's emphasis on a participatory democracy, but with a particular emphasis on small scale, local area assemblies as the vehicle of political decision-making.

He presents a romanticized view of the city as growing out of the earliest forms of human association. He asserts that the overwhelming evidence of anthropology indicates that

participation, mutual aid, solidarity and empathy were the cornerstones which provided a survival advantage. These same values, according to Bookchin, underlaid the city until recent times. He follows Aristotle's view of the structural standards of the 'polis' as a highly self-conscious ethical entity: it had to be large enough so that its citizens could meet most of their material needs, yet not so large that they were unable to gain a familiarity with each other and make policy decisions in open, face-to-face discourse.

He characterizes urbanization by the traits of anonymity, homogenization and institutional giantism, a process which destroys the city, erasing local divisions which meet the structural standard of participatory democracy. The same process promotes the notion of personal freedom through independence, the ideal of the 'rugged individual' who abides no limitation on his action and has no compulsion to be part of a collective. Thus, Bookchin sees urbanization as responsible for the decline in citizenship.

The answer he offers involves the remaking of society through the development of local communities. Bookchin calls for participatory democracy to be realized through small scale, local area assemblies as the vehicle of political decision-making. These would be the seat of political decision-making. Coordination at the city-wide or higher levels would be achieved through strictly-mandated representatives to central bodies charged with the responsibility for administration alone.

Barker's work on ecological psychology led to the development of Manning Theory (Wicker, 1979) in which it was found that participants in under-staffed settings (i.e. those in which there were more roles than individuals) were typically more involved and more satisfied.

Warner and Hillander (1963) found a strong relationship between the size of the organization and both attendance and participation, suggesting that commitment decreases as organization size increases. Knoke and Wood (1981) also tested the relationship between organization size and commitment, following the notion that increased size implicitly reduces the opportunities to participate in leadership roles or influence decisions. However, they found no net effect of size on commitment when other variables were controlled.

Olsen argued that "rational self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests (1971, p.2). He provided a cost-benefit assessment as the underlying reason, suggesting three basic reasons why rational decisions would be to avoid participation: because increasing scale of organization results in small individual benefits; because increasing scale involves greater costs of joint action; and because large scale inhibits the formation of coalitions for action. Olsen also suggested that participation would be higher in smaller groups, supporting the theses of Manning Theory and those such as Bookchin who argue for a return to small scale organizations.

The relationship between scale of development and other measurements including housing satisfaction, neighbourhood satisfaction, participation and powerlessness were examined in a recent study (Taggart, 1995). While the results were only marginally significant in statistical terms, they are suggestive that medium scale - in this case, developments of between 50 and 100 housing units[8] - has a positive effect on all of these characteristics.

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[8]   The scale categories were based on a simple trichotomy of the subjects' reported neighbourhood size. Because the study dealt only with townhousing residents and there was a tendency to equate the specific development to the neighbourhood, these scales should not be interpreted as implying an appropriate neighbourhood scale in other housing forms.

Boundaries established by common designs and physical separations can serve to establish an area within which social interactions are expected to occur. Together these aspects of urban developments can reinforce a community identity and influence the range within which residents seek out meaningful signals. In turn, the scale of development can thus create the "density" of inputs with which residents must cope. Some may be too large to facilitate interaction and result in 'sensory overload'.

TABLE 3: DEVELOPMENT SCALE EFFECTS

Scale of development	High Housing Sat isfaction	High Neighbourhood Satisfaction	High Participation	High Powerlessness
Small	49%	44%	41%	47%
Medium	49%	60%	51%	41%
Large	40%	44%	41%	46%

Taggart, 1995: 114

Others may be too small to provide a critical mass for collective action or to support external recognition of the development's identity or be lacking in sufficient stimuli. Thus, the scale of development, of the social arena for community, may frustrate the achievement of personal needs and of the emergence of neighbourhoods.

On balance, there is little evidence that density per se represents an impediment to community, although scale may well have some important effects. One manifestation of the emergence of community may well be the creation of an organization or organizations which give it a collective structure and direction. The consideration of community enablement would not be complete without a review of the literature - and the evidence - on voluntary organizations.

Community Involvement

Since the voluntary organization was "invented" over 150 years ago, it has become the focus of a separate field of study. The social sciences have paid significant attention to the concepts of social participation, examining the determinants of participation and its outcomes. There is a need to explore why people participate - what motivates them - as well as to determine what they gain from experience and what subsequent behaviours they will exhibit. If the neighbourhood is to become the vehicle for wide participation in local decisions as suggested by the WECD (1987), the essential aspect of the *Active Neighbourhood* will be wide participation in democratic decision-making, reflecting in part the concept of the *Active Society* developed by Etzioni (1968). Etzioni wrote of the active public as representing typically some five percent of the population as he mapped out how a transformation could occur to the *Active Society*, one in which the vast majority participate in collective decisions. He argues that this is a real possibility in the post-modern age.

In much the same terms, an *Active Neighbourhood* (Taggart, 1995) is defined as a limited geographic area in which there is a high degree of interaction among residents who come to know each other incidentally in going about their daily lives and come to develop more or less organized ways of reaching collective decisions on common interests associated with their shared circumstance. Such *Active Neighbourhoods* can be a powerful force, addressing a wide range of issues from simple planning decisions to contribution to official plans, from crime prevention to community economic renewal.

According to Etzioni, through participation, the population would collectively reformulate the knowledge base of society, what Etzioni described as its 'contextuating orientation'. This orientation is the stable structure of values and beliefs which is widely shared within a given society and which determines what new ideas get accepted. This orientation reinforces the status quo, leading to the rejection of new ideas or 'bits' which contradict the orientation of the set, that is, new ideas which appear to point in a contrary direction. According to Etzioni, changes in societal knowledge come about through new 'bits' being added onto the existing set.

These 'bits' are initially ones which do not contradict the general orientation outright but subtlety and over time contribute to a gradual shift in the societal orientation until it points in a new direction. Societal action is determined by societal knowledge, and this knowledge involves barriers and costs which must be overcome in order to bring about social change. Among the 'bits' in the current orientation of North American society are those valuing suburbia featuring single family detached housing as the ideal residential environment and the continuing perception of higher density living as unhealthy.

Etzioni (1968: 624) considers that alienation is a result of a social structure failing to fulfill human needs. A society is "authentic" if it meets those needs. Although he recognizes that human needs (as opposed to needs which are shared with animals) could be modified through socialization as well as through material redistribution, he suggests that the "flexibility of basic human needs is limited in that they can be more readily and fully satisfied in some societal structures than in others... [and that] there are significant limits to the manipulability of the members [of a society]".

Etzioni maintains that an authentic society requires authentic sub-societies, that is, ones which likewise meet human needs. But he has made little distinction on the basis of population scales. He defines community as a social unit which has integrative mechanisms which are not dependent on external units or supra- or sub-units. These mechanisms would maintain the unit boundaries, inner structure and political organization.

Our Common Future (WCED, 1987: 63) reflected similar thinking, noting that "[t]he law alone cannot enforce the common interest. It principally needs community knowledge and support, which entails greater public participation in the decisions that effect the environment. This is best secured by decentralizing the management of resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources. It will also require promoting citizens' initiatives, empowering people's organizations, and strengthening local democracy".

Following Etzioni, the social changes needed to achieve sustainability can, however, be undertaken through collective decision making and action. A synthesis of the WCED's recommendations and Etzioni's concepts suggests a focus on the prospects of the *Active Neighbourhood*. Other writers have dealt more specifically with the question of population scale, arguing that it is of fundamental significance in any radical theory of social change, that a sense of community and shared purpose must exist among the majority of society's members, and that this is best addressed at the neighbourhood level.

The Voluntary organization

The voluntary organization, as noted by de Tocqueville over 150 years ago, is widely seen as a rebirth of community, a form of gemeinschaft which may or may not have a geographical base. It relies on the features on any formal organization in order to preserve itself and fulfill its members' expectations. By 1912, even Tonnies came to see the possible re-emergence of gemeinschaft, of overcoming individualism and reconstructing community through the rise of a moral-humane group consciousness (Fletcher, 1971: 78). He was responding in particular to the rise of the co-operative movement.

Theorists such as Silverman (1970) distinguish between formal and informal organizations. Formal organizations are described as being consciously and purposively established for the achievement of explicit goals. Silverman suggests that formal organizations can be distinguished from informal ones in that they have rules designed to anticipate and shape behaviour in the direction of the goals and a formal status structure with clear lines of communication and authority.

The formal/informal boundary is not clear cut. Silverman points to armies, business enterprises and churches as examples of formal organizations; families, friendship groups and communities as informal ones. But families can be purposive and exhibit all of the qualities of the formal organization. Even the community has been defined as a social structure delineated by role relationships and having its own set of norms and positions (Bertrand), again suggesting a formal nature.

A more useful basis of distinguishing organization types might be the ways in which members are attached to the group. Etzioni (1968) provided a typology which linked the process by which people come to be members of a group and its moral quality. He describes coercive links as alienative, remunerative ones as calculative and normative ones as moral. Coercive and

remunerative recruitment is typical of some of Silverman's examples of the formal organization, but both the community and the voluntary organization rely on normative means.

Etzioni (1968) suggests that leadership, rituals, manipulation of social and prestige symbols and resocialization are among the techniques involved in normative social control. He sees normative social control as leading to individual commitment to any organization and emphasized that it applies to elites as much as lower-ranking participants. This reflects a notion put forward by Janowitz (Knoke, 1981), that social control has a dual aspect - that it is both the means by which a collectivity constrains participants' activities and the process by which the members shape the organization's policies toward superordinate goals, that is, ones which all members share.

Following in the typological tradition, Reisman (1950) portrayed human behaviour as developing from "tradition-directed" in feudal times, through "inner-directed" during the industrial period, to "other-directed" in modern times. This loss of personal autonomy, he suggested, had given rise to wide-spread alienation.

Rose (1967) took this notion further, suggesting that many people placed greater dependency on family and extended family, on publics[9] and on voluntary organizations precisely as a reaction against the loneliness, ignorance, powerlessness, anonymity and, finally, dependency generated by mass society. He sees the voluntary organization as "simply a public with a more permanent relationship among its members and a more formal structure (Rose, 1967: 205). They share several distinguishing traits with publics. They specialize in one or a few interests, focusing on discussion which sometimes leads to social action. They willingly consider new ideas, and rely on "rational" discussion. Their continuity and formality, however, give voluntary organizations a stronger psychological effect on members than mere publics in counteracting the feelings engendered by mass society.

According to Rose, voluntary organizations are social structures having, among other things, distinct features of formal leadership, specialized activity, rules for operating, and place and time of meeting. He makes a distinction between two types of voluntary organizations, "expressive" ones- those which existed for the satisfaction of internal interests of members - and "social-influence" or "instrumental" ones. Knoke and Wood (1981) define instrumental groups as voluntary social influence associations that attempt to influence public policy in specific areas. Because of their specific and limited purposes, Rose suggests that instrumental organizations tend to have a limited life, although he offers no explanation of why this would be so - it would seem that an organization meeting ongoing purposes would have continuing support.

Booth and Babchuk (1966) define voluntary organization in similar terms, as formal groups embodying continuity, and rules governing eligibility, goals and prescribed rights and obligations of members. Like Rose, they see them as integrative systems for individuals and the community, playing a vital role in society.

Neal and Seeman (1964) tested whether voluntary organizations did indeed mediate between mass society and alienation. They found that members of organizations experienced lower levels of powerlessness than non-members, even controlling for socioeconomic status and mobility. However, they were unable to determine whether those who perceived themselves as

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[9]   He described "publics" as large, informal, non-contiguous, integrated discussion groups.

having power were more inclined to join or whether the fact of membership contributed to their greater sense of power.

Styskal (1980) suggests that participation in voluntary organizations allows members to express their individuality and to meet the psychological need for self-actualization. He sees commitment as a result of participation essential to the maintenance of the organization and to individual fulfillment. Whyte (1991) identifies a number of important factors at work in the way participation generates commitment, which distinguish between animal and human behaviour: the role of others in systems of rewards and penalties; social comparisons; the development of trust in response to the time lags between action and reward; and the ownership of ideas.

Even as Rose sees the voluntary organization as a means of enhancing democracy by distributing power throughout the population, he fears that class-based differences in participation could lead to the election of a semi-totalitarian government hostile to the voluntary sector. He suggests that low-income people are less likely to participate in voluntary organizations because they are "too poor to pay membership fees, to ignorant to know how to conduct themselves in group settings, or too apathetic to have any interest in organized group activities" (Rose, 1967: 245). Since they have not experienced the power and personal satisfaction which comes with membership, he feels they might well be supportive of a more restrictive political regime.

From a social justice and equity perspective, Rose appears to place the blame upon the victim - low-income people. He does not pay any attention to the conflicting demands they face, working long hours to achieve livable incomes and still having to perform many duties higher income persons can purchase, from child care to house cleaning. While one can appreciate the reluctance lower income people may feel to invest in voluntary organizations in which they may lack the skills to influence outcomes or lack the hope of success, the labels of ignorance and apathy suggest an inappropriate value judgement.

The notion that participation - both in voluntary organizations per se and in other social processes such as elections - increases with socioeconomic status is wide-spread. Babchuk and Gordon (1962) tested it out in a slum area, with a particular emphasis on how people became affiliated with associations. They believed personal influence was the most critical factor and they therefore expected that the time spent in an area, religious affiliation and size of family would all play critical roles. Although they reported high participation levels within the slum, participation was found to increase with income, education, and homeownership. Low income adults, less likely to join organizations themselves, nevertheless encouraged their children to join expressive organizations.

Babchuk and Gordon studied whether formal leaders of organizations or informal leaders from one's personal network were more influential in the decision to join. Personal influence networks were found to be more important in the decision to join in the case of expressive organization than in the case of instrumental ones.

Reflecting Etzioni's (1968) suggestions on the techniques of normative socialization, Knoke and Wood (1981) tested the relationship between strength of commitment and the range of incentives available, the opportunities for participation in decision-making and the legitimacy of the leadership. They found that those who participated in decision-making had the strongest levels of commitment.

Knoke and Wood (1981) describe 'the pervasive ideology of membership control' as being based on democracy being valued in itself but also on the basis of a belief that wide

involvement can increase the successful performance of the organization. They tested the degree to which commitment to and detachment from voluntary organizations was a product of the degree of social control the members had over the association. Contrary to findings from other research, they found that lower income members were more supportive of their organizations than the more affluent.

Knoke and Wood found that commitment was related to both participation in decision making and the strength of communication within the organization, and that strong communication could compensate for lack of direct involvement in decision making. Presumably, a continuing flow of information from decision-makers to the membership would permit members to determine their level of participation according to the personal salience of particular issues.

Warner and Hillander (1963) measured member commitment on the basis of meeting attendance, active participation in meetings, performance of special assignments, project participation and financial contributions. They found a strong relationship between the size of the organization and both attendance and participation, suggesting that commitment decreases as organization size increase. They found only a weak relationships between size and both the performance of special assignments and financial contributions.

The investigation of voluntary organization and participation has taken two distinct paths. The traditional one has involved researchers seeking as unobtrusively as possible to gain knowledge of general principles. It has not focused exclusively on locally-based groups. On the other path, work has been decidedly "hands-on" and local, with the deliberate goal of organizing and changing the community under study.

Participatory Action Research

What is now known as Participatory Action Research emerged out of the fight for survival of low income communities in Chicago and in Latin America.

Saul Alinsky (1972) worked in many of the same areas studied by members of the Chicago School, helping them to develop their defenses against pressures from the surrounding city. Paulo Freire (1972) advocated the "popular education" programs in rural communities in Latin America, in which research skills were transferred from scientists to the people under study, in a form of Participatory Research. He argued that the division of labour between research experts and study subjects perpetuated authoritarian societal forms. Both Freire and Alinsky focused on the local production of knowledge as a means of creating community consciousness and organization.

Swedner (1983) saw an urgent need for a community development technique which could be applied in urban areas, noting the frequent lack of the "we" feeling of community frequently found in rural communities. What he advocated was Action Research, a program in which social scientists would join forces with urban administrators in field research, problem identification, action development and evaluation.

Action research and participatory research have merged into Participatory Action Research (PAR), which has been widely applied largely in rural areas throughout the developing world and in industrial settings in the United States and Europe (Whyte, 1991, Couto, 1987). Despite a growing focus on PAR as a tool in community development, critics have questioned its status as science (e.g. Argyris and Schon in Whyte, 1991, Eldon, 1983 and Lapati, 1988). The

basic issue is how information generated for and by the local community for its specific uses can be taken to a higher level of generalization, to be of wider use.

PAR involves community members in the search for solutions to shared concerns, just as de Tocqueville described the American phenomenon. This itself contributes to their development of a wide range of research, social and political skills and the experience often contributes to a heightened sense of group identity and attachment. PAR continues to find application in the development of community consciousness. Perhaps most importantly, it represents a history of democratic voluntary organizations which have been developed by low income people on a neighbourhood basis.

Mandated Citizen Participation

Rosener (1978) noted the trend towards greater requirements for citizen participation, mandated in such areas as urban planning and environmentally sensitive developments. She observed that evaluations of citizen participation yielded conflicting results - the "effectiveness" was often judged as low by agencies which found the citizen input countered planned initiatives and high by citizen participants. This highlights the need for a clear understanding of the relationship between participation and outcomes and agreement on the objectives. The nature of this participation is not well defined. Alexander (1969) provides a conceptual model of resident participation in planning, which she termed the Ladder of Participation[10]. At the lowest levels, the planners inform residents, while progressively greater participation is manifested at higher levels, from consultation to true participation, in which the residents themselves are involved in the decision-making process. It may be that the majority of resident participation exercises have amounted to little more than tokenism.

While the American tradition began, as deTocqueville noted, with citizens banding together to develop and delivery a wide range of services[11], most of these were subsequently taken over by municipal and state or provinvial governments. With the notable exception of Alinsky 's efforts in the early forties, governments took the lead in delivering public goods. It was not until the so-called "bulldozer approach" pursued by government became the prevalent approach to urban renewal in the fifties that wide-scale protest developed and with it renewed attention to local resident involvement. Through the sixties and seventies, there were numberous federally-sponsored initiatives in the United States which contained a flavour of things to come. These included the Community Action Program, Community Action Agencies and the Model Cities Program. Hallman (1984: 125) reports on a directive issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal:

"[T]here must be some form of organization structure, existing or newly established, which emboides neighbourhood residents in the process of policy and program planning and program planning and implementation. The leadership for that structure must consist of persons whom neighbourhood residents accept as representing their interests."

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[10] Kasperson and Breitbart (1974) provide a useful overview of theories and issues in citizen participation. They review models such as those of Arnstien the social advocate, of Burke the administrator, the VanTils' two dimension model involving issues of scope versus focus, and of Milbraith's Hierarchy of Involvement.

[11] Hallman (1984) identifies voluntary organizations providing fire and police services, park maintenance, immigration settlement and schools in the period prior to the First World War.

The requirement of citizen involvement, such as under Canada's now defunct Neighbourhood Improvement Program, has given rise to many locally-based organizations in lower income areas across Canada. Subsequent programs in both countries - the Block Grants Program in the United States and the Community Resource Organization Program in Canada - have provided critical support by which local communities were able to establish permanent organizations and access the skills necessary to participate and compete in the planning process.

Tenure and Participation

Another factor widely assumed to have significant effects on participation rates is based on socioeconomic status: the legal rights of individuals with respect to their residency, what is referred to as housing tenure. Those who own their own home generally have greater legal guarantees that they will remain residents of their neighbourhood and this is widely seen to have implications in terms of participation rates. Homeowners are widely seen as being "better" citizens, and, by implication, non-owners are seen as "worse" citizens. Owners are supposed to be happier, more involved in their community and to be more likely to vote.

The benefits of ownership which are most commonly suggested are: security of tenure (in that owners usually experience declining housing costs over time, relative to their incomes and cannot generally be displaced at the whim of others); the opportunity for control (in that the residents can make changes within and around their home and can deny access to others); status and positive self-identity (in the uniqueness of each home, the display of personal taste and values in decor and landscaping, and the symbol of the home as an achievement); and finally economic stability (in the investment value of the house both as a present good and as a retirement nest-egg).

All of these can be appreciated as contributing to a resident owners' commitment to the home and the preservation of its' setting. They can even be viewed as worthy of government support as "public goods"[12]. Even housing as an investment has been seen as a public good since homeowners develop equity through tax policies which contributes to their lesser reliance on the state. But this is deemed to be 'earned' and not a matter of right. The others are reasonable aspirations of all citizens, rooted in human needs.

Traditionally, ownership implied detached housing, but this is changing as new options in attached housing become increasingly popular (e.g. condominium or strata title as it is known in British Columbia, co-operatives, life tenancy in which residents pay up front for long term leases on the basis of life expectancy, etc.).

It may be worthwhile to separate the issues of tenure and form. Given the negative social and environmental aspects of the traditional ownership model, with its relationship to suburban sprawl, can the positive aspects of ownership be achieved in other forms of tenure and design?

The "pervasive ideology" Knoke and Wood (1981) referred to is perhaps best expressed in formal organizations within the co-operative movement. Tonnies saw the potential of co-operatives:

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[12]   Blumenfield (1984) provides a review of the 'needs' met by housing, which he identified as shelter, the physiological need; privacy, the psychological need; and prestige, the sociological 'demand' which served no public interest. He downplays the psychological needs and dismisses the social needs. Yet they are real factors in housing satisfaction which must be addressed.

"It is evident that, under a form adapted to conditions of Gesellschaft, there has been revived a principle of Gemeinschaft economy which is capable of further development ... [which] may become the focus for a resuscitation of family life and other forms of Gemeinschaft through better understanding of their significance and their essential qualities." (Fletcher, 1971: 78)

According to Tonnies, this possibility rests on a reorganization of the economic foundations of society, from the predominance of the movable capital of trade and commerce to the natural interchange of production and consumption. Members of co-operatives create a synthesis of the affective, homogeneous group and elective rational social connections within a heterogeneous society, which combines the components of mutual support on the basis of democratic decision making towards common interests.

The geminschaft elements of an affective basis of affiliation and group homogeneity are no longer essential prerequisites, since the individuals elect to participate in an association with persons who were for all intents strangers shortly before the establishment of the co-operative. Each member shares some common values or interests but these are not founded on long-term habits of association through sharing a geographic area and possibly occupation. They may be focused on specific elements of daily life. Each makes a "rational" decision to join but "affective" relationships grow out of their common purposes and mutual help. They become, over time, associations based on trust and reliable expectations of each other. And the association is not enforced by traditional power structures but by democratic rule in which each member has an equal voice.

Chorney (1990) explicitly cited housing co-operatives as contributing to an increase in social solidarity. Although he recognizes that many participants in co-operative housing take it to be merely a temporary solution on the road to ownership, he sees it as offering education in self-management and contributing to a sense of social solidarity. Grant (1991) similarly sees co-operative housing as one potential basis of creating a new planning paradigm.

The co-operative movement is guided by what is known as the Rochdale Principles (Dreyfuss, 1973): an open and voluntary membership; democratic control; a limited rate of return on capital; earnings or profit from business belong to the members; the necessity of education and the idea that co-operatives must co-operate with one another.[13] In these aspects, the movement goes far in addressing what Janowitz (1980) called for in citizenship - the need for balance between obligations and rights. The emphasis on education within the co-operative movement serves the same ends as participatory research in providing members the necessary skills for effective participation.

There is much in the notion of co-operatives as a new gemeinschaft which itself may reflect a romantic rendering. Anecdotal information is rife of struggles for power between the "ins" and the "outs" within co-ops. Yet the foundation of new enterprises based on absolute democracy - one member, one vote, touching on every decision of fundamental import to the collective - points the way to a possible rebirth of the neighbourhood. For when the co-operative is based on residency, the issues become by their very nature central to an

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[13]   The principles governing the co-operative movement were to be re-examined at the meeting of the international body in England in the fall of 1995. While the proposed revisions are not fundamental, they address some needed changes to deal with the economic environment of the 1990s.

important element of our lives -our shelter- and span a wide spectrum of concerns. And knowledge of other members and the ability of each to influence other becomes a natural offshoot of everyday life - one cannot help but encounter those who share a geographical space and its associated facilities which the collective controls.

If the "Community Lost" theorists are right, social relations in a post-industrial society will be highly rational and there will be little emphasis on belonging for other than explicitly direct self-interested reasons. Indeed, the solidarity of homeowners is widely seen to be greatest when their investment is threatened - when a change in their residential setting is perceived as threatening property values. One might also expect to find relatively high involvement in condominiums where the same economic self-interest is involved. On the other hand, the "Community Lost" theories suggest that strong social relations only exist where there are evident economic self interests. Yet there is ample evidence of strong communities in public and non-profit housing where there is no economic interest whatsoever and still clearer evidence of strong communities in co-operative housing where the economic motivation is limited at best.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has investigated resident participation and interest in participation in various forms of assisted housing, specifically including co-operative housing, non-profit housing and public housing. These three are also widely seen to be of decreasing status, having client profiles of progressively lower incomes, education and employment. And, while co-operative communities appear to be thriving, there are many strong communities in the other forms of assisted housing and there is evidence that residents would like to take a more active role in the day-to-day operations of their residential community.

Condominium owners commonly experience low rates of neighbouring and social interaction within their developments and, in fact, there is often limited interest in condo elections among resident members.

One of the major factors which may stand in the way of achieving *Active Neighbourhoods* within lower income areas is the general lack of participation. It can be readily understood that alienation is rife among this segment of the population, given that society has in many ways already failed them. There, more than anywhere else, one might expect to hear the old line, "You can't fight city hall" or "There's no point in voting". A number of studies have documented low political participation among those low in socioeconomic status, but also found important interactions between other social structural elements.

The Correlates of Participation

Olsen (1972) reported that voter turn-out had been associated with a number of factors, from age, sex and race to the components of socioeconomic status. According to "social participation theory", voting behaviour is a product of participation which works to broaden the individual's sphere of interest, brings the individual into contact with other view points, and contributes to an increase in political knowledge and relevant skills. He found that participation in voluntary organizations contributed to increased political activity, but that informal social involvement such as neighbouring did not have this effect. This may be resolved through recognition that the informal exchanges do not generally involve explicit joint decision-making and thus have little bearing on sensed efficacy.

According to "social participation theory", voting behaviour is a product of participation which works to broaden the individual's sphere of interest, brings the individual into contact with other view points, and contributes to an increase in political knowledge and relevant skills. Participation in the political process and in public policy activities is taken to be largely predicted on the basis of efficacy - those who can influence the decisions are more likely to be involved.

Yet in reviewing several studies, Sinclair (1979) found relatively weak relationships between participation and sensed efficacy, with correlations of 0.15 at the federal level and 0.12 at the provincial level. He undertook a study of the relationship between political powerlessness and socioeconomic status in Canada based on surveys in 1964 and 1968. He found that levels of sensed powerlessness in Canada were high and increasing, largely independent of socioeconomic status. While those in low status and peripheral groups were more alienated, powerlessness was wide-spread across socioeconomic categories.

He suggested that those low in status, the 'objectively deprived', might suffer from a "false political consciousness", focusing on "the improvements they had seen over time and not the distance still to be covered" (Sinclair, 1979: 132). On the other hand, he found relatively high levels of sensed powerlessness in high status people. His suggestion was that, having been socialized to accept values of individualism and minimum government interference, they see the actual performance of government as excessively populist or collectivist. Sinclair concluded that Canadians' experience of politics was alienating across the board, even if the cause of alienation differed between status categories.

Still, there is evidence that Canadian society is moving towards the *Active* state. MacDermid and Stevenson (1991) found that political action of one form or another was relatively high, even among system supporters (those below average in activity and in criticism of the status quo) and the alienated (those below average in activity and high in criticism). For example, 36 percent of system supporters and 47 percent of the alienated had engaged in the 'easy' activity of signing a petition and at least seven percent of both groups had engaged in 'harder' activities such as joining a group, attending a protest meeting or phoning a talk show.

MacDermid and Stevenson wrote of a "critical awareness" which perhaps reflects a new consciousness of some economic and political realities described by Brown (1981:358-9):

"As long as national economies were expanding steadily, the affluent and the powerful could always rationalize that since the economic pie was expanding, everyone would eventually get more. ... With the economic pie no longer expanding, it becomes more difficult to dodge the question of how the pie is being distributed. ... Social cohesion is bound to increase if materialism is gradually abandoned as a social and personal goal among the affluent."

Sallach, Babchuk and Booth (1972) explored the relationships between alienation, voluntary group membership, socioeconomic status, and political activity. Their hypotheses were derived from conflicting explanations of the link between status and activity: class-related differences in access to information; occupational differences in the encouragement of political skills; and class-related barriers to political power. In their work, they distinguished between various types of political activity, including discussion, attempted influence, campaigning, association and voting.

Sallach and his colleagues found that membership in voluntary associations was the most powerful predictor of political activity, and that both socioeconomic status and sensed

powerlessness were clearly related to only one form of political activity - voting behaviour. In emphasizing the roles of early socialization and group membership, they concluded:

> [I]nterpersonal skills, gregariousness, self-confidence, [and] a positive self-image all function together to encourage and reinforce social participation in formal groups, informally with friends and acquaintances, or in other potentially anxiety-producing situations. (Sallach et al, 1972: 889)

They suggested that this is the typical pattern of socialization for middle class children, thus accounting for what they perceive as class differences in political efficacy. Yet Sinclair's (1979) findings suggest that powerlessness is at best marginally related to class. The socialization described by Sallach et al may contribute to higher levels of social participation and thus economic success, but this should not be translated to mean that the more general notion of political efficacy is class-related. The middle class may well be disinclined to engage in critical political activity, sensing that they enjoy more than their fair share of society's material rewards.

Thirty years of research in sociology and political science have provided few clear answers to the questions involving participation and socio-economic status. It does appear that alienation is growing but, at the same time, more people in every income category are becoming involved. One important aspect appears to be the presence of a relatively small scale group or organization within which the individual has the opportunity to influence group decisions, and thereby tap the group's resources to address the problems which concern that individual. These might frequently be the very problems with which urban planners have to deal.

Further evidence on the topic of participation, particularly of low income persons, might be derived from less academic sources. For the past six years, CMHC has been exploring the theme of community participation, paralleling an increased interest among other agencies of government at every level as well as in academic circles. There have been some interesting findings.

Firstly, it was found that a significant portion of residents do voluntarily participate either in attending meetings or serving on committees. Table 4 provides the participation rates in the 1978-1985 non-profit and co-operative housing programs. Clearly, there are differences between programs, with housing managed by municipal organizations having the lowest rates of participation and co-op housing the highest.

TABLE 4: PARTICIPATION BY SELECTED HOUSING PROGRAMS

Program	Attending meetings	Participating in Committees	Satisfied with impact
Public Non-profit	34%	20%	50%
Private Non-profit	59%	21%	64%
Co-operative	92%	62%	88%

CMHC, 1983: 245

Even in public housing, which is fully targeted to low income households, participation rates were relatively high. The evaluation of this program found that there was no participation in only 8.5% of the dwellings and that residents participated in three or more areas of housing operations in over 52% of the units (CMHC, 1990:207).

By far the most significant findings for those concerned with encouraging self-reliance are the benefits these people reported as resulting from their involvement. Table 5 summarizes these benefits for a number of housing programs. As many as 82% of participants reported one or more skills derived from becoming active in their housing environment. Many of the benefits can be translated directly into enhanced employability and between 41% and 62% reported increased self-confidence. There are many anecdotes of someone who had been reliant on social assistance developing a rewarding career as a direct consequence of their participation. Up to 39% of co-op members reported improved self-reliance (CMHC, 1992: 145). But there may be a lasting benefit to the community as a whole, as the participants learn to direct these new abilities to addressing local issues.

A Canadian study of public housing tenant satisfaction (LeBrasseur, Blackford and Whissell, 1988) underscored the importance of personal control over the environment, one of the presumed advantages of single home ownership. This study found satisfaction was related to individual self-concepts. Those who viewed themselves as having an important role to play in control of their situation (i.e. having an 'internal locus of control') were much more satisfied when they were allowed some say in the management of their housing.

TABLE 5: SELF-IMPROVEMENT BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Skill or benefit	Percent reporting new skill or benefit*
Financial	9.8% - 21.8%
Clerical	5.5% - 21.8%
Trades	2.9% - 14.6%
Organizational	27.6% - 40.2%
Project Co-ordination	40.7% - 44.4%
Self-confidence	41.8% - 61.6%
One or more	63.6% - 82.3%

* ranges reflect differing programs and populations receiving or not receiving rent-geared-to-income benefits. CMHC, 1992: 143

It is worthwhile to explore the link between housing satisfaction and participation. Table 6 shows the relative level of satisfaction among residents of assisted housing, private market tenants and homeowners.

TABLE 6: HOUSING TENURE AND SATISFACTION

Tenure Category	Percent satisfied
Public housing	87.4
Private market Tenants	76.8
Homeowners*	92.7
General population	86.8

* Homeowner satisfaction prorated from general population. CMHC, 1992:132

Schoenberg and Rosenbaum (1980) focused on structural features such as external links and organizations . They define a *neighbourhood* as an area with boundaries identified by residents, with at least one institution identified by residents and with shared common space. They postulate the requirements of a *Viable Neighbourhood* being the existence of a mechanism to define and enforce shared standards of public behaviour, at least one formal organization, ties to city resources, and enduring channels for exchange between conflicting groups. The *Viable Neighbourhood* may rest on the adoptation of garbage collection times as an indication of the enforcement of shared standards for public behaviour.

The *Active Neighbourhood* (Taggart, 1995) is defined as a limited geographic area in which there is a high degree of interaction among residents who come to know each other incidentally in going about their daily lives and come to develop more or less organized ways of reaching collective decisions on common interests associated with their shared circumstance. One of the suggested conditions for the development of neighbourhoods is geographical limits, implicitly meaning small scale. Scale in turn is related to housing form. The density and form of residential development could have significant implications for the realization of the *Active Neighbourhood.*

It has been found that local communities continue to be important to people and that they can be a significant arena of participation. It has also been found that participation leads to skill development and enhanced satisfaction. Further, there is strong evidence that group participation can be higher among those with lower incomes or levels of education. It may even be that people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods depend more on organized efforts than higher income people who perhaps start with a higher degree of self-confidence and the ability to act effectively as individuals. From these perspectives, the opportunity for local resident involvement in the planning process, particularly in marginalized neighbourhoods, may be just the counterbalance required to the forces contributing to the growing sense of powerlessness among all socio-economic categories.

CMHC and Community Enablement

Many important lessons on the theme of citizen participation have been learned through Canada's experience in housing. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, as the federal housing agency, has a long history of involvement in self-directed efforts across wide range of housing and settlement issues. Through the Neighbourhood Improvement Program or NIP as it was known by those involved, the federal government provided financial support for social and physical infrastructure improvements at the neighbourhood level, on the condition that local residents be involved in the planning.

NIP had varying degrees of success in citizen involvement. While there has been no systematic evaluation of the program, there are a number of neighbourhood or city-specific reports. From the available accounts, the experience of Port Dalhousie was one of the real winners. The Port Dalhousie neighbourhood of St. Catharines, Ontario, had been a separate village at the Lake Ontario terminus of the first three Welland Canals. Its links to this heritage were evident in its architecture but development in the area had been frozen when it was slated for urban renewal. Reinvestment in the housing stock halted, property standards declined, and the former village was in danger of becoming a low income ghetto.

The city invited residents to a meeting to hear about the NIP - Port Dalhousie was one of several neighbourhoods being invited to compete for funding under the program. Within three months, there was an active community association with over 700 members. Volunteers undertook a series of community surveys, leading to a set of proposals for NIP-funded improvements being put to a public meeting before being submitted to city council.

Separate committees were established to deal with a range of local concerns, many of which were not within the scope of the NIP. Social and recreational programs were set up for teens and seniors, a heritage committee was established, a monthly newspaper was put out, and resident volunteers worked on getting their neighbours involved in the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. Work began on several long-range efforts, to develop a community centre within an unused heritage building, to put in place a shoreline protection system to counter erosion and provide public access to Lake Ontario, and to establish a commercial area revitalization program.

Throughout it all, decisions were made democratically at general meetings or meetings of the elected board of directors. People who had never before taken a role in civic affairs gained new skills and confidence. They also developed a new attitude - instead of the old complaint "You can't fight city hall", they found they could work with the city's planners and other staff for the improvement of their neighbourhood.

The organization was called the Port Dalhousie Quorum and its motto was "Working together, we'll make things happen ... PDQ!". Years later, one of the former presidents reported on a visit to the old neighbourhood where a local property owner had recently gone to city hall with a redevelopment proposal. The planners' reaction included the advice: "Go see PDQ". Clearly, the residents of Port Dalhousie had become an *Active Neighbourhood.*. Such local communities can be a powerful force, addressing a wide range of issues from simple planning decisions to contribution to official plans, from crime prevention to community economic renewal.

At a recent workshop organized by the Canadian Institute of Planners, it was observed that there are many community organizations active today which got their start through the Neighbourhood Improvement Program. It might be useful to undertake a comparative analysis of the neighbourhoods involved in this program prior to its implementation and currently, using census data.

There has been a lively debate over the NIMBY phenomenon, the Not-in-My-Backyard reaction where a group of upper middle class home owners, often seen as small cliques which do not represent the population of the area, lobbying on behalf of narrow self-interests and against the wider good of the city.

Time and again, the signs of *Active Neighbourhoods* have been seen among marginalized groups, including those with low incomes, disabilities, limited education, or poor economic prospects. And they have shown what they can accomplish, not only for themselves but for the broader community. As the mission statement of Concordia University's Institute in Management and Community and Development puts it, they "must be seen as pools of talent rather than of need."

The NIP is just one example in CMHC's long history of involvement in self-directed efforts across wide range of housing and settlement issues:

- The Community Resource Organization Program which provided sustaining funds for local community resource organizations for a limited period of time, so that they had the opportunity to become self-sustaining. While the primary work of these organizations was in the development of social housing, many went far beyond that field into other areas of social and economic development. Many of the groups developed through this funding continue to operate today.
- CMHC's support for community development extended to various housing programs, perhaps in particular in the co-op sector. Thousands of religious-based or service organization-based groups and co-operatives have developed housing to meet a variety of special needs or interests and again moved beyond housing into dealing with many other issues of local concern.
- CMHC has also supported initiatives focused on enhancing the capacity of individual households or small groups to improve their housing situation. At the program level, the Rural and Native Housing Demonstration Program is one example, in which families were helped to build their own homes. The success of this initiative has led to it becoming an ongoing approach to serving housing needs in remote areas. At a smaller scale, eight families in Whitney Pier, Nova Scotia, received help to build their own homes.
- The Resident Participation Initiative which focuses on those living in public housing was introduced in 1989 and includes several provisions, such as increased funding for resident associations and support for the development of community meeting spaces. A research project carried out in conjunction with this initiative demonstrated the broad range of resident-directed initiatives in which public tenants were actively contributing to enhancing the social fabric of their communities. In a video documenting resident participation in public housing, housing managers spoke of the many benefits they had realized through encouraging this involvement.
- Currently, CMHC is sponsoring an current initiative known as *Home Grown Solutions*. This two-year exploration of community enablement is being managed by the Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Canadian Housing and Renewal

Association, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Home Builders' Association. It is hoped that local groups will successfully demonstrate a wide range of activities from social programming to self-help housing. In association with this initiative, CMHC has published two manuals, *Housing Ourselves Affordably*, a guide on multiple self-help housing, and *Land for Our Future*, which reviews the role land trusts could play in supporting the development of affordable housing.

Individual research projects have also contributed to our understanding of the ways in which communities can develop solutions to the issues which concern them, while building a tool box which can be used by other groups across the country. For example:

- an Inuit community in Labrador, determined to build on the new skills they had developed in building their own homes to turn them into economic opportunities for tomorrow, developed a community skills inventory manual; and

- the residents of the Riversdale neighbourhood here in Saskatoon developed a volunteer-based housing inspection program, which resulted in real improvements in the condition of housing in their neighbourhood, and a hand book setting out the process for other areas faced with the problems of substandard housing and absentee landlords.

The road map for future CMHC efforts in support of local communities is not fully drawn. In large measure, CMHC is responsive to new ideas coming out of the very communities which have so often been viewed as dysfunctional ghettos, pools of dependency and need. Time and time again, they show themselves as pools of talent and commitment.

Towards a Model of Community Enablement

The starting point of our definition of Community Enablement reflects the powers that deTocqueville suggested voluntary organization took upon themselves: the power to identify a problem, the power to identify a solution and the power to implement it. If a community is enabled, then clearly the community is in charge. Likewise, in the context of an inclusionary and democratic society, it is implicit that the community decision making process is one in which all members have a full and equal say. Further, this notion reflects the Maslovian concept that the individual and the community seek to become all that they are capable of becoming.

The focus of much recent work in the area of community enablement has been on disadvantaged or marginalized neighbourhoods, those areas where people less able to compete in the marketplace are clustered together by economic forces, areas characterized by low rents in substandard housing, low levels of work force participation, income and education, high levels of dependency and a variety of social ills. The life experience of many people living in these neighbourhoods frequently results in feelings of powerlessness, anomie and distrust of others. They are effectively disenfranchised and often lack the social connectedness and organization necessary for them to begin the journey to enablement.

This characterization suggests several questions:

♦ *Is the neighbourhood an important arena of social life?*
The dominant perspective of sociological theory has been that geographically limited communities would cease to be important arenas of social linkages. Yet the overwhelming evidence derived from housing satisfaction studies indicates that the neighbourhood remains an important setting in terms of socializing, mutual support and identity.

♦ *Are Canadians today generally prepared to be involved in social action?*
A recent Canadian study (MacDermid and Stevenson, 1991) found that Canadians were becoming increasing active but in non-traditional ways. Environics (1994) reports that a "vacuum has appeared as confidence in various institutions such as the state, business and organized religion have been in steady decline". Consistent with this decline in confidence in government, Environics notes that "the values associated with equality and autonomy ... have been progressing steadily over the past decade.". This analysis of Canadian social values indicates that there is a set of values gaining greater support among Canadians - support for social equality, for membership in a caring society, and a focus on community rather than on the national level.

♦ *Are those who are disadvantaged more or less likely to become involved?*
Contrary to prevailing perceptions, the weight of evidence is that the disadvantaged are more likely than the more affluent to become involved at the community or neighbourhood level. Findings of high participation rates within social housing communities support this expectation. This probably reflects some pragmatic considerations - they are more likely to have influence at the small scale, local level and do not have the mobility to maintain activity across greater distances. It may also be that it is through this involvement that they begin to develop the social skills necessary to influence collective decisions. On the other hand, a population which can be characterized by its marginalization may need some intervention which can instill the hope that it can be effective in bringing about the changes it seeks.

- *If those who are disadvantaged do become involved, what is the probability of this being successful?*

The best evidence on this question is probably that derived from CMHC's program evaluations, which have found a significant portion of residents gaining new skills and confidence and reporting higher satisfaction from their involvement. This is supported by the finding that co-op members are more likely to be involved and satisfied than the higher income freehold owners (Taggart, 1995) - and, perhaps most significantly, this local involvement seems to translate into higher invovlement in organizations beyond the neighbourhood level.

There is a common perception that neighbourhood success in marginalized communities is almost always the result of either an outside organizer's efforts or of a charismatic leader arising within the neighbourhood - one who can galvanize the residents to action. This implies that community enablement among disadvantaged populations will either require a significant investment, often by a party with a preset agenda, or be a product of chance. This raises some issues on which there is little systemic evidence:

- *What does it take to stimulate the development of community and of collective action among clusters of marginalized people?*
- *What is the most effective process of community enablement?*

In the context of an ethnically mixed, pluralistic society such as Canada, there is an added issue of the viability of neighbourhood models -

- *Does the clustering of people from many different cultural backgrounds represent yet another barrier to collective action?*

While not couched directly in the language of enablement or empowerment, Hallman (1984: 256) provides such ideas in his discussion of achieving *Neighbourhood Wholeness*. He suggests that there are several meanings to the notion of wholeness: *complete*, that is having all the essential parts in place and working properly; *functionally integrated*, so that the various parts reinforce each other; and *healthy*, with wounds healed, illness cured and wellness maintained.

From this discussion, it might be suggested that an *Enabled Community* is one which is complete - having all the essential parts, say, an active population, an encompassing organization and a democratic process, in place and working; functionally integrated - being one in which the components - individuals, agencies and organizations - reinforce each other- and healthy, that is; having resolved any major internal differences. With these matters addressed, the community is ready to engage in a process by which it can exercise the powers suggested by deTocqueville.

Initiation

One major issue, especially in the case of the proto-community, is where does the spark come from by which an organized collection of people might begin the process of creating community. While there are many community organization tools available, these are not likely to be taken up by individuals acting alone, particularly when they themselves are disadvantaged and disillusioned. There are several possible sources for the spark which might begin the community-building process:

Residents: It is often the case that one or more residents will be roused to action over a specific issue - a threat to safety, a proposal for a zoning change, the closure of a local service, etc. - and move to identify others within the commuity who share the same concern and who might be prepare to start some collective action. Hallman (1984: 146) cites studies into resident motivation which seem to counter the notion of homo econimus (that humans are only motivated by economic self-interest). For example, in one study, 78% of resident participants were motivated either by a sense of civic duty or local area commitment, with another 15% being prompted to become involved through friendship and only 6% by a concern over property values, the driving force of NIMBY.

Neighbourhood-based agencies: The staff of local agencies such as schools and churches often take on a role in animating the community to address social issues, as an extension of their work or as an expression of their social mission.

Private and public agencies: Other organizations which are not neighbourhood-based may determine to play an organizational role, particularly in disadvantaged areas, as an expression of their social commitment. These may include foundations, unions, service clubs, churches, academics, and government. In many cases, these organizations will approach the task with their own agenda, which could lead to eventual conflict if this agenda is not accepted by the community once it is activated.

Developers and Other Economic Interests: Occassionally, a local intervention may be driven by an outside organization which sees economic opportunity within a depressed area. These may include companies with land holdings in the area or which see a new market potential.

Methods of Initiation

Frequently, neighbourhood organizations seem to be an example of "spontaneous combustion". A crisis situation serves to galvanize public opinon within the community, whether it is a rash of attacks on children, notice of a pending zoning change or major re-development, or some other change being directed upon the local residents from outside. Any efforts to organize a community where there is no crisis usually requires a lot of preparation.

One approach is to develop an in-depth understanding of the neighbourhood in terms of the issues of greatest local concern. This may be done through a community-wide survey, through interviews with key informants such as teachers, church leaders, and service providers, or through block meetings in which people are invited to one of the neighbours homes to informally discuss the issues of greatest concern. A community organizer with years of experience was recently asked what the most effective ways was to stimulate community. The suggestion was to simply ask a group of poor people "So how does it feel to be poor?". The key to lighting the fire is creating an awareness of shared interest.

A second key to building an organization is discovering leaders. These may be local activists who are frequently in the front of any effort to push for change, existing leaders who have some influence by virtue of their position in the community, such as a minister or school principal, or opinion leaders, persons who are in nodal positions in the information transfer process within the community and who are looked to as a source of reliable information and

good judgement. In areas with low evident social organization, it may well be in putting people into a group setting where they are challenged to speak their minds that leaders will emerge, individuals or groups who can facilitate the community in defining and moving towards shared goals.

Process

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993: 345) suggest a five step process towards what they term Whole Community Mobilization. These are:

- Mapping completely the capacities and assets of individiuals, citizens' associations and local institutions;
- Building relationships among local assets for mutually beneficial problem-solving within the community;
- Mobilizing the community's assets fully for economic development and information sharing purposes;
- Convening as broadly representative a group as possible for the purposes of building a community vision and plan; and
- Leveraging activities, investments and resources from outside the community to support asset-based, locally-defined development.

Clearly, this model has an economic focus aimed at individual income enhancement as well as community processes. The two key achievements within this process is the creation of a broad (representative and inclusive coalition for action at the local level and the generation of a collective vision and plan, based both on information (e.g. the mapping process - perhaps a community survey or other approach to data-gathering. The mobilization of internal and external assets would generally be focusing on the implementation phase of community action.

Hallman suggests two basic strategic decisions the neighbourhoods will face: between seeking to control a process or to influence the decision of others; and whether to stick to issues within the neighbourhood or to deal with persons or agencies outside the neighbourhood which have an influence on neighbourhood life. The choice between influencing decisions or control has fundamental significance for the community organization's subsequent approach. If the community seeks to influence the decisions of others, it will focus on lobbying efforts and will organize itself to mobilize protests and demonstrations, letter-writing campaigns and the like. If it seek to control the process, it will develop the capacity to delivery services directly to its members.

First meetings

A major challenge will be to attract a significant part of the community's population, itself a function of the degree to which there is an identified issue of paramount concern, and, to a lesser degree perhaps of the perception that the local community can have any effect. It will often be necessary to move in small steps, developing some consensus among a small turn out at an initial meeting, perhaps forming a steering committee to organize a subsequent one. Consideration will have to be given to personal schedules and responsibilities, including shift work and child care. Many community organizers recommend that even the earliest meetings should try to agree on some specific project which will give the community a sense of progress.

Organizational form

Community organization may take several different forms. The most common is a resident association, in which each person or each household is entitled to membership and to vote in elections and on matters before the full membership. Generally, such resident associations have an elected board which oversees the day-to-day operations of the group, approves specific activities within an overall mandate, and arranges meetings and elections. Each board member other that the officers (chair or presdient, secretary, treasures, etc.) may chair a committee with certain specific responsibilities, such as fund raising, communications, or membership recruitment. This style of organization has advantages - it involves a number of residents directly in the decision-making and information exchange process, it provides leadership training opportunities for a significant portion of the members and provides a density of roles which has been found to contribute to satisfaction.

Related types of neighbourhood-based organizations may be limited to those in specific forms of tenure, such as a homeowners association or a tenants group.

There are other styles of organization at the level of the functional neighbourhood. A neighbourhood congress is an organization of organizations, that is, a body made up of delegates from other groups, such as service clubs, churches, schools, and resident association.. As well, local governments may establish Neighbourhood Advisory Committees or Neighbourhood Councils, usually with limited decision-making power. As the neighbourhood organization develops, it may finally incorporate either as a non-profit or for-profit corporation. This offers benefits in terms of limiting the legal liability of individuals as well as confering powers or eleigibility for funding that would not otherwise be available.

At the highest level of neighbourhood empowerment is probably the Neighbourhood Government, in which a council is democratically elected and has some or all of the legal power and authority of a municipality.

Sustaining the Organization :

Once an organization has developed, there are some formidable challenges in keeping it going. One of the keys to survival will be the achievement of short term goals. Small successes feed the hopes of members and without hope, there can be no members and thus no organization. From this perspective, it is critical that any organization, no matter how lofty its ultimate objectives, undertake limited term specfic projects by which it can demonstrate its usefulness. Within this process,there are a number of other elements which need to be addressed.

Recognition:

As the major resource of a neighbourhood organization is its membership of unpaid volunteers, the one reward the organization can offer is recognition. This may be as simple as a public word of appreciation for a job well-done or as formal as a Resident of the Year designiation.

Recruitment:

The old adage about asking a busy person if you want something done has its corollary in the burn-out of volunteers. Many of the biggest contributors to neighbourhood activities will some find themselves over their head. One response is retreat. The answer for the self-sustaining organization is to be constantly recruiting new members and new volunteers. The first task is to define a number of discrete tasks which a new members can handle but through

which they will find both a sense of purpose and the opportunity to grow. Only by the constant inflow of new people can the load be shared and burn-out avoided. The leadership which finds it has no time for recruitment will never have the time.

Training:

New members and future leaders need training in terms of organizational processes - how to plan a project, how to report, how to chair a meeting, etc.. Experience is said to be the best teacher, but succesful organizations will develop more or less formal training opportunities. For example, they might offer orientation sessions for newly elected directors or committee chairs. They may adopt a mentor process in which the in-coming leader works closely with the outgoing person they will replace. They may even get help from service clubs, academic bodies, or other organizations which can provide courses in a variety of relevant topics.

Funding:

Despite the presence of a strong volunteer base, organizations will need access to funding. Much of this can be achieved through their own fund-rasing programs, including membership fees, raffles, community fairs, and fee-for-service programs. Organizations which are to be successful in delivering services within low income communities will generally, however, need access to financial supports from outside the neighbourhood.

Evaluation:

The key to on-going success is a constant process of evaluation. Evaluation should be included specifically from the outset of every project and the organization should also be evaluating itself - examining its structure and procedures, on the basis of continued input from the members and the community it serves.

Community Organization Roles

Several reviews of community organization (e.g. Dyson and Dyson, 1989; Hallman, 1984 and Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993) have identified the wide range of roles and activities pursued by community organizations, many of them having a particular focus on marginalized communities. These fall into four categories: advocacy, neighbourhood self-help, the delivery of municipal services, and community economic development. While the first of these may seem somewhat self-explanatory, the range of specific undertakings in the other areas is impressive.

While the following is not an exhaustive list of the areas in which community organizations have been active, it does suggest the scope of their involvements and the range of issues of particular concern to a disadvantaged population in which they have a contribution to make.

Neighbourhood Self-Help

In Safety and Security:

- Block Watch
- Patrols
- Safety Audits
- Operation Identification
- Buddy Systems

- Head Start
- Youth Recreation
- In Fire Prevention:
- wardens,
- volunteer inspection

In Mediation:
- dispute resolution service
- family counselling
- healing circles
- community alternative sentencing

In Housing:
- Paint-up/Fix-up
- Tool Lending
- Skill Exchange
- Energy Audits
- Housing Inspection

In the Environment:
- Neighbourhood Clean-up
- Recycling
- Sidewalk Sweeps
- Tree planting
- totlots(etc)
- gardens
- beautification (fireplugs, signage)

In Mutual Help:
- Caring Neighbours
- Daycare
- Babysitting Co-Ops
- Childrens Advocate
- Homework/Tutorial
- In the Social Life:
- Block Parties
- Fairs
- Counselling And Employment Market
- Seniors Outreach And Meals
- Food Buying Clubs
- Neighbourhood Gardens
- Farmers Market
- Heritage And Cultural Events

In Delivery Or Co-Ordination Of Municipal Services:
- Complaints
- Education
- Program Promotion
- Task Forces
- Special Facilities
- Hiring
- Contracting
- Coproduction (Partnership)
- Colocation (Sharing Offices)
- Planning

In Economic Development
- Commercial Revitaization
- Land Trusts
- Co-Ops
- Business Enterprises
- Development Bank
- CD Credit UNions
- HR Development
- Skill Inventories

Roles of government

        The roles of government have been suggested in various United Nations reports and declarations. The Brundtland Commission (WECD, 1987) suggested the minimum roles of delegation of authorities and resources. The United Nations earlier (1963) provided a definition of community development as "a process by which the efforts of people themeselves are *united with those of government* authorities" (emphasis added), and suggested the role of government as the provision of technical and other services (Dykeman, 1992).

        Hallman (984) provides a detailed review of possible roles for government and other actors from outside the locaal community in the achievement of what he refers to as *Neighbourhood Wholeness*:

Direct services: This is the obvious role of government - the delivery of programs, including the bundle of social services which are of particular importance to marginalized persons. However, the traditional set of programs have been widely criticized as contributing to dependency rather than self-reliance. The process by which government (and other "professional") services undermine personal and community wholeness is described vividly by McKnight in his discussion of community and its counterfeits. Chorney (1990) provides a similar image of government fostering psuedo-communities. On the other hand, there have been a number of examples of government programs which provide the financial support for local community development without being overly prescriptive.

Refrain from Harm: The second role of government in contributing to community enablement is to not cause harm. One classic example of government causing harm is the approach which was taken to urban renewal in the sixties, in which whole neighbourhoods were designated for clearing and redevelopment, without any regard for the very vital communities which existed there. Other typical ways in which government may harm community is in the zoning which is applied to local areas within cities or in the approval of major developments such as new arterial roads which can cut through natural communities.

Legal Authority: Government can provide the legislative basis for community action, in the powers it will vest in non-profit or other community-based organizations.

Removal of Obstacles: Often it is the limitations government imposes that prevent community organizations from playing particular roles. For example, it may stipulate the types of organizations which may compete for a municipal contract or may add requirements with respect the bonding or insurance that limits the potential of a low income group to take advantage of such opportunities. Other obstacles to community-based action may be reflected in by-laws (for instance, proscribing certain activities in a given area, or disallowing certain land uses) or in the boundaries on local areas it imposes by definition.

Financial resources: Community organizations can look to government for much of the financial resources they require. These may take the form of direct equity donations (e.g. in land, buildings, or surplus equipment), grants or loans, the provision of contracts, shared revenues, or tax provisions.

Technical assistance: Government staff can often provide invaluable technical advice to local organizations.

Brokerage of partnerships: Government can often bring its influence to bear in linking local organizations to other potential partners. This may involve moral suasion as well as collateral trade-offs.

Tools: Many of the tools which community organizations require can be accessed through government. Recent Canadian examples include manuals on land trusts, self-help housing, community crime prevention and safety audits, and volunteer inspection programs.

The consideration of tools involves a number of questions:

Are the tools available which will assist local groups to develop communities?

Key tools in this area will be guides to organizing and organization, surveying public opinion, holding meetings, committee management, budgeting and financial recording, and planning and running projects.

Are there tools available to suggest possible solutions across a wide range of community issues? Each local community will have its own priority issues, ranging across the full gamut of human needs. Accordingly, the proto-community should have access to information on a wide variety of possible solutions - how-to guides - which they could impement with their own resources on many of the basic needs they are likely to confront. These include issues in employment and income generation, safety and security, human resource and skill development, housing, mutual help, community finance, health and nutrition.

Are the tools accessible? Such self-learn tools must be accessible to the intended audience, whetehr this is in terms of the language level relative to the typical level of educational attainment, access to applicable technology or alternative means of communication (other than the printed page). For marginalized, usually low income communities, the matter of the cost of tools becomes critical.

Summary

The enabled community is one which is organized for action and is of particular relevance to disadvantaged or marginalized people congregated in specific, limited geographic areas. Its typical maifestation is in the voluntary organization, which may or may not be formally contituted as a nonprofit corporation for example.

The enabled community is inclusive and has the capacity to govern itself through democratic means. It has the capacity to identify common issues and to develop shared visions of where it wishes to go. It provides more or less formal opportunities for skill pooling and skill transfer and thus can contribute not only to the collective self-sufficency by individual self-sufficiency as well.

Among disorganized clusters of the disadvantaged, there is a special need for community as a means by which the assets of residents can be pooled, thereby giving them a force collectively which they may lack individually. Governments and others interested in the public good have a role to play in stimulating the emergence of community and the recognition by neighbours of their capacity for mutual help and joint endeavour. In this way, people and neighbourhoods can become all that they are capable of. A variety of approaches to

community animation - the stimulation of neighbourhood residents to come together to create community - have been identified.

It would appear that the community enablement process generally evolves from some initial animation effort, whether within the local area or from outside. Two key steps in the evolution are the identification of community assets implicit in the Community Skills inventory and associated tasks identified by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and the development of a community vision statement, a comprehensive story of where the residents wish to go together. These together prepare a community to identify their priorities and to develop and implement solutions.

Conclusions

Fiscal restraint is forcing all levels of government to look to alternative approaches to meeting objectives. This has led to a new interest in enabling approaches which can produce cost-effective results while fostering increased self-reliance on the part of marginalized people and enhancing social justice. Policy developers have important roles to play in support of local communities, not only in their own strategic approach to citizen involvement but in contributing to the success of citizen involvement.

Despite myths to the contrary, it has been found that neighbourhoods or local communities remain important to people. The evidence on the issue of urban design and its implications for the realization of community is ambiguous. Despite all the anecdotes of successful inner city low income neighbourhoods, there remains a strong sense (but no conclusive evidence) that suburban communities are stronger and that both density and heterogeneity work against community. There is evidence that low income people and others who are disadvantaged may be particularly ready to invest in community action, whether this is in reaction to lack of mobility or a sense of limited individual capacity. There is overwhelming evidence that participation leads to satisfaction and this does translate into satisfaction with the residential environment. Advocates for marginalized neighbourhoods suggest that participation leads to skills development, that it builds self-sufficiency and there is some evidence to support this.

The most common and possibly most effective vehicle for community action is the vountary association. The representative character of citizen involvement is critical to its legitimacy. Accordingly, advocates of community involvement must seek the broadest possible participation from within neighbourhoods being enabled. Among marginalized groups, there may be a lack of experience with many of the tools which provide for the legitimacy of the input. Knowledge of community survey techniques, how to organize and conduct public meetings and parliamentary procedure, and committee management can often be delivered either directly by local government staff or through recruiting the help of community organizations with the necessary experience. All of these will ensure that the directions coming out of community enablement exercises will reflect the will of the community as a whole, rather than of an "elite" which is ready to co-operate with the establishment. In addition, professional staff can communicate some of their own tools kits to residents, guiding them into a consideration of all the relevant factors which will ultimately need to be taken into consideration in obtaining the approval of duly elected or appointed bodies.

One of the most often cited problems in the anecdotal information on resident participation is that of maintaining leadership. Many would attribute successful resident organization or initiatives to the presence of a single individual with commitment, charisma and drive. Leadership, however, arises everywhere, even among the most disadvantaged groups. The experience of leadership itself contributes to greater skills development and these skills often translate into new opportunities for the individual. This becomes one of the axioms of participation advocates - leaders leave. Therefore, it is important that community groups follow practices which help develop successors, through committee structures which provide a multitude of roles in which many people can gain the requisite abilities to lead. Again, there

may be community organizations or academic institutions in the area which can help beginning groups by offering training in relevant topics.

This is a time of fiscal restaint in which an even greater burden is falling upon those who are most disadvantaged. There have been numberous calls for the decentralization of authoirities and resources, with a view to including marginalized people in the decision-making process. These two factors compel governments at all levels to look to the local community or protocommunity, to tap the human and other assets which exist in every area. A legitimate process of community enablement will restore to the emergent neighbourhoods important powers which they can use to achieve satisfaction, dignity and self-sufficiency.

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