

SPECIAL 25TH ANNIVERSARY DOUBLE ISSUE  
NO. 50/51 • SPRING/SUMMER 2001



# WOMEN + ENVIRONMENTS

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

**Women and  
Planning in Britain –**  
25 Years On: A Reflection

**Crossing Borders:**  
Housing as a Vehicle for  
Community Development

**On the Way to Work:**  
Transportation & Welfare  
Reform in the US

**Computers:**  
Community for Aging  
Women in Australia

**25 YEARS  
LATER -  
ARE COMMUNITIES BETTER?**

NO. 50/51 • SPRING/SUMMER 2001  
SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE • \$5.95



# Launch

## 25 Years of Women & Environments

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Women & Environments International is a unique Canadian magazine, which examines women's multiple relations to their environments – natural, built and social – from feminist perspectives. Since 1976, it has provided a forum for academic research and theory, professional practice and community experience. By volunteering their time to the collective editing and production of Women & Environments, Editorial Board members contribute to feminist social change. The magazine is associated with the Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies at the University of Toronto.

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**Celebrating 25 years of  
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"25 Years Later - Are  
Communities Better?"**

(Sequel to our "Healthy Communities Through Women's Eyes")

**Tuesday, June 19, 2001, 4.30 to 6.30 p.m.**

In the Lounge of the Institute of Women's Studies and Gender Studies, New College, University of Toronto, Willcocks runs east-west, midway between College and Harbord; New College is on the north-east corner of Willcocks and Spadina; the Spadina Streetcar stops at the corner; the lounge is on the 2nd floor nearest to the 20 Willcocks St. entrance

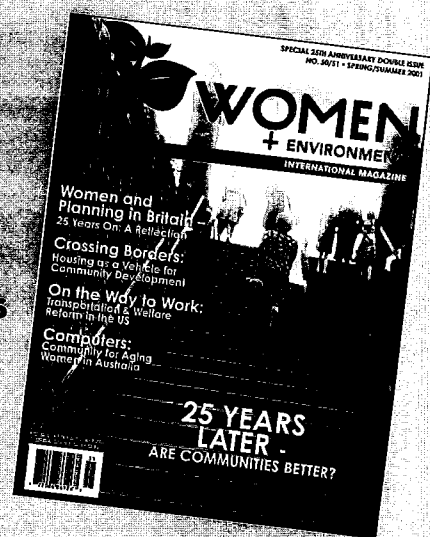
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## On the Cover

"Ascent of Women," photograph by Eva Kemlein. Born in 1909 in Berlin, Eva Kemlein grew up to experience Germany's most horrendous period in history. Her Jewish heritage contributed to her divorce and got her expelled from Greece, where she had sought refuge from the Fascists. She returned to Berlin in 1937 where she lived in hiding and was active in the underground movement until after World War II, when she resumed her career as free-lance photographer. Today, at 92, she is still healthy and active as a photographer.

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# WEspeak

25 years, a generation of women – that's how long Women & Environments International Magazine has been exploring our relations with our environments – social, built and natural – and agitating for a better fit. Women & Environments emerged in 1976 as one of the results of women caucusing at the first UN Habitat Conference, in Vancouver. Sharing experiences and views, these women realized that their perspectives on their environments often differed from those of men. They were determined to stay in touch and continue their exchange by launching Women & Environments. At first it served as networking newsletter and midwife for the relatively young field of studying women's relations to their environments, particularly the built environment. Soon the newsletter evolved into a magazine and became a catalyst and medium for actions and new insights emerging from this field. Many issues, such as women's interest in mixed land use planning, better transit, affordable housing, better design for the multiple and evolving roles of women, failed to make headlines in the mass media. Yet our issues greatly affect the daily lives of women. It was only when the male-led environmental movements and "new urbanism" endorsed some of these practices, that headlines were captured.

It has not been easy for our small collective to survive the effects of globalization so familiar to us all. The cutbacks of government support and funds for community efforts, in favour of private competitive and for-profit undertakings, have hit hard. At times we almost gave up, but new findings in research and actions by and support from women, inspired us to stick with our mandate. We are including a reader survey to see if you still value this mandate or if it needs adapting. Please, therefore, take the time, fill in the form, stuff it in the attached envelope, and

return it to us. Our next "Network Directory and Index" issue will summarize your responses and our conclusions.

As tribute to our beginnings we dedicate this sequel to "Healthy Communities Through Women's Eyes" to women's activism in the built environment. How has it changed to accommodate women's needs? What remains to be done? Though more women participate in previously male-dominated professions than 25 years ago, this progressive change has not automatically translated into acceptance or addressing of women's needs in housing, community development, transportation, or even consumer design.

Clara Greed gives us a veteran's perspectives on changes regarding gender and community planning. The articles by Jacqueline Leavitt, Mallika Bose, and the interview with Teresa Vigil address shelter in different places and perspectives. Shelter is a fundamental issue for women. Our nurturing and domestic roles persist as stubbornly as our lower socio-economic position confronting us and our dependents everywhere with a relentless "affordability crisis." While the 1996 UN

Habitat II conference adopted "housing as a human right," homelessness has increased and support for social housing has dropped. Evelyn Blumenberg focuses on the tough mobility issues that welfare women face when trying to get off welfare and into paying jobs. Karen Barnett and Barbara Adkins open our eyes to a little-acknowledged aspect of modern technology: its potential for elderly, most of whom are women. Barbara Rahder and Rebecca Peterson show the link between health and the built environment. Shorter contributions in our WE Research, In The Field, and other sections round out the issue.

The past century witnessed amazing successes in the women's movement. Women can be proud of the 2000 World March of Women, and their part in the protests of Seattle and Montreal among others. Women are important allies in the environmental, anti-capitalist, and anti-patriarchal movements. These can only succeed, however, if feminists fully share their leadership. Keep it up sisters. If you do, so will we. ♡

## Thank You

WE International gratefully acknowledges the general support of the University of Toronto, and the financial support of the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) for reducing mailing costs, the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Gender Equality Division, the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Marshall Macklin Monaghan, Urban Strategies, Canadian Urban Institute, Match International and the following individuals: Jane Davidson, Browyn Krog, Bertha Modlich-Streuli, Serina Morris, Barbara Rahder, Nancy Singer, Carolyn Whitzman and Jeanne Wolfe. We also thank our volunteer editor Emily Lizzi and proof reader Katherine Verhagen.

# Upcoming Issues

Help us make them happen

Women & Environments International Magazine invites your financial support, submissions, and ideas for our upcoming issues.

"Ecofeminism and Cross Cultural Conversation" will be the theme for our Fall 2001 issue. It will feature several internationally-known feminist theorists and activists, and provide a valuable resource list for ecofeminist education, research, and practice. Our regular "In The Field," "WE Research," "In Print," and other sections will complement the content. While the content is already coming together, we still do not have sufficient funds to pay the printer. Please Help!

"Women Healing their Communities after Conflict" will be the theme of one of our 2002 issues. It will feature women's experiences and achievements from around the globe, from Africa to Europe, from the Americas to Asia. A further issue on "Feminist Ecological Economics" is also on the drawing board. Then, it is time for another "Network Directory and Index issue; these never get outside funding. For all of these, Women & Environments invites your submissions, ideas and financial support.

If you are a feminist researcher, looking to publish your findings, why not consider WE as the media for allocating your publication budget. Use the attached envelop for your responses, suggestions, and enquiries. Cheques under \$50 should be made out to Women & Environments International Magazine; cheques for \$50 and over qualify for a charitable receipt, but should be made out to the University of Toronto and sent to:

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to light industry

the way, undesired landscapes

become familiar // the huge

white cylinders

with peaks like the tin

woodsmen in the wizard of oz

the smell

of burning plastics from those

cylinders that thicken her lungs

and

makes her baby cough //

all night you hands you bony

chest you invitation

to become fat and sleepy,

you who owned her and she didn't

know until she understood you

didn't anymore,

you she moves from after only six

months of ambiguous distance //

after only a year in these

concrete courtyards

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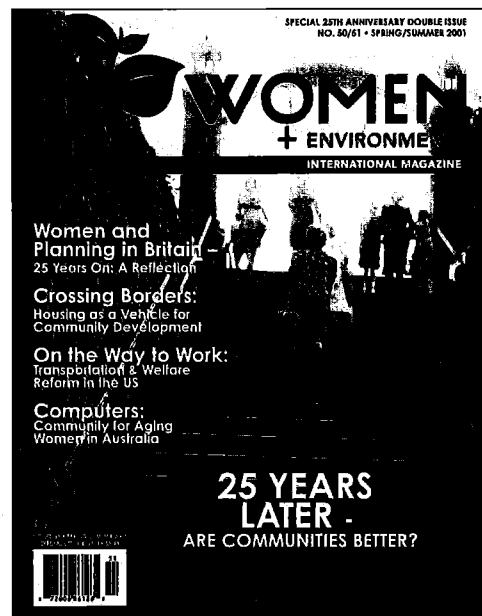
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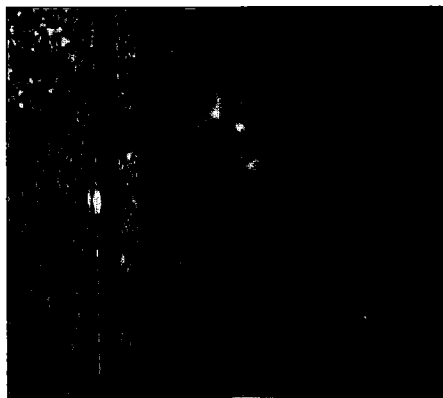
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Clara Greed

## Women and Planning in Britain —

### 25 Years On: A Reflection

Clara Greed

"Fighting the good fight" for better cities for everyone has occupied me since the 1970s, so it is not surprising that this review of the development of the "women and planning" (or women and built environment) movement in Britain is heavily coloured by my personal experience. At one level I have seen huge changes, not least in the acceptance of more women in the built environment professions and a national increase in women in higher education (one can now even teach "women and planning" as an official subject without being laughed at or attacked). Much remains the same, however, and in many respects cities have become worse, not better — especially in matters of transport and the quality of life. "Women and planning," rather than changing the mainstream, now lives in a separate, parallel universe; there are two sets of conference circuits, publications and networks — and it seems that "never the twain shall meet."

### Beginnings

In the late 1960s I enrolled at Cardiff University in Wales to study for a town planning degree. I was one of few: there were scant numbers of women teaching at university then, and hardly any women students; relatively few young people went to university compared with today. I came from an inner city area of South

London where all women worked, and where we were constantly fighting the planners over threats of demolition and road widening. The 1960s in Britain was a period of massive clearance and development to make way for new urban motorways, high-rise buildings and town-centre redevelopment. American planning ideas and architecture were popular and seen as "modern" but were to prove quite unsuitable for the British situation.

At that time I did not see myself as a feminist; while in reality I probably was, I had no idea what feminism meant. But I was knocked over by the rubbish that was taught in our university planning course. One (male) lecturer told us "*In the future 'everyone' will only work three hours a week and play football the rest of the time.*" I naïvely chirped up: "*But what about women, a woman's work is never done.*" "*Don't be stupid, we're not talking about that!*" came the angry reply. To save my sanity, I tried to put these questions out of my mind. Yet every time I went home I was overwhelmed by the contrast between the two realities, home and university, in our experience of town planning issues. By the mid-1970s the thoughts began to resurface and I realized I was not stupid or alone in thinking the unthinkable — men planners were wrong.

### Late Developer, New Beginnings

In 1976 a wonderful woman called Madge Dresser from California (who settled in Bristol where I was then teaching surveying students) gave me a photocopy of the first issue of *Women and Environments*, and in 1978 a copy of the first special issue on women — "Women and the City" — of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. I was thrilled by what I read, as it vindicated what I had always thought but never dared express publicly. At last I discovered feminism, read "everything" and started applying it all to town planning and surveying. It was still heavy going though, and one was likely to be ridiculed for daring to mention in university or planning offices what nowadays we would call "women and planning" issues.

Yet new hope was emerging, as in London some women were addressing town planning issues within the context of the Greater London Council. This governmental body had previously been male-dominated. However, with the rise of the "new left" and feminist movements, eventually, "women" began to alter its work and the production of

Development Plan in 1986, which included women's issues (the following year the GLC was abolished by the Thatcher government).

Meanwhile, London women planners founded a *Women and Environments Bulletin* (WEB Quarterly) in 1984. Jane Foulsham and other women academics in the London Polytechnics were researching women's urban issues, and Beverley Taylor (editor of WEB) suggested that I do parallel research on "women and surveying". This eventually led to my first book, *Surveying Sisters*, and to my PhD. It had taken me 25 years to recover the path that my instincts were leading me to in the 1960s.

## Boredom and Familiarity Set In

"Women and planning" was more accepted and respected over the years, and more women became lecturers and planning officers. Even the Royal Town Planning Institute established a "women's committee," which is still going strong (chaired by Dorie Reeves from Strathclyde University in Scotland, where urban feminists arguably are making relatively greater progress than in England). The movement still owed much to the foundational work of American women,<sup>1</sup> but there were parallel movements in France and Scandinavia that were highly influential and more culturally appropriate to Britain. As time went on, urban spatial and social policy emanating from the European Union proved to have the greater influence.

By the late 1980s, equal opportunities legislation and policy had become widespread in name if not always in effect. The 1990s saw a massive growth in higher education in Britain and an increase in women's representation in planning, surveying, and architecture courses (from 3% in the 1960s to 30% by the 1990s). Yet the numbers of women faculty and senior staff barely changed.

Interestingly, the next generation of women students did not generally seem to "value" feminism; perhaps they took it for granted as "normal" (like mobile phones and computers) that women should go to university and have careers, and did not yet see the problems ahead. The very fact that women lecturers could now run courses on "women and planning" and research students could do PhDs and get grants to study "women's issues" (all of which took us years of battle to achieve) somehow took the cutting edge off it all.<sup>2</sup> It was as if everyone had been inoculated with a mild dose of "feminism" so that the vaccination made them immune from taking it seriously! Indeed some young women students are deeply embarrassed by the topic "women."

In the 1990s a range of seminal (ovarian?) women and planning publications were available in Britain, which together continue the story to the present day.<sup>3</sup> In addition, we have all done masses of articles, papers, conference presentations, access initiatives, careers programs and consultation exercises. Even so, one can still meet men planners at conferences and meetings who appear to know absolutely nothing about gender issues, or who will comment, "*Oh, we've done women: you should be concerned about the environment.*"

The environmental movement, and especially "sustainability," has grabbed central stage, diverting attention from women's issues and giving men cause to "blame women" for being selfish. After all, women commit such environmental "crimes" as doing the shopping, feeding their children, using cars to get children to school, heating houses, and using washing machines (I always ask such men, "*Who does your washing?*"). The true definition of sustainability includes social equity and economic viability as well as environmental sustainability. In Britain, however, the emphasis has been strongly put upon the environmental dimension, often to the exclusion of other considerations.

## Whose Reality is the Real Reality?

The present New Labour Government in Britain says it is committed to social inclusion and urban regeneration.<sup>4</sup> As Susan Brownill discusses in her recent feminist critique of urban regeneration, however, the very fact that the decision-making committees and boards involved are predominantly male, being drawn from male-dominated property professions, has marginalized women's viewpoint and "other" solutions. As a result, emphasis has been put upon economic development and employment rather than upon the social and cultural factors that really regenerate an area.

Many women are disillusioned with the ways in which apparently gender-neutral topics such as social inclusion, sustainability, regeneration — and even "joined-up-thinking" — have been interpreted effectively to exclude or disrupt women's lives and realities. Brownill calls for urban regen(d)eration (sic). In the same publication, Charlotte Coleman discusses the effects that so-called sustainable "transportation planning" is having on women. She discusses the "different" travel patterns of women who seldom make uninterrupted, mono-purpose journeys. Women are likely to trip-chain a range of journeys, taking children to school, getting to work themselves, doing the shopping and stopping off along the way for other essential, but undervalued, tasks and duties. Coleman explains that male-oriented policy, which seeks to control the use of the car, does not take into account women's "different" journey patterns and their limited time budgets. Women's escort journeys to take children to school may be linked with split-second precision to getting themselves to work and getting back to the shops before they close.

Criticizing women for using cars to take their children to school is seen as an example of non-joined-up-thinking, as it



focuses on just one part of a complex linked set of activities. It ignores the realities of women's lives in which many of their "private car journeys" are in fact a form of "public transport" for the benefit of everyone else in the household. Rather than blaming women, it would be so much better to start planning towards creating mixed land uses, cities based on walking and short distances, and an integration of the home and work aspects of development at the city-wide structural level. Women's carefully planned multi-purpose journeys should be valued as a way to reduce the total number of journeys, rather than seen as a source of increased congestion. Instead, women are told by male critics to use public transport, where none is likely to be available, where bus routes are unlikely to go anywhere near decentralized supermarkets, and timetables seldom echo modern women's time schedules and travel patterns.

## Is More Better? How Do We Change the Culture?

Having failed to influence strategic "big" aspects of national planning policy, such as transportation and regeneration, many of us are looking at other ways of changing things. The problem is that there are now masses of "women and planning" policies, courses and initiatives, but there is virtually no implementation and action, and a general sense of boredom exudes from the still-dominant male oligarchy which "runs planning."

Most ordinary people, however, are none too satisfied with the nature of town and country planning. Furthermore, statutory planners arguably have less power now than in the days of my youth when they laid waste whole cities in the name of progress. It seems to me that greater power now resides in the private sector among property developers and the construction industry. I have therefore shifted my research emphasis to investigating

the wider construction professions which are even more male-dominated and macho than the dear old planners, but which have an enormous influence on the design of the built environment. I am now looking at the ways in which cultural change may be transmitted (or blocked) within the construction and built environment professions. As Swedish colleagues remind me, even if women form a

There are now masses of "women and planning" policies, courses and initiatives, but there is virtually no implementation and action.

majority in an organization (as in their Parliament) or their numbers have substantially increased (as in British planning departments), "*more does not necessarily mean better*" unless there is cultural change in the organization itself, and a change in the personal perspective and "conditioning" of both females and males therein.

## Wider Horizons

I have been looking more towards mainland Europe and the European Union and have been thrilled by the energy and power of pan-European "women and planning" groups such as Eurofem. Developed by Liisa Horelli, Eurofem originated in Scandinavia where a range of governmental requirements for gender issues are to be included at every stage of their plan-making processes.<sup>5</sup> I have marvelled at the way in which German colleagues have taken advantage of the so-called greening of German politics to

include women, thanks to the efforts of organisations such as FUN (FrauenUmweltNetz) in Frankfurt and such women as Mieke Spitzner in Wuppertal. I have been fascinated by the completely different ways in which "planning" is conceptualized in other countries. In particular, "Time Planning" is strong in some Italian cities (Carmen Belloni in Turin being a key figure), and this is being taken on board in France and Germany. The planning of "time" as well as "space" in cities has great potential for resolving many of the temporal problems that women encounter in terms of opening and closing times, "latchkey children" and sheer exhaustion. It keeps the environmentalists happy in enabling more efficient use of road space and reducing rush hour pressures.

A word here on the neo-traditional movement, which in Britain and Europe splits into two versions. One, the "new urbanism," is closely aligned to the rebirth of "urban design" and is concerned with both aesthetic and practical issues for the user of cities. The traditional city's short distances, mixed land uses, everyday life, neighbourhoods and "community," have all been taken on board by the Eurofem women and planning movement, but they have also been travestied by male architects who want the architecture but not the practicalities. The other version is a purely aesthetic, visual version which is strongly linked to the urban preservation movement for which Prince Charles and other traditionalists have campaigned. Many women are uneasy with a lot of this, as we don't want to end up as "figures in the landscape," like peasants in the master's ideal village. Furthermore, many of the ideas emerging from the neo-traditional movement are very anti-accessibility and unsafe (winding footpaths, lots of steps).

Nowadays I put more effort into specific detailed issues, generally within the realm of "urban design" in relation to enabling people to "use" cities more comfortably and effectively. In my research on >

"women and planning" many women have said to me, "*It all comes down to toilets.*" Women are very distressed to find that so many public toilets have been closed in recent years, and that new developments do not necessarily include accessible toilets. This is an issue that Sue Cavanagh at Women's Design Service, recognized by many as one of the most significant women in the movement, has also worked on. The provision of public conveniences is arguably a more reliable indicator of the true level of progress of women in the built environment and society than any quantity of equal opportunities rhetoric.

In conclusion, I value the fine example that North America gave us all in the 1960s and 1970s. Now many of us "Brits" look to other European states for inspiration. For the future I am keeping an eye on "women and the built environment" initiatives coming out of Africa and the Far East, where dynamic feminist engineers, planners and architects are tackling similar issues within different cultural settings. But I am vigilant, as things can go backwards as well as forwards. We have hardly begun to change the built environment. ☘

<sup>1</sup> See Catherine Stimpson et al., eds., *Women and the American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> See Linda McDowell, "Doing Feminism," in Linda McDowell and Joanne Sharpe, eds., *Space, Gender and Knowledge: Feminist Readings*. London: Arnold, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> For example, Jo Little, *Gender, Planning and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Elsevier, 1994; Clara Greed, *Women and Planning: Creating Gendered Realities*. London: Routledge, 1994; Dorrie Reeves, "Women and the Environment." Special edition of *Built Environment* 22(1), 1996; Christine Booth, Jane Darke and Susan Yeandle, eds., *Changing Places: Women's Lives in the City*. London: Paul Chapman, 1996; Clara Greed and Marion Roberts, eds., *Introducing Urban Design*. Harlow: Longman, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> In Jane Darke, Sue Ledwith and Roberta Woods, eds., *Women and the City: Visibility and Voice in Urban Space*. London: Palgrave, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> R. Skjerve, ed., *Manual for Alternative Municipal Planning*. Oslo: Ministry of the Environment, 1993.

**Dr. Clara Greed** is a chartered town planner and a Reader (senior researcher) in the School of Architecture and Planning, University of the West of England in Bristol. The subjects of her 10 books include women and surveying, women and planning, social aspects of planning, and urban design issues. She can be contacted by e-mail at: 100712.1337@compuserve.com

# Crossing Borders:

## HOUSING AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

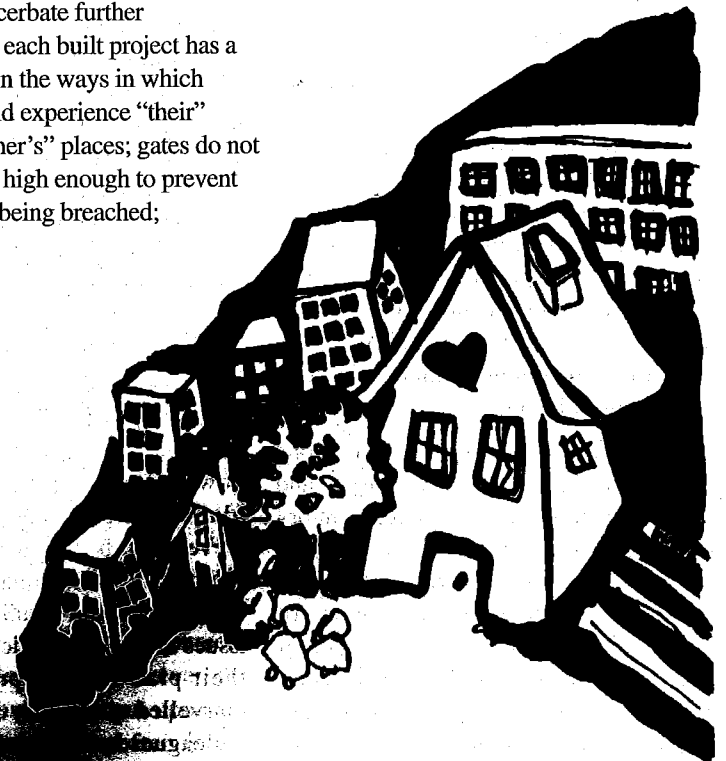
Excerpts from Jacqueline Leavitt's presentation to the Conference on "Women and Housing: What Then? What Now? What Next?" Vancouver, Canada, October 5, 2000. For the full text go to our website: [www.weimag.com](http://www.weimag.com)

### Jacqueline Leavitt

(...) Of the many ways to play with the concept, crossing borders is used here first, as a means of re-thinking or "reconceptualizing" issues of housing and community development policies and their formation; and second as a means of thinking about cross-border strategies. Cross border thinking<sup>1</sup> and acting begins with several assumptions:

- first, individual housing and community development projects link over time and space; that is, each part of the built environment creates borders that may reduce or exacerbate further development; each built project has a ripple effect on the ways in which people live and experience "their" place and "other's" places; gates do not provide walls high enough to prevent borders from being breached;

- second, border transactions between house and community represent power relationships about access, resources, ideas, and implementation, all of which determine control over land, its use, management, and ownership;
- third, housing and community development policies are loaded terms that reflect values the consequences of which fix borders and create policies isolated from other issues such as labour and immigration policies; and



- fourth, housing and community development projects and policies embody roles that extend women's traditional responsibilities inside the house, blurring the border between private and public space; at present this highlights ways in which society devalues unpaid work within the home and community and values paid work in real estate, finance, and development.

### Why "Crossing Borders?"

The concept of crossing borders is a catchy phrase but, more to the point, is one way to suggest that it is necessary to re-think, rather than merely rework, policy. Rethinking is necessary in order that

**The ideas of the reform-minded and primarily women proponents of public housing were about developing permanent communities with facilities open to the surrounding neighbors - physically and socially integrated.**

people in a society are able to reclaim language, machinery, and the imaginary - the language in order to establish the mutual exchange of ideas, the machinery in order to implement the ideas, and the imaginary to put forward visions that facilitate the lengthy process required to shape the future. Why else is rethinking necessary?

To begin with, others are reworking or unraveling old strategies. In different places around the globe, Jane Kelsey's apt phrase for New Zealand also applies. She writes of the policies that aim to "roll back the state," to make way, without barriers, for a strategy that privileges free-market operations and leaves at best a shrunken safety net vulnerable to more cuts. (...) we patch leaks through tweaking legislation, introducing buzz words, redefining meanings of poverty, calculating subsidy formulas, and designing organizational structures. Over time, we patch less. (...)

Second, patchwork strategies strengthen

underlying ideologies that have repeatedly made inappropriate and or insufficient responses to changing demographic and labour structures. This is true for the pro-market housing strategy and for social rental programs that were promoted through municipal or state socialism. If past programs were intended to eliminate unhealthy, inadequate conditions, we need to ask why physical deterioration is still a problem; if the playing field was to be leveled to assist or provide for those in need, why do gaps between supply and demand perpetually exist; and why in countries with different political structures, vulnerable groups remain sheltered in the most deteriorating housing or

unsheltered on the streets? (...)

A third and related reason for at least hesitating before choosing to rework housing and community development [as separate] policies lies in cautionary tales from elsewhere. Mistakes in the built environment dot urban landscapes, unrelenting reminders of past actions. Jean Conway, commenting on health and housing policy in England, wrote: "despite a century of public health and housing intervention, slum clearance, general improvements in health and near eradication of the main killer diseases, those with the worst health still live in the poorest housing. (...) The complacency following decades of state programs has been shattered. . . . At the same time a new recognition of poverty has undermined assumptions about the effectiveness of the welfare state."<sup>2</sup> (...)

Fourth, piecemeal strategies do increase awareness of special groups and targets such as battered women or Aboriginals or

women with children but this insufficiently acknowledges the gendered nature of housing and community development policies. To begin with, these policies are heavily based on the family wage, itself a holdover from relying solely on the male wage. Additionally, whether holding a wage job or not, women are rhetorically acknowledged as the glue that maintains families, households, and communities, particularly under conditions of poverty. As part of this women take care of the emotional needs of the household, or become caregivers to older relatives and friends, whose own reduced physical mobility is accompanied by reduced earning powers. Conditions for women can be qualitatively worse in countries of the South where the lack of infrastructure adds countless hours to chores such as hauling water, and in countries of the former Soviet bloc where services such as child care are no longer provided by the state. (...)

This leads to the fifth assumption for rethinking the issues. The restructuring of social housing policies is barely linked to other policies such as labour market studies and gender is left out entirely. (...)

Similarly, housing and community development policies are weakly tied to immigration policies other than provisions for temporary relief shelter, regulations for migrant labour, and de facto acceptance of those immigrants with enough financial resources to enter the private housing market. (...)

### Crossing Borders: Defining Community Development (...)

The ideas of the reform-minded and primarily women proponents of public housing were about developing permanent communities with facilities open to the surrounding neighbors - physically and socially integrated. Well-known women like Catherine Bauer and Mary Simkhovitch led the fight to provide community centres, well-baby clinics, and recreation. Lesser known women such as Catherine Lansing pushed the ideas through the newly-set up bureaucracies. (...)

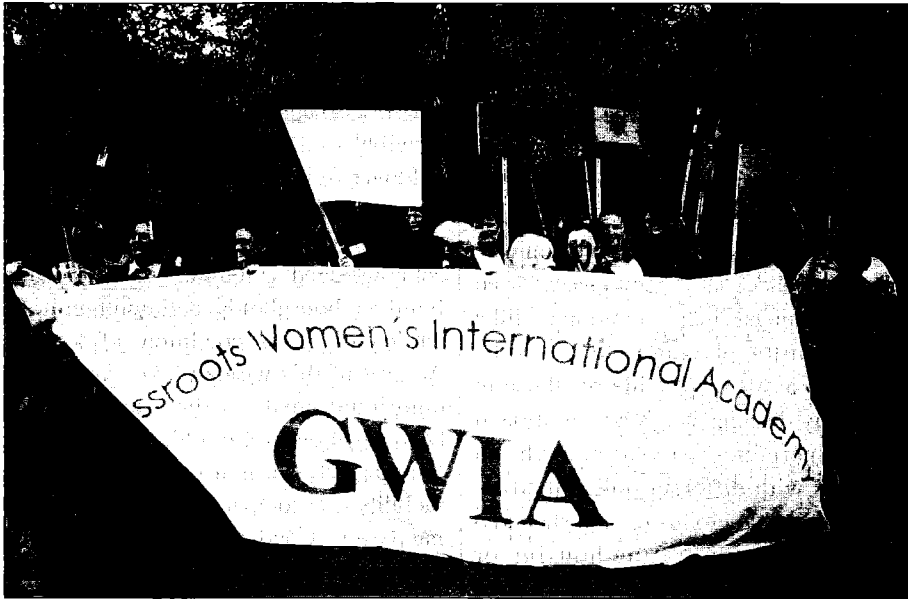


Photo by Jacqueline Leavitt

Beginning in the 1970s, the idea of community development corporations took hold. (...) The competing strains that underlie the practice of community development are:

- focus — production or empowerment;
- source of initiation — bureaucrats, foundation program officers, and academics or residents who begin with neighbourhood protests;
- scope — single issue such as housing or multi-purpose, working on “holistic neighbourhood redevelopment;” and
- emphasis — physical or social improvements.<sup>3</sup>

**Focus.** Herbert J. Rubin believes that over time, traditions of production and empowerment “influenced the other,” but I think not. Empowerment presumes that organizing is an integral and steady task; production is counting numbers of units. Funders largely discourage organizing. The years when the border/dividing line arose between production and empowerment seems to be the 1960s, and the subsequent development of what many refer to as “first generation CDCs.” (...)

**Source of Initiation.** From the beginning, foundations played a powerful role in the orientation of community organizations. Over time, and in return for funds with which to operate, lenders made clear that protests were not welcome in their boardrooms. Gittell describes one turning point in the 1970s when: “the Ford Foundation called together eleven community-based grassroots advocacy organizations from different parts of the country to promote a new agenda of community development for local organizations with Ford Foundation funding. This was part of [a] national push towards building affordable housing and initiating local enterprises and away from advocacy and organizing.”<sup>4</sup> (...)

**Scope.** The Ford Foundation has heavily invested in capacity building, spinning off the Local Initiatives Support Corporation as a financial intermediary and training arm. Ford is also at the forefront of encouraging individual community groups to merge their tasks if not their jurisdictions in what seems to be a two-fold strategy of collaboration and regionalization. Community-based groups are being urged to collaborate with each other on projects,

and some grants have been targeted to develop neighbourhood plans. (...)

Promoting regionalization as an economic development strategy is a newer thrust, even though most CDCs are either not staffed at the level they need or lack the time and resources to undertake sectoral or regional economic analysis. (...)

**Emphasis.** The single activity that most community development corporations continue to undertake is what they have long been identified with: that is, housing in the neighbourhoods in which they are located, with a shift towards economic development that is oriented to more micro than macro activities — e.g., activities described above and also including reverse commuting options, job training, recruiting local people for jobs in empowerment/enterprise zones or large civil work projects, and to a lesser extent providing support for micro-enterprise. (...)

#### **Capacity Building, Professionalizing, Measuring: Public/Private Borders**

At the same time as virtually every evaluation or analysis of CDCs points out problems that they face — insufficient resources at their disposal, daunting tasks they confront over which they have no control, dependency relationships with funding sources, negotiating treacherous political waters, etc. — there is a bit of “blaming the victim” mentality as to solutions. (...) In turn, foundations favour investments that survive and have funded research on appropriate indicators for making grants, on capacity building of organizations that they fund, in trying to restructure the CDC network itself to rid the field of the smaller groups, and in redirecting the scope of work. (...)

Gittell et al. refer to Martha A. Ackelsberg’s argument that “women’s community work and activism point to a new conception of politics and democracy... by bringing human and economic need issues out of the household and making these needs the subject of common struggles.” Thus: “the issues that

affect most women's daily lives, decent and affordable housing, safe neighbourhoods, quality health care, day care and education, to name a few, are increasingly defined as private issues outside the purview of government or politics."<sup>5</sup> (...)

Gendered community development needs more visibility. Sherry Salway Black of the First Nations Development Institute has questioned what is currently measured as indicators of successful community development. She writes that: "For the most part, community development practitioners measure easily quantifiable indicators and ones that are predominantly economic in nature—houses built, jobs created, incomes increased, businesses started, loans made, people trained or educated, services provided. Although we know these indicators do not show the full picture, we implicitly accept them due to time and funding constraints."<sup>6</sup>

Black urges that what is needed is "comprehensive economic and non-economic measurements and indicators that truly reflect local values and needs."<sup>7</sup> If we look at those values associated with women, they include caring for others, concern about people and not only property. There has been criticism about an approach that likens community development tasks to housekeeping and further stereotypes women. Perhaps, but as the next section shows, gendered community development offers much to learn from.

#### Crossing Borders Internationally: The Role of Women's Organizations and Community Development

Most community development corporations do not acknowledge the gender factor, even in terms of identifying who leaders are, the composition of the staff, the profile of people housed or hired by employers. They are not alone. Neither public nor private agencies have appreciated the gender factor. (...)

International networks of grassroots women have taken shape as recognition has grown about the impacts of the global



### The Hamilton Women's Housing Co-operative

The Hamilton Women's Housing Co-operative is one of several such projects in Canada. They often contain a number of units reserved for women with special needs, such as victims of abuse, women with AIDS or disabilities. These co-operatives are a very effective example of community development producing housing for women. Governmental financial support allowed for extended amortization of mortgages and development costs such as architectural, legal, and other professional work. Tragically, when governments cut financial support for social housing in the 90s, no further units could be built.

Left: Hamilton Women's Housing Co-operative; Right: Women Residents in Meeting Room. Photos by Deborah Barndt

economy on women. Grassroots women from the North and South have formed shadow delegations who carved out physical and policy space in the United Nations. UN conferences provided opportunities for networking around the globe. In 1975, International Women's Year, in Mexico City, a 10-year plan was adopted to improve the status of women around the world. In 1980, the UN World Conference on Women met in Copenhagen, where the United States and 52 other nations signed an agreement to end discrimination against women. Concluding the UN Decade for Women in 1985 in Nairobi, Kenya, 13,500 women from more than 100 countries convened. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women met in Beijing, China. Nongovernmental participants were relegated to Huairou, about 33 miles from the official conference site. There, the women's tent became the focal point for grassroots women. Lobbying to insert women's issues into the Beijing document, "the women were [also]

preparing for the Human Settlements Conference in Istanbul." Attention focused on concerns about homes and community, and the grassroots women developed an independent statement, which summarized their primary positions about women and shelter.

At Istanbul, grassroots women were no longer at the fringe and played a remarkable role in drafting "The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda." Women, their needs, the roles they should play in attaining sustainable human developments, are explicitly integrated into the documents. The key demands were:

Housing is a fundamental right; women's equality in shelter and habitat must be ensured; forced evictions, whether perpetrated by public or private agencies, must be halted immediately; indigenous, rural and urban housing and habitat concerns must be recognized as being inextricably linked; current economic policies such as structural adjustment policies that

commercialize land and services, further marginalize the poor, and increase the burden of poor women, must be halted immediately.<sup>8</sup>

Women and housing issues were linked, including ties to women's paid and unpaid labour. Even so, the struggle has to be refought at each UN conference, and the message repeated at professional meetings.

Following Istanbul, the then-Secretary General for Habitat established the Huairou Commission as an NGO to implement the agenda and legitimate grassroots women's strategies for protecting and improving their homes and communities. Since then, Huairou has sponsored "Our Best Practices" as a means of showcasing grassroots women's community development work and teasing out the differences between this kind of development and the mainstream's. More recently, under the leadership of the German Mother Centers, the Grassroots Women's International Academy (GWIA) developed a forum for exchanging and sharing ideas that is a model learning tool. From June through October, four week-long modules were held where international representatives presented techniques to organize around housing and community development.

A major strength of the Huairou Commission are its component support groups, among whom GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood) International has played a crucial role. A loose network of grassroots women's organizations that formed in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985, GROOTS challenged the absence of women like themselves at the UN global meetings. The organization has grown since. In 1991, GROOTS Canada began, "after women from Toronto and Vancouver attended a set of meetings conducted by the Institute on Community Development, National Congress of Neighbourhood Women in Cleveland, Ohio." GROOTS Canada was one of the four groups participating in the mutual

exchange and horizontal learning that occurred among women from Papua New Guinea, Kenya, and Appalachia in the U.S. (...)

Grassroots women are claiming space democratically. Examples of claimed spaces may be modest: building thatched roofs on poles in rural communities in Nepal creates meeting places where women mobilized around cleaning and renovating water supply systems, building pit latrines, constructing temporary bridges, etc. Papua New Guinea women constructed houses for an international conference of grassroots women and in one village, built a platform on which women leaders shared space with men leaders for the first time. The built form includes two rooms in a YWCA in Prague, the Czech Republic, where a mothers' centre claimed space for their group, a group typically ignored by civil society including government in the post-socialist city. A more elaborate building, the Mutterzentrum in Bad Saltzger, Germany, is the result of women negotiating with local authorities for donated land and with Expo 2000 for 7 million deutschmarks to construct the inter-generational facility. The built form arises from needs of railroad workers in Mumbai, India, who, desperate for housing close to their jobs for the railroad company, built one-room dwellings from found materials along the rail lines. Threatened by demolition and vulnerable to accidents from speeding rail cars, women and men negotiated for their rights to demolish the shacks themselves and for other land in order to build new housing in close proximity to the workplace. Built form such as parking garages might follow regulatory principles about safety in Montreal and Toronto, Canada that developed through grassroots women partnering with local authorities. The results may not take built form but are experienced in changes in bus routes, i.e., responding to drop-off requests that permit women to travel at night with greater security and thereby claim more use of the cities. (...)

The activities of grassroots women in community development are poorly funded. Foundation and governmental support fluctuates from place to place. A great deal of time is expended that is volunteered. Organizational structures wobble. The efforts continue. The international coalition-building strengthens local community development. (...)

Locally and internationally, women's networking can serve to advance community development. We will have crossed the border when community development builds both community and housing – appropriate and affordable for women.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Guillermo Gomez-Pena, "Excerpts from Warrior for Gringostroika," in Bobby Byrd and Susannah Mississippi Byrd, eds., *The Late Great Mexican Border: Reports from a Disappearing Line* (El Paso, Texas: Cinco Puntos Press, 1998 2nd printing), pp. 105-106. He then integrates English, Spanish, and Spanglish words to express his point: "boycott, complot, ilegalidad, clandestinidad, transgresion, desobediencia, binacional; e otras palabras, to smuggle dangerous poetry and utopian visions from one culture to another, desde alla hasta aca."

<sup>2</sup> Jean Conway, "Housing and Health," in Tim Brown, ed., *Stakeholder Housing* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), pp. 55, 56.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert J. Rubin, *Renewing Hope Within Neighbourhoods of Despair: the community-based development model* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Marilyn Gittell, Isolda Ortega-Bustamante, Tracy Steffy, *Women Creating Social Capital and Social Change: A Study of Women-Led Community Development Organizations*, New York Graduate School and University of New York, 1999, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Gittell et al., pp. 67-68.

<sup>6</sup> Sherry Salway Black, *The Elements of Development Model*, The Richard Schramm Paper on Community Development, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Salway.

<sup>8</sup> Sheryl Feldman, ed. *Women, Homes and Community Super Coalition*, "Bringing Habitat Home: A Commitment Report," prepared for the Huairou Commission on Women and Habitat, New York, UNCHS, 1977, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> In *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink raise some important questions. They clearly demonstrate the historical link between the networking that I discuss and the success of the abolitionist and suffrage movements, both of which were also international in scope. They attribute the term networking to the women's movement as well.

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# STILL A LONG ROAD AHEAD:

## Women in Calcutta Slums

Mallika Bose

Ever since the First World Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico City, the first Habitat Conference the following year in Vancouver, and subsequent conferences in Nairobi, Rio, Cairo, Beijing and New York, researchers have recognized, analyzed and theorized the relationship between women and their environments. Women's subordinate status in social, economic and political life has prompted governments, aid agencies and non-government organizations (NGO) to initiate programs for women in both rural and urban areas. After 25 years of research and programs, are communities better for low-income women in developing countries? The living conditions of 54 women in two slums and one squatter settlement in Calcutta (India) highlight the negative impacts of sub-standard housing on these women and their families. Their lives thus help to answer the question.

### Housing Conditions in Slums

In 1995 I spent 8 months in two slums (Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala) and one squatter settlement (Azad Mohalla) located along the eastern railway tracks in Calcutta. The three areas were within a couple of miles of one another. Most residents were Muslims. Staff of an NGO introduced me to some residents. I came to know and eventually interviewed 18 women in Azad Mohalla, 14 women in Darapara and 22 women in Topsia-Shibtala.

Azad Mohalla is a small linear squatter settlement consisting of two rows of houses overlooking a narrow unpaved lane (Figure 1). Because it is an illegal squatter settlement, its residents live in constant fear of eviction. It is ironic that they would name their settlement Azad Mohalla, "the neighbourhood of the free," as if to remind themselves of their innermost desire: the ability to claim a place as home. In contrast, Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala are established larger slums. Houses are built along numerous winding lanes, and often cluster around small courtyards (Figure 2). Darapara lies adjacent to the Park Circus Railway Station, while Topsia-Shibtala is near Calcutta's leather-tanning industry. All three sites are situated in mixed-use

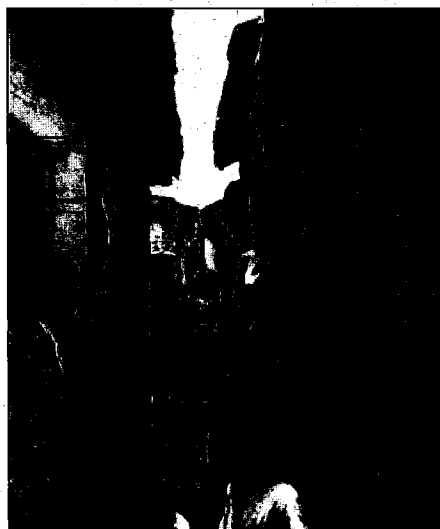


Figure 1. Photo by M. Bose.

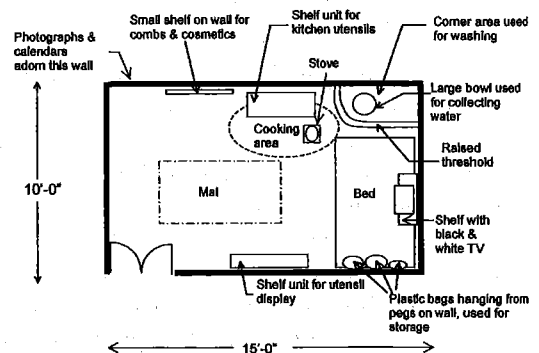


Figure 3: House of Farah Begum at Azad Mohalla

residential, industrial and commercial neighbourhoods.

Almost all families that I visited live in small single-roomed dwellings. In this room residents eat, cook, study, sleep and often earn an income (refer to Figure 3). The walls are constructed of brick and mortar; a bamboo frame and terracotta tiles hold up the pitched roof; a thin cement layer tops the packed earth floors. Narrow doors provide access. Some homes have small windows, while others have perforated concrete panels integrated into the walls. A few families cannot afford even these minimal standards. Their homes have floors of packed earth, and walls of split bamboo matting or mud plastered over a bamboo frame.

There is no private water supply and no toilets. In Azad Mohalla, a tube-well in an alcove off the central path through the settlement provides water but many women prefer to use municipal taps in the adjoining roads, that provide running water dur-

ing specified times of the day. In Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala, many of the courtyards also have municipal taps. Since Azad Mohalla is an illegal squatter settlement it has no drainage or sanitation facilities. Families with friends in the neighbouring legal slum use the sanitation facilities there, while others use the space adjacent to the railway tracks behind their settlement for their personal hygiene needs. At Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala residents from nine or ten families share a single WC, typically located in the central courtyard of a cluster of homes.

The roads and paths in Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala are paved and provide limited drainage, while the central path in Azad Mohalla is dirt without any drainage. During the monsoon months all three areas are flooded and full of ponds. In Azad Mohalla the muddy water from the path often flows right into the houses, soaking the earthen floors. Roofs often leak and walls can partially collapse during torrential rains. Garbage disposal is always a problem. During the monsoon season water from garbage dumps spills over into paths and ponds from which water is sometimes used for household chores. The leather-tanning factories around Topsia-Shibtala discharge untreated effluent into open canals, and the slum dwellers complain about the stench and the possible associated health hazards. Residents at Darapara and Topsia-Shibtala have legal electrical connections, while residents of Azad Mohalla obtain their

electricity illegally from an adjoining slum. Table 1 summarizes the housing condition of the families that I visited.

These living conditions illustrate vividly the dismal housing situation of slum dwellers in Calcutta. Why is this particularly relevant to women? It is because women spend almost all their waking and sleeping hours within their homes and settlement. Women in Muslim communities have strong social sanctions against travelling and interacting with unrelated men. Women and children therefore bear the major brunt of the environmental impact. Even when sick, women are responsible for household work and childcare. Women have to wash clothes and dishes either at the public tap or by carrying water into homes that lack drainage. Women cook on kerosene or coal stoves that give off fumes and pose a hazard within the small, poorly ventilated one-roomed homes. Simple daily chores like cooking and washing become time-consuming, labour-intensive, and often hazardous. Inadequate sanitation and garbage disposal spread diseases and make it difficult for women to keep their families healthy. All these factors exact a huge physical and emotional toll on the lives of women slum dwellers.

## Housing and Women's Livelihood

In spite of these extreme living conditions, most women slum dwellers have

jobs. Of the women I met at the three sites, 65% earn an income. They are engaged in poorly paid jobs in the informal sector, mostly in one of three basic job categories: 26% are domestic servants, 37% do petty piece-rated work and 31% are small-scale vendors. Situated in the midst of a middle-class residential neighbourhood, most women in Azad Mohalla are engaged in domestic service. The factories at Topsia-Shibtala support home-based petty piece-rated work for the women of that settlement. Darapara is located near the Park Circus Market and Railway Station, and women there can conveniently visit markets in different parts of the city, buy products, and resell them from shops in their homes or from stalls in the adjacent market within their settlement. A steady stream of people coming and going to and from the railway station provides the customer base for the vendors in Darapara. Except for the occasional visits to city markets, even the vendors spend most of their times in or near their homes. While most women are engaged in home-based work, its type is strongly influenced by the opportunities available in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

When questioned about their job preference, more than half the women (55%) prefer home-based work. Twenty percent find the question irrelevant, since they are only allowed to engage in home-based work. Working from home allows women to circumvent the social sanctions against travelling and interacting with unrelated men, earn an income and still fulfill their household responsibilities, while women with young children often do not have time to engage in wage work. Some women living in extended families are able to get other women in the family to help with their household chores while they generate income. In this way, socio-cultural norms such as household structure, the extent of household responsibilities, and the stage in the family life cycle influences women's ability to engage in wage work.

Table 1: Housing Conditions at a Glance

	Average Size of Home	Persons per Room	Materials of Construction	Infrastructure		
				Electricity	Water Supply	Sanitation
Azad Mohalla	86 sq. ft.	4.6	Roof: Tiles on bamboo framework  Wall: Mostly brick and mortar, some split bamboo matting or mud on bamboo frame	Lights - 100% Fans - 33%	Tube-well or Municipal tap in settlement at all three sites	No WCs in the settlement; no bathing stalls
Darapara	70 sq. ft.	6.0	Floor: Mostly packed earth with cement topping, some just packed earth	Lights - 100% Fans - 50+%		10-12 families share a single WC; very few bathing stalls
Topsia-Shibtala	94 sq. ft.	7.0		Lights - 100% Fans - 63%		6.4 families share a WC; 73% have access to bathing stalls





Figure 2. Photo by M. Bose.

Even though the women earn a meagre income, they still contribute significantly to their family's income, on average 45%, while 29% contributed half or more of the total family income. Research consistently finds that women spend almost all of their income on family welfare, while men often spend a significant portion of their earnings on personal expenses. Women's income is crucial to the basic survival of their family and to raising its living standards. Investing in housing and basic infrastructure like water supply, sanitation and drainage makes their living environment healthier, reduces the toil of daily chores like washing clothes and fetching water, and frees up time for

women to engage in wage work to further improve their family's standard of living.

#### A Plea for Action

The living conditions and reality of the 54 families I visited resembles that of the 4.31 million estimated slum dwellers living in Calcutta alone. In spite of the Government of India's goal of promoting "Shelter for all," investment in housing has consistently declined. During the First Five Year Plan period (1951-56), investment in housing represented 34% of total investment in the economy. The corresponding figures for the Fourth (1969-74) and Seventh (1985-90) Plan periods were 12% and 9% respectively. This trend reflects the change in the government's role from a direct provider to a facilitator of housing.

In spite of the publication of the groundbreaking report *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* in 1975, women's concerns are not integrated into major public policy documents. Even recent policy documents such as the Ninth Plan, 1992-97, and current documents of the Ministry of Urban

Development and Poverty Alleviation, do not reflect a gender-sensitive approach towards housing that recognizes the links between housing and women's productive role in society. The government increasingly depends on private endeavours to fulfill housing needs. Future housing providers must recognize the productive role of women from low-income groups, their significant contribution towards the basic survival of their families, and the links between the quality and location of housing and women's income generating abilities. Unless the current housing policy in India changes significantly, the housing situation and quality of life of low-income women is not likely to improve. ♣

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# Housing and Women in Cuba

Interview with  
Teresa Vigil,  
Habitat Cuba



"Complex of prefabricated units". Photo by R. Modlich.

**Habitat-Cuba's Motto is: collective action for sustainable habitat.**

Implementation Criteria:

- complement and support government policy and action
- active participation of all partners and particularly the community in the production and social management of habitat
- technological, energy, economic and environmental sustainability of solutions
- social and gender equity
- democracy and transparency
- efficient and effective management

Estrategia de Desarrollo (Development Strategy), Habitat-Cuba, Aug. 2000)

**CUBA NEVER CEASES TO FASCINATE** – this Caribbean island that goes on fighting the odds and doing things differently from the rest of the world. In November 2000, Regula Modlich, *Women & Environments (WE)* was in Havana. With little more than a name to guide her, she searched out Habitat-Cuba to find out how Cuban women tackled their housing issues. She met Teresa Vigil who was willing to answer our questions.

*WE: The Cuban revolution had promised to eliminate slums. What has happened to this promise?*

**T:** In the first years of the revolution many slums were indeed eliminated. The "special period" following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the virtual end of her aid to Cuba changed all that. Cuba had little oil or other energy to produce cement, so necessary for the "prefabricated units," the type of housing introduced under the influence of the Soviet Union. Our econo-

my suffered greatly and construction of new housing slowed down. In recent years, however, general economic conditions in Cuba have recovered, though not completely.

Housing construction in Cuba is a national responsibility. The government builds the housing and after 20 years of "rent-geared-to-income" (typically 10 % of income), occupants come to own their

units. This applies to apartments and detached houses. A few people do build their own houses. In recent years, most new housing is built in conjunction with economic development goals of the country, such as agriculture, mining or tourism, and the need to house workers near their jobs.

*WE: How come so much of the existing housing stock appears in disrepair?*

**T:** Shortage of materials makes repairs difficult. Much is left to individual initiative and the unofficial economy. It is a recognized problem. Yet, the initiative to rehabilitate "Old Havana" with its outstanding Spanish architecture is both promising and exciting. Initially the project had international sponsors. Today it is

	<b>1959</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>8 million</b>	<b>11 million</b>
<b>Housing Stock</b>	<b>1,5 million</b>	<b>3.5 million</b>
<b>Household Access to Electricity</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>over 95%</b>

a self-sustaining, multifaceted (architectural, social and economic) project.

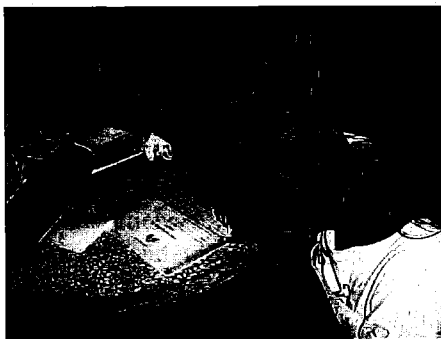
*WE: What does Habitat-Cuba do?*

**T:** One of Habitat-Cuba's programs is to eliminate slums and build new communities. With the agreement of local governments Habitat-Cuba has initiated projects

in six of 14 provinces. International agencies from countries such as Norway, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and even the Global Ministries of the Methodist Church in the US provide funds. These are used exclusively for materials, which need to be paid for in dollars. The provincial governments, in coordination with provincial housing offices finance nationally produced materials. To pay for staff and administration Habitat-Cuba offers services such as professional courses on such topics as the use of clay as a construction material and the method of participatory design, created by Argentine architect Rodolfo Livingston. This is the method used by Community Architects. (Ed. Most staff, including the president, are women. Teresa herself is a retired architect and volunteers much of her time).

At least half of all architects in Cuba are women. "Community Architects" is one of Habitat-Cuba's more exciting programs, and my favourite. It started in 1995 and received a "Best Practices Award" at Habitat II in 1996. Since then about 500 architects, most of them women, have been advising owners who wish to improve or renovate their units. The whole family, including children over 10 years, gather with the architect for an initial discussion. When the architect returns with alternative concepts a second family gathering takes place before plans are finalized. Since 1998, the National Institute for Housing has administered the program.

Habitat-Cuba started a movement exploring alternative local materials, especially



"Young woman evaluating her home". Photo by Isabel Leon, Arch.

clay and bamboo. Through the "special period" architects have had to adjust to available materials. Bamboo promises to be useful for housing carpentry and furniture. Cuba needs to import all wood, as she has no indigenous wood. The program is even looking for plant species, which could adapt to the conditions of Cuba's different regions. Such construction materials are more labour intensive yet require no energy or oil. They are suitable for particle board, windows, doors and furniture, but are only appropriate for constructing small-scale housing projects. Building five storeys makes sense in major cities, but not in rural areas. The people there prefer lower-scale housing and it is there that clay construction is most efficient.

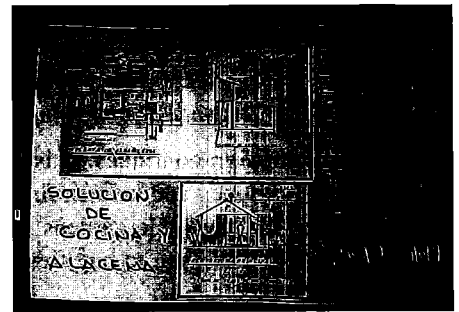
Another program is Community Development. In 1999 alone, Habitat-Cuba was involved in 19 projects. Introducing a gender perspective in all of its projects is another mandate of Habitat-Cuba. A Spanish professor who came to Cuba offered a course on how to incorporate gender sensitivity into projects, which greatly helped to implement this objective. When we build houses to replace a slum, many of the women household heads prefer not to marry the men they live with, so as not to have to share ownership of the new units.

*WE: How about co-operative housing?*

T: Cuba's Housing General Law does not provide for housing co-operatives. Habitat-Cuba has experimental co-operative projects. We have obtained a special provision for two experimental co-operative projects in two towns: Sancti Spiritus and Ciego De Avila. These are now in development and, if successful, the Housing Institute may evaluate the experiment and reproduce it.

*WE: Is there a homeless problem in Cuba as there is in the rest of the world?*

T: Seeing the homeless, when I was in Canada, greatly concerned me. While many Cubans live in poor housing conditions, practically none are homeless, except



"Kitchen and dining proposals for a farm home" Photo by Isabel Leon, Arch

maybe a very few who are mentally ill and have wandered away from the hospitals where chronically insane are institutionalized at no cost to their families.

*WE: Support services in neighbourhoods are very important for women. How are they developed?*

T: Primary and secondary schools as well as day care centres are built at the same time as housing. Some day care centres accept children from the age of three months, but generally, children enter when they learn to walk. Children of women who work in priority areas, such as health care, research or education, have first right to public day care centres. The

99.2% of pre-school children are enrolled in a pre-school program in contrast to only 15% in Latin America and the Caribbean region. Almost 100% of primary school graduates continue into senior high school or technical school, while only 73% of children in Latin American and the Caribbean region reach fifth grade. [Granma, Nov. 26, 2000].

fee for childcare is also geared to income. There are many informal caregivers, who are licensed; they serve children up to the age of five years. Children in such care receive additional education two to three times a week. There is also a network of special schools for children with disabilities in Cuba, though the goal is to encourage children with special needs to be integrated into the normal stream.

*WE: Cuba responded to the "Special Period" with a campaign encouraging urban agriculture. Is this continuing, and if so are both men and women participating?*

T: Yes, this campaign continues. It is a slow process. Both men and women find employment in the vegetable gardens in the cities. These enable you to buy fresh vegetables.

*WE: How are general conditions for women in Cuba?*

T: Wages for men and women are the same. Women aged 15-60 in the labour force in Cuba increased to 68% in 2000 from 42.2% in 1990. The divorce rate is very high - women head over 35% of households - and the birthrate is very low. With rent, and childcare geared to income, free education, and all medical services for children free, the economic burden on single mothers is greatly eased. Women are entitled to three months' maternity leave at full salary, from 1 1/2 month before to 1 1/2 month after delivery. After that a mother has the right to six months of leave at half her salary while she retains the right to return to her job for up to one year.

*WE: Is there domestic violence and child sexual abuse in Cuba?*

T: Domestic violence exists, but it is not a very serious problem. Women know their rights very well and feel they can get protection from police who will prosecute and evict any man accused of domestic violence. Similarly, women feel safe in most public places. Theft is more likely than

physical assault. Sexual abuse of children exists but is very rare. It is considered such a great crime, and so frowned upon by people that it is punishable with long jail sentences or even with death.

*WE: Has the Family Code, which requests men to share domestic responsibilities, been effective?*

T: It has had considerable influence, and most men understand their duties. Yet is not easy to implement, because Cuba - like the other Latin American societies - still exalts "machismo." Schools do include the Family Code in the curriculum and it is read at wedding ceremonies.

*WE: How about older women?*

T: While there are some senior citizen buildings and nursing homes, most older women live with the family of one of their children, as do I. As everywhere, care-giving falls almost totally on women. Some neighbourhoods are starting to have day care centres for seniors. This allows working children of seniors who need supervision to hold on to their jobs. It is recognized that with declining birth rates and increasing longevity, this problem will grow.

### Conclusion

In spite of the serious challenges of the US Blockade, the "Special Period," and some natural disasters, Cuba adheres to a housing policy unlike any other country. While there are no special policies aimed at women and their housing needs, women do benefit from Cuba's socially



Newly constructed rural community. Photo by Isabel Leon, Arch.

very progressive policies. The projects of Habitat-Cuba, and the efforts of the many women leading, working for, and benefiting from these projects, have a significant impact. The goals, processes and projects of Habitat-Cuba involve communities and families in finding and developing innovative solutions, making decisions and, most important, in providing housing. In this way Habitat-Cuba nurtures a sense of common ownership, control and initiative at the grass roots level, so important to socialist ideals, yet so neglected in previous socialist experiments. ☘

**Teresa Vigil** is an architect who worked for many years in housing design and research. Though she is officially retired, she continues to work as assistant to the President of Habitat-Cuba, Selma Diaz, who is an architect too. Habitat-Cuba works in strict collaboration with the Cuban Housing Institute and International Development Aid Agencies to help implement some of the social goals of the Cuban Revolution. You can contact Vigil at: [vigil@habitat.get.tur.cu](mailto:vigil@habitat.get.tur.cu)



"Rural community built from short lived local materials". Photo by Isabel Leon, Arch.

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# ON THE WAY TO WORK:

## Transportation and Welfare Reform in the US

Evelyn Blumenberg

"Into the job market, and off welfare," has been the US government's motto over the last 25 years. In the process, the philosophy of welfare provision has shifted from a top-down federal program toward a federally funded program that devolves significant authority and flexibility to states, localities and the private sector. The 1996 "Personal Responsibility and Work

comprise close to 70 percent of adults on welfare in the US. Successful programs must therefore address the particular transportation needs of women.

Several pieces of federal legislation aim to help fund transportation for low-wage workers. In 1998, the Access to Jobs program, part of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century, assists states and

portation programs for welfare participants. To be effective, however, they must address the transportation needs of women – their distinct travel patterns and their labour-market status. Household, neighbourhood, and workplace characteristics that influence women's ease of travel must be considered in developing appropriate transportation policies, instead of simply

**"These federal programs have increased the resources available to support transportation programs for welfare participants. To be effective, however, they must address the transportation needs of women — their distinct travel patterns and their labour-market status."**

Opportunity Reconciliation" Act imposes a five-year lifetime limit on the receipt of public assistance. To implement this new "work-first" policy, welfare participants need help accessing the labour-market.

Transportation services are a significant component of a successful welfare-to-work program. Welfare participants often live distant from employment opportunities. Traveling to work and to the many other destinations such as day care centers, schools, and employment offices is essential to employment. Welfare participants, report difficulties such as missed bus connections, broken-down cars, long commutes, and limited transit service. In particular, not having access to cars limits their likelihood of finding and holding employment. Single-parent households

localities to develop flexible transportation services that connect welfare participants and other low-income persons to jobs and employment-related services. It has funded 400 programs and allocated US \$124.5 million to aid the travel of low-income commuters. The Welfare-to-Work grant program administered by the US Department of Labour is intended to provide services – including transportation services – to the hardest-to-employ welfare participants. Finally, the welfare program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), while the largest source of funds, allows only a small proportion to be used for transportation programs by TANF-eligible families.

These federal programs have increased the resources available to support trans-

expanding existing services or applying policy approaches that have been effective for low-wage male workers.

### Household characteristics

Welfare participants are largely single parents who are responsible for their own travel as well as that of their children. Such parents make many more trips than adults in all other household types. They make more stops on their way to and from work and are responsible for returning home when household or family emergencies arise. A large percentage of welfare participants live in households without vehicles and must negotiate these difficult travel tours on public transit. Transit-dependent welfare participants >

have even greater transportation difficulties and, not surprisingly, lower employment rates than those who have access to automobiles.

## Characteristics of the Neighbourhood

Highly localized labour-markets shape and often limit the opportunities of low-income women who on average commute shorter distances than men (of all income categories). In Los Angeles, a city characterized by low-density development and suburban sprawl, the average commute distance of welfare participants is approximately seven miles. The evidence is conclusive that women travel shorter distances than men and are therefore more reliant on nearby community resources and services. The reasons for women's shorter commutes remain unclear and subject for further study. Women may prefer to work closer to their homes to better balance both paid work and household responsibilities. This could also reduce the high costs of long-distance commutes given their low wages. Women may also be responding to employers who locate near available supplies of low-wage female labour.

## Employers/Job site

The economic opportunities of welfare participants are influenced by the jobs and services located in their neighbourhoods. Welfare rates are lower in job-rich areas while employment rates are higher where welfare participants have good transit service.

Women's location in the labour-market also influences their travel patterns and needs. Low-income women with children are more likely to work non-standard hours. Two-fifths of low-income employed mothers work nights or weekends, when levels of transit service is either very limited or not available. At such times women typically experience high levels of fear for their personal safe-

ty at deserted transit stops and on sparsely populated buses and trains.

New service must accommodate women's travel during peak and off-peak hours as their employment necessitates. Women need to make intermediate stops on their way to and from work to transport young children and perform other household responsibilities; to access jobs and services in their communities; and to travel in safety. In dense urban areas, public transit may effectively connect welfare participants to jobs and services. In low-density, job-poor neighbourhoods, however, cars may be a more effective option. Overall, welfare participants who have access to cars have higher employment rates and earnings and experience fewer transportation problems than participants who rely on other modes of transportation. Although not problem-free, cars offer welfare participants flexibility in trip-making, the ability to travel longer distances in shorter time, access to destinations that are not served by public transit, and travel in relatively secure and safe environments.

Despite these findings, a study of public agencies in California shows that very few counties have planned or implemented programs to help participants own or maintain automobiles. Facilitating auto ownership is not a politically popular approach for many local policy-makers and planners who seek to create more "livable cities" through reducing auto-dependency, increasing transit use, and

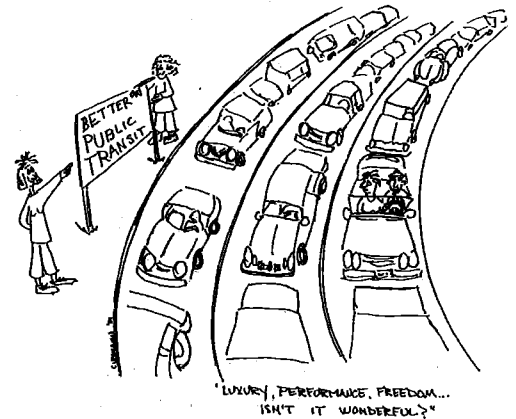


Illustration by Carolyn Lehmann.

discouraging suburban sprawl. Yet unless local planning policies create more densely developed and better serviced neighbourhoods, the essential preconditions for viable transit, "livable cities" will continue to make empty rhetoric. To successfully allow single mothers to make the transition from welfare to the labour market, policies must reflect women's distinct travel patterns and needs. Cars must therefore be part of the policy mix for low-income women and single mothers, particularly those living in job-poor and transit-poor neighbourhoods. ❁

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# Computers:

## COMMUNITY FOR AGING WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA

Karen Barnett and Barbara Adkins

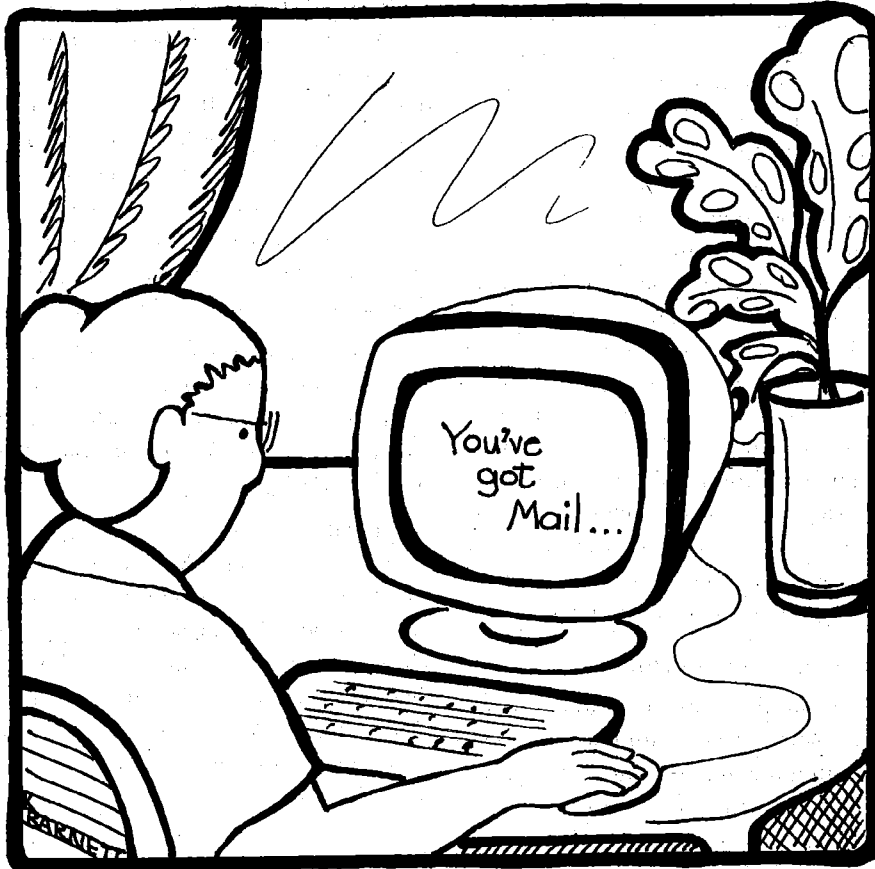


Illustration by Karen Barnett.

*"The organism cannot be considered apart from the habitat that houses it"*

*— Zoe Sofia, 2000*

Older women's computer use is important as it has the potential to address some of the social silencing and devaluation of older women's wisdom and experience. Older women can appropriate computer technology to maintain their independence and identity, so threatened by the aging of the body.

Managing technology becomes a display of women's competence for continued social belonging. This is relevant to their sense of independence and personhood. The Internet extends their habitat past the walls of their homes, allowing them to connect with others with the same interests through real and "virtual" interaction.

For some, this has further significance in providing social connection in the context of a future where there may be physical limitations because of aging. Margaret, Nyree, and Georgina are three older women who have successfully accessed computer technology for these purposes.

### Planning for the Future

Margaret, 66, single, and a retired educator, is well set up with technology, and a capable and confident computer user. Not surprisingly, she enjoys her ability to continue using her skills to teach others about technology, whether they be a young friend with a school project or people her own age at the public library. She enjoys Internet banking, family history, e-mail, and using ATMs. Margaret is also well aware of how the computer can compensate for the physical declines that may occur through the ageing process:

*"I am writing this using a speech recognition program and all I will have to do is to edit. I am at the time of life now when I need to make provision for the future when I'm no longer as mobile as I am now. One of the provisions that I have made is use of the Internet and e-mail. I am hoping that as long as my eyesight lasts I will be able to communicate with friends and family using the Internet. We are living in times when technology is changing rapidly. I hope to be part of this. I can hardly wait for the next exciting experience with computers that will lie before me."*

### A Hobby for the Mind

Rather than physical decline, Nyree, 70, is fearful of losing her mental faculties. In fact, she has an obsession with memory loss:

*"I was always told that I didn't have a brain to do this job. No no, you wouldn't have the brains for that, you know. I mean my brain has gone off in later years I know that. But I was quite all right. I topped the grade in science one year at school so I really wasn't a dummy."* >

Nyree worked in many challenging jobs during her lifetime as a sole parent. None of these were clerical, so she seems reluctant to approach the computer with her previous gusto. The computer is an addition to her long list of hobbies and she is determined to persevere, chase up courses, and continue with her long battle to master it. Nyree feels: "If you don't understand computers, eventually you're just going to be left behind." But it is the great hope that the computer holds out for the brain that Nyree values the most. She longs to get on the Internet and so keep the brain active:

*"I just like to keep my brain active because I don't want to be one of those people who just sits in the house and vegetates ... and I am going to be one of those people who does have a brain problem. I feel I can't remember anything and so I want to try and keep it going as long as I can."*

#### **New Friendships On-line and Off-line**

A keen hobby quilter, 60-year-old Georgina mentioned to her friends her struggles to master the computer. She followed up a suggestion to investigate a website for quilters and through that found an on-line group of hobbyists. This initial contact has unexpectedly evolved into what is now a huge social network:

*"We have a web page and e-mail, and discuss topics, give hints, and help to those who need it. ... The wonderful thing about this is we are a family and if anyone is ill or has a problem they can unburden themselves and know they have a sympathetic group of listeners."*

This group has forged friendships beyond the "virtual" as a direct result of the online contact; as Georgina says:

*"It is so strange that one sees an e-mail from someone, replies, and next thing a friendship is formed. I can now travel almost the length and breadth of Australia and there would be a cheery face to greet me, cup of coffee, and maybe a bed for the night."*

These extracts from interviews with older women illustrate how it is important to view older women's computer use spatially and economically.

While these attitudes and dispositions play a role in older women's access to this technology, there is another factor that is equally important but often overlooked. Technologies in the home are often invisible and mundane, and as computers become increasingly part of the common features of homes, they fade into the background as easily as stoves, fridges, irons, telephones, and so on. This disguises that the home and its mundane technologies provide a "habitat" for women typified by Zoe Sofia as "belongingness to and interactions in an actively containing and preserving environment shared with entities, both human and non-human." The home is adapted for computer use and becomes a safe and familiar environment that facilitates older women's social connection and sense of identity. For Molly, Lotte, and Sophia the adaptation of their environment to accommodate electronic communication provides a new and enriched experience of home.

#### **No Longer "Doing Time"**

At 69, Molly is now an avid computer-user of three years, with many interests, including a computer club. She uses e-mail and word processing to compensate for bad handwriting. It's not showing off, she says to friends, but a practical solution to her inability to manage neat writing to keep in touch as she used to. A lot of her e-mails have graphics attached to make them "jazzy." The inclusion of the computer in the domestic space is a wonderful addition that allows her to move legitimately between chores and pleasures:

*"Now I am older I have more time to do the things I want to do. Once my time was taken up with washing, ironing, cooking, driving, and everything that we do for our family and no time for myself. I even used to do all ironing at night, about 30 shirts every week, sometimes when everyone was in bed. Now when I have done my*

*jobs I feel free to do my things without feeling guilty. I have a husband who is old fashioned and thinks men should not help around the house. I also have more money (not much) to spend on what I want. Don't always tell some of the family. I've done my time."*

#### **The Fascination with Technology**

Lotte is 78. In spite of a poor marriage, she is content that her choice to stay in it advantaged her children and, after her husband's death, allowed her to have a home of her own for the first time in her life. Born in Europe, Lotte has had very little formal education, yet in spite of this she has always liked technical things, read a lot and taught herself several languages. She says of computer technology:

*"It's fascinating. I'm fascinated by it, you know. I can't help it; I'm just... all these new things, I love it. I'm still brainy enough to get into it so that's one thing I'm very thankful for..."*

Lotte values her independence and freedom to do what she likes when she likes. Her home is like a timeless cocoon free of the demands of husband and family, and the computer has become a crucial part of her environment – accessible whenever she needs it. When her computer was taken away for repairs, she missed it more than she expected.

*"Oh, I miss it so. I could go up say at two or three in the morning and say oh, here's a good time, you know, and play on the net and look for this and that, you know, sit up there for hours and then go back to bed again sleep till ten o'clock, have a rest – it's a good life – its my time so – but I miss that very much."*

#### **Home in a Room**

Severe physical impairments, mainly resulting from a stroke, removed Sophia, 83, from her home to a shared room in a nursing home. As a native of New York Sophia relied on the New York Times for news of home, but reading became almost impossible:



*"I used to lie here praying that it would all end. The New York Times was delivered but I could not manage to read it, even when folded for me – and it was three weeks out of date."*

Her husband and a friend set her up with a computer and a table that allows her to get her wheelchair exactly where she needs it. Now Sophia can see the outside world physically and virtually. She has e-mail contact with life-long friends, her optometrist and rabbi, and of course, Internet connection to the New York Times. She says that without the computer she would not be here. The computer has allowed her to gather together meaningful things that re-created an environment specifically for her:

*"I have a view out the window right in front of me to the left and although it is the trade entrance it is still interesting and when I see the evening meal arriving then I know it is time to hurry along surfing. I have a mirror just behind my monitor and I call it my rear view mirror. I can see who is passing in the corridor or who has called in. ...Overall I am as comfortable as can be and when I get onto my New York Times then the time and troubles just fly."*

### Conclusion

There are some common themes in these stories: recognition of declining abilities, such as loss of memory; increasing dependence; and reclaiming time of one's own. A diversity of imperatives drives these women to competence with the computer. However, we must not forget that the house and its contents function as a kind of habitat for electronic communication. The abilities of these women to successfully adapt their home environment for their information technology needs raises the question of other instances where a hostile environment may discourage computer use, or where economics place the technology out of reach. Others may continue to be dominated in the home by the ironing, by the family, and domestic demands placed on

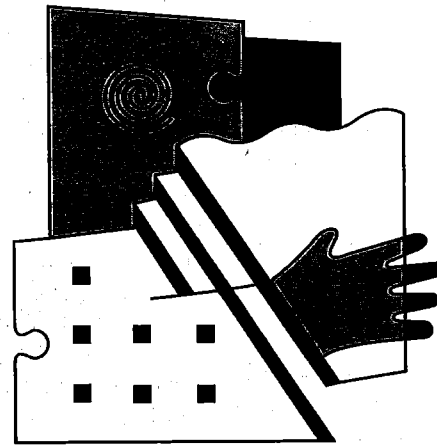
women, or by the constraints of a nursing-home environment. The examples considered here show that whether these older women are technically competent or unable to fathom how the technology operates, whether they have had working occupations or have been disadvantaged, they can see the opportunities they will have as a consequence of using the technology. It remains for us to design and adapt home environments as "habitats" and to ensure economic conditions that foster older women's social connection – both north and south – through the Internet. 🍷

**Karen Barnett** is a PhD scholar at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia. She is using qualitative perspectives to investigate information technologies in the lives of older men and women. She is interested in aging and gender, and in the social and spatial aspects of technology in everyday settings. She can be contacted by e-mail at: kbarnett@qut.edu.au.

**Dr Barbara Adkins** is a sociologist who teaches and researches on sex and gender, everyday interaction and issues of space. She is currently supervising projects that investigate the social and spatial issues in women's refuges, the Internet as a tool for rape crisis counseling and gendered work practices. She is at the School of Psychology and Counseling, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

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## A Brazilian Neighbourhood Evaluates its Quality of Life

Leticia Marques Osorio

DO WOMEN AND MEN VALUE THEIR quality of life differently in the squatter settlements of developing countries? The concept of QOL is not just an indicator of the level of one's "private life." It is a concept that integrates all needs, perceptions, expectations, satisfactions and subjective elements of people living in an urban community.

Four scholars, Leticia Marques Osorio from Brazil, Claudia Aranibar Miranda from Bolivia, Obehi Momodu from Nigeria and Sri Maryati from Indonesia, were supported by six German universities to research this question. The project was designed as part of the development of an International Women's University – Technology and Culture (IFU).

While both women and men are exposed to environmental degradation in cities, women and children have to face greater adverse effects, particularly in settlements that lack proper sanitary facilities because they spend more time in the home and neighbourhood. These health hazards pose an additional burden on the household. Women tend to be the primary providers of necessities such as building material, food, and domestic fuel. They continually face the deteriorating urban environment and development with its pollution, disease, and contamination. Improving basic services and the urban environment therefore benefits women more than it does men. Such measures can therefore be considered part of a "gender-equitable development strategy."



PLANETARIO VILLAGE (1991)



PLANETARIO VILLAGE NOWADAYS

Explosive population growth is expanding urban areas and crowding city centres in developing countries. While upper-income groups manage to protect their interests in high quality, well-serviced enclaves, the large majority are threatened by inadequate provision of security, emergency services, health care, housing and clean water supply. Our researchers chose *Planetario Village* in Porto Alegre as the Brazilian case study. They wanted to:

- analyze the relationship between quality of life, environment, and gender;
- detect critical issues or inequities, as well as positive situations;
- propose ways of improving that relationship; and
- establish international comparison between different cases.

Porto Alegre is considered Brazil's "Capital of the Quality of Life" because of its healthy environment and high social indicators on health, education, security, and access to basic services. Yet, in inner-

city squatter settlements, *favelas*, people live in deplorable conditions. The small, overcrowded homes, put together from scrap materials, mostly on government land, lack infrastructure such as water or garbage collection. These areas violate planning laws, which require prior approval from the local council as well as infrastructure installation. Residents can't afford the price of the land and forced evictions are common. *Planetario Village* came into existence in 1960s. The population grew during the 1980's as people flooded in from surrounding poor areas.

Porto Alegre decided to apply the *Land Regularization Program*, designed to provide low-income people with land and housing, to the *Planetario Village*. The municipality would allow the community to stay in its central location, supply the public infrastructure and build permanent, well-designed houses. A right-wing councillor representing the surrounding middle- and upper-class neighbourhoods took the municipality to court, arguing that the poor ought to live in the periphery, not on

valuable inner-city land. But *Planetario's* inhabitants and the municipality won. The *Participatory Budget* covered some improvements. *Participatory Budgets* started with the election of the Workers Party in 1989, when all citizens were invited to decide how much should be spent on items such as health, housing, transit and environment. However, the budget fell short of ensuring adequate replacement housing and other needed improvements.

Here is how men and women responded in the *Planetario Village Quality of Life* survey, which was based on four components: human, natural, physical, and socio-cultural. Women rated these from 1.9 to 3.5 and men from 1.9 to 3.6. The human field rated highest; the natural field lowest. The human field included variables evaluating the quality of public facilities and time spent to reach them. It rated so high because of *Planetario's* location near the city centre where the public facilities are concentrated.

#### Total Index for Each Field

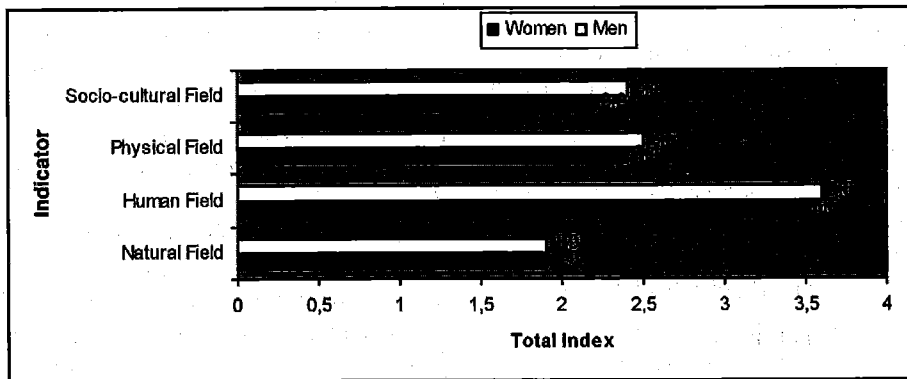
The Municipality had invested more in the physical area, such as housing and

such as security and drug-trafficking prevention. The greatest problems, however, were in the natural area, noise levels, air pollution, flooding, abnormal temperature inside the houses, and problems with plagues.

Overall, women and men evaluated the four quality of life components almost equally. Women did, however, rate their living conditions lower than did men because they are responsible for ensuring that fuel and water are available and pollution levels are well managed in their homes and around their settlements. Women were also more critical of their neighbours, both inside and around *Planetario*. They were therefore more willing to move out of the neighbourhood. Women rated social problems as more serious than did men. Drug addiction and trafficking, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, domestic violence, and robbery all affected women, while men were not concerned about teenage pregnancy and domestic violence. Women were more active in the Community Centre and in the Participatory Budget, whereas men were more active in Parents Associations

nancy, alcoholism, domestic violence, and robbery and improve our natural environment, pollution noise, flooding, and plagues." These are the two top priorities for *Planetario's* men and women for improving their quality of life. If the municipality is ready to listen, it should prepare plans based on what the residents expressed in the research, a process worth adopting in cities with similar communities around the world. ☛

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infrastructure, than in any other field. Everyone in *Planetario* felt their houses were better than the previous ones, yet they still requested improvements such as extensions and renovations. The residents were more concerned with socio-cultural improvements. They wanted the government to do something about social issues,

and in the Local Health Council. Women felt they were more representative of the neighbourhood, because they all held an elected position. Men believed that they could influence the decision-making process without being elected.

"Help us with our social problems: drug addiction, drug trafficking, teenage preg-



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# ISSUES OF WOMEN'S FEAR IN URBAN SPACE:

## The Case of Belfast

Wendy Saunderson

WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE built environment has been on feminist research agendas in North America since the early 1970s. In Europe, it is over 20 years since feminists first challenged radical urban theorists for failing to see the ways in which their analysis of urban processes and urban social movements ignored women. In Britain, it is only within the past 15 to 20 years that literature on such issues has appeared and that British town planning has acknowledged its failure to consider women's position in the production and consumption of urban planning and design. In Ireland, feminist perspectives on urban social process and spatial forms remain conspicuous by their absence.

Of Northern Ireland's population, 39% live in the Belfast Urban Area. Of these, 52% are women. However, of the town planners and architects who plan and design our cities, the vast majority are still men. What does this suggest for urban women as the majority of city dwellers, the men and women who produce and consume the built environment of Belfast? Do women and men in 2001 identify differently with city living? What does all this suggest about urban identity, gender, and contested urban space in Belfast?

Belfast's town planners are in a unique position. Following 50 years of planning decisions under the devolved Stormont Government, from the 1921 partitioning of Ireland to the 1972 local government reforms, local authorities in Northern Ireland lost their powers to the British

Government in London. This centralization removed all planning powers from Belfast's City Councillors, leaving non-elected professionals to take planning decisions. The fundamental dilemma with planning in Northern Ireland was that neither the "poacher" nor the "gamekeeper" could be ousted or elected. Devolution in 1999 saw the transfer of powers back to Northern Ireland when the new Northern Ireland Assembly was set up.

Belfast is probably best known as a troubled and "pariah" city: the hotbed of Northern Ireland's political struggles and sectarian violence from 1969 until the first IRA ceasefire in 1994. However, since the late 1980s, Belfast city centre has undergone a dramatic revival. The Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001 included concerted efforts to re-imaging the city through physical planning and to establish physical development policies for the area. A confident, corporate, commercial, and image-conscious city has largely replaced the old symbolism of the besieged and troubled Belfast.

### The Study

At the start of the BUAP 2001 in the early 1990s, detailed personal accounts of city living were collected from over 100 architects, town planners, and men and women living in Belfast. A method called Identity Structure Analysis (ISA) was used to uncover and explore women and men's relationship to the city and their feelings and identifications within it, i.e. their "urban identity." Almost 10 years later

(2000), a small number of these women were re-interviewed to try to establish how their feelings had changed – if at all – towards the city after dark.

The findings suggest that Belfast's re-imaging has been "successful." Men, like women in Belfast, have generally strong and positive urban identities. Yet unlike men, women's urban identity becomes highly vulnerable when they think of themselves using the night-time city. The thought of using the city at night creates strong conflicts in identification, coupled with low self-esteem and contributing to a high sense of vulnerability. This is not the case for men.

Ease of movement in the city is as much psychological as it is physical. If a woman perceives personal danger or threat, then fear results. Whether this fear is "justified" is immaterial, as it influences subsequent movement, avoidance or encounter. As H. Koskela termed it: "women's fear of violence is realised as spatial exclusions." Many women said they simply did not go into Belfast at night; some said they would, but only if they were accompanied, were in a car, or had booked a return taxi. One woman submitted:

*"You don't go into the city at night if you know what's good for you – it's no place for women late at night. Anyway, I can never be blamed for being caught in 'the wrong place' at 'the wrong time' if I stay at home in my own space – at least I can control what goes on here".*

Such indications of an implicit curfew on

women using the night-time city reinforce the contention of deeply gendered urban space. For many urban women, this amounts to spatial exclusion. Clearly, for women in Belfast, fear for personal security in the night-time city adds a very undesirable dimension - socially, spatially, and symbolically - to their urban lives.

But what do urban dwellers in Belfast mean by personal safety and security? Safety from what? This was a particularly pertinent question in the context of the

city at night. The "safe streets" provided by the current continuing ceasefire in Northern Ireland did not mediate such sentiments. Nor did the new, bright and modern image that the BUAP 2001 and its attendant commercial thrust brought to Belfast substantively allay these continued feelings of reluctance to use the night-time city. One woman summed up what she called the "dilemma":

*"Usually if there are people around, you feel a bit safer, but sometimes I've been*

Yet unlike men, women's urban identity becomes highly vulnerable when they think of themselves using the night-time city.

politically distressed "pre-ceasefire" (pre-1994) climate of Belfast. Of urban men, 53% feared personal attack in the city: being robbed/mugged or personally threatened, while 47% felt their personal safety threatened by sectarian violence, being "caught up" in terrorist bombs or shootings. In contrast, all urban women referred to personal safety in terms of being safe from sexual harassment or direct sexual attack. Only 20% of women fear, amongst other things, sectarian activity, but just at night. So, it would appear that even in the face of the exceptionally "troubled" pre-ceasefire political climate of Belfast, issues of women's personal safety in the city remain very much in the arena of sexual politics, not sectarian politics.

Perhaps most surprising was that the in-depth interviews of 10 of the women, 10 years later, showed little improvement. These women still reported the same feelings of insecurity and fear of using the

*around the Queen's University area and really felt quite frightened: there are so many people (students I think) just hanging around the steps and street furniture and drinking - they can become quite abusive at times. All the good street-lighting in the world doesn't remove that fear of being alone. But on the other hand, if you go into other areas of Belfast at night - perhaps to a pub or a friend's house - sometimes the streets are very deserted and that's even worse because you start wondering why nobody is around!"*

Urban identity may be conceptualized as an "indicator" of personal, social, spatial, and symbolic representations of the city. When women construe the city in terms of actually using it, the consumption of particular aspects of urban living, such as public transport and particularly, the night-time city, Belfast becomes a highly contested space - socially, spatially, and symbolically - along the lines of gender.

## 25 Years on - What Can be Done?

Even after the spawning of research evidence, women's networks, initiatives, and awareness-raising, after 25 years women still feel their personal safety threatened by the night-time city. "For some women, the threat of rape at night turns their cars into armoured tanks, their solitude into isolation," comments T. Beneke. Clearly, there is still the need for studies of this kind to provide much-needed empirical research on urban women's relationship to planned urban space. Research must continue to reveal how exactly women relate to the city - at least, a sufficient amount to warrant a better response from urban planning practice and policy-making. Planners should formulate city-wide strategies to incorporate women, taking full account of the complex inter-relations between the many facets of their public and private lives in the city.

In particular, ways of improving women's perceptions of safety in the night-time city should be prioritized. Gender-sensitive urban planning can substantially reduce women's fear of the night-time city: better lighting in parks, streets and public waiting areas; and more CCTV cameras in isolated areas. Maj Britt Theorin, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities asserts: "The fear of rape and sexual assault is not an inevitable part of metropolitan life." She believes that beyond gender-sensitive urban planning and rethinking the physical layout of our cities, we need gender-sensitive urban policy-making - more patrolling police officers after dark, affordable public transport and subsidized cab-prices for women >

and girls travelling alone at night. Stockholm, for example, offers "girl cabs" after dark, when women can pay a shared fare if they pick up other women travelling in the same direction. Mexico City and Tokyo both provide women-only metro-cars at peak hours. Women are not, and should not be treated as, a "special needs" group: they are 52% of the population.

As part of a wider commitment to dissolving inequalities within the built environment, planning must make a conscious effort to relate its activities to creating

links between different policy areas. Housing, transport, childcare, retailing, and leisure policies need to relate to other divisions such as class, race, age, sexuality, and culture – and particularly to gender, which subsumes all such divisions. Women working within the planning system are uniquely placed to address the situation. Existing professional women's groups, such as the all-women panels of the Royal Town Planning Institute, need to continue their high profile and strong impetus. Those, which have dissolved, can reform and continue. Women's issues

and the "symbiotic relationship between urban institutions and women's lives" need to be kept to the fore and pressed towards recognition and change. We may have come a long way in 25 years, but we clearly have a long way to go. ❁

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# Women's Health and the City\*

Toronto

Barbara Rahder and Rebecca Peterson



The Medicine Wheel cr. Mnjikaning Art Studio

**W**omen's daily lives in cities expose them to a wide variety of environments. The impact of these environments on their health and well-being varies by age, class, race or ethnicity, as well as a host of other individual and cultural factors. How do we make sense of this complexity and diversity?

To begin answering this question, we held discussions with seven groups of women whose voices and perspectives are not often found in the literature. These included older women, teenage girls, Native women, immigrant women, single mothers, women with disabilities, and women working in academia – 50 women in total. We organized the groups by networking with agencies and organizations in the Toronto area such as the Older Women's Network, Oakwood Collegiate Institute, Anishnawbe Health, the Davenport-Perth Community Centre, Able York, and the York University Faculty Association.

## Voices of Diversity

Our discussions produced a wealth of information about the ways in which different women perceive their environments. Environments that are important sources of support and connection for

some may be settings of fear and vulnerability for others. While our findings are limited by the small number involved, and by the emphasis on women in Toronto, the diversity of responses among groups and within groups suggests that the environmental influences on women's health are far more complex than is generally recognized.

## Women's Environments

When examining the relationship between women's health and environments, researchers have looked almost exclusively at health systems and at gendered risks in the home and workplace. In contrast, this project provided women with an opportunity to name the environments they see as influencing their own health and well-being, and thereby expand our understanding of the environments relevant to women's health. Immigrant women's discussion of the "chilly climate" in Canadian neighbourhoods highlighted the importance of the environment surrounding the home.

Teenage girls emphasized ways in which the school environment, including their peers, can have both positive and negative impacts on health. For example, teenage girls talked about the ways in which teachers can create a positive or negative environment by being either supportive and encouraging or hypercritical in the classroom. Girls also talked about feeling harassed and judged by both adults and other teenagers. Many said they wished there was less emphasis on clothes and boys and more efforts at building supportive relationships and self-esteem among girls.

Native women's discussion of feeling "lost in the world" described the horrific consequences of being immersed in a cul-

tural environment that is hostile and oppressive to Native people. Native women's sense of being "lost in the world" included histories of trauma, abuse, foster care, dysfunctional men, poverty, marital breakdown, single-parenting, and racism. Lack of education, services, and knowledge of traditional spirituality makes it particularly difficult for native women to feel strong and connected. For every group, public spaces, such as streets, parks, shops and services, were seen as impacting on their sense of health and well-being.

## Risk and Resilience

Gendered health risks are one of the primary themes in women's health and environment research, though concepts of resilience and thriving are equally important. This project focused on both the positive (resilience) and negative (risk) aspects of the various environments. While it would be inappropriate to generalize from our discussions to all women, some common themes are worth noting.

Almost all of the groups talked about the positive aspects of connection or community in one form or another. A prevalent theme in the older women's discussion, for example, was about the tension between autonomy and isolation. Teenagers talked about the need for places where they can relax and be themselves – un-judged and unsupervised by adults. Immigrant women spoke about the loss of community they experienced in coming to a new country. Native women talked about reconnecting with their own people, culture, and traditions and praised the Anishnawbe Health Centre because of its use of holistic, traditional Native healing practices. In fact, many of the women familiar with Community Health Centres >

appreciated the community-oriented services these provided, including services and information in many languages. These findings suggest that women's connections to community may be key to their thriving and resilience.

Accessibility (or inaccessibility) was another common theme. Women talked about access in terms of physical, economic, and social opportunities and barriers, covering everything from public services, such as transit and childcare, to racial discrimination and gender bias in the workplace. Physical and transportation barriers also limited the number of women with a disability we were able to meet with as a group.

Fear was another common theme that limited women's access to the city around them, particularly at night. Teenage girls described being harassed regularly by men on the street, and in a variety of other settings, day and night. Older women and women with a disability spoke of being afraid of break-ins, purse snatching, or

assaults. Virtually all of the women we spoke with were familiar with this sense of vulnerability. Violence, as well as the fear of violence, is clearly a risk that women face in many different settings.

#### **Priorities for Change**

Many of the groups noted priorities for change that are prerequisites for health, such as affordable housing, adequate incomes, nutritious food, freedom from violence, and the threat of violence. Building supportive physical and social environments throughout the city – environments that respond to the wide diversity of women's needs – would clearly be a health benefit for all.

Several groups also made specific recommendations for change related to health policies and services, particularly services for children and youth. Older women and Native women, for example, both stated that increased funding for health care services was a priority. Native women also stressed the need for more services linked

to Native culture, while women with a disability want services more responsive to their specific needs. A priority for teenage girls was programs and services that will help build their self-esteem. Clearly, women's health needs are diverse, and the health care system should respond to this diversity. ❁

\* This is a summary of a discussion paper entitled "An Environmental Framework for Women's Health" (September 2000) by Professors Barbara Rahder and Rebecca Peterson with the assistance of graduate students Christy Doyle and Jackie Kennelly. The project was funded by the National Network on Environments and Women's Health (NNEWH). For a copy of the discussion paper, please contact Barbara Rahder rahder@yorku.ca or Rebecca Peterson rebecca@yorku.ca at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3, Canada.

**Barbara Rahder** and **Rebecca Peterson** are Associate Professors in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto. Over the past 15 years, Barbara Rahder has focused on participatory research with a diversity of women on issues of equity and access to housing and community services. Rebecca Peterson has concentrated on gender and environments, environments and behaviour and most recently on women's health and environments.

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# In the Field

## La Esperanza

### MEANS HOPE IN MEXICO

Jeanne M. Wolfe

#### *Women in Mexico, gaining ground!*

It happened, on the Pacific Coast, a little over 250 km. northwest of Acapulco in another tourist destination Zihuatenejo, Ixtapa. Earmarked for development in the early seventies, the resort area of Ixtapa, in the state of Guerrero, was as a magnet for those seeking work. Population growth was spectacular, especially in the eighties, when it grew by an average of 9.6% per year. Many newcomers were unable to find accommodation and were forced to settle informally around the official urban area, invading steep hillsides and ravines.

In his 1987 election campaign for Governor of Guerrero, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu made many promises, not only to legalize land tenure for squatters, but also to improve the lot of women. Critics suggested that it was all a vote-getting ploy. To the surprise of many, some of these promises were kept. A women's secretariat – the first in Mexico – was established to help create employment opportunities and technical training, to promote laws and programs that protect women, and to encourage women's participation in social life.

Aitor Itturalde, a McGill's School of Urban Planning student, investigated the *La Esperanza* squatter settlement, and found the following. The *Secretaria* coordinated various state and municipal programs for housing, schools, and sanitation services. The agency made sure that

women had access to these services and that construction materials were channeled equally towards women. It addressed the growing problem of families with absentee fathers by pushing for state laws that keep the property in the family and prohibit its sale. There was much legal wrangling, but eventually the idea of women owning property became accepted practice.

Men saw property-owning women as a threat to their authority, and male dominated Guerrero politics were grudging. Official community leaders were all men, while the women were the active residents who attended rallies, organized protests when necessary, and worked to improve the *colonias*. Itturalde found, that many families discovered it was in their collective interest for the woman to become the title-holders when land tenure was legalized in *La Esperanza*. In the event of non-payment of mortgage or taxes, a too frequent occurrence among the poor, a woman was treated much more leniently. There were no threats or evictions. Financial arrangements were renegotiated gently.

Today in *La Esperanza*, 48% of the plots are owned by women, as compared to 17% in Mexico as a whole. ♣

**Jeanne M. Wolfe** is Professor, at the School of Urban Planning, McGill University, Montreal and has a long-standing interest in gender issues relating to planning. She can be reached by e-mail: [jeanne@urbarc.lan.mcgill](mailto:jeanne@urbarc.lan.mcgill).

## PLACE TOWN

In the morning I pass  
near a place surrounded by  
tall gray sad dirty walls  
with billboards "Vote blue list"  
one day I look inside  
it is a shantytown  
People  
more people  
Dressed with cheap fabrics  
naked with happiness  
A girl offers me lemons  
"A dozen for one hundred,  
please buy"  
She is thirteen, more or less  
my age  
A grocery store in ruins  
with rats, dirt  
with fatal germs  
It is a place surrounded by walls  
dirty with human crimes  
which are ours

by Franca Jarach, Translated by  
M. and C. Altschul

Part of a series to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the coup which in 1976 established a military dictatorship in Argentina. Thousands of men and women disappeared and were presumably killed. Franca Jarach was a high school student at Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, she was born December 19, 1957, abducted June 25, 1976 and since disappeared.

# Women and Housing

## WHAT THEN? WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

Leslie Stern

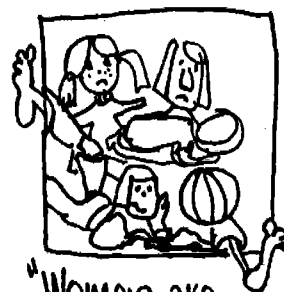
*It was a landmark event for many.* More than one hundred women and a few daring men met to recognize past accomplishments in housing women and to develop strategies for the future. "Women and Housing: What Then? What Now? What Next?" was the theme of the conference at Harbour Centre in downtown Vancouver on October 5th and 6th, 2000. Hosted by the B.C. Women's Housing Coalition and supported by an array of sponsors, the conference and consultation drew a wide range of participants. There were housing professionals, researchers, planners, practitioners, and people who needed housing. They came from as far away as Ontario, Kitimat, Fernie, and Victoria, as well as the Downtown Eastside, other parts of Vancouver, and the Lower Mainland. All agreed that it is necessary and important to continue to talk about "women and housing" and that "housing that works for women and children works for everyone."

Still, there are thousands of women in British Columbia who cannot afford housing: single moms and ex-single moms, young women fleeing abuse, aging women with little savings, women with disabilities, women with low wages who are only one pay-cheque or one illness away from a series of shelters and the street. It is clear that the housing market to date has not worked for women and that the situation is getting worse. In a system that is gender-blind and relies on the invisibility and low value of women's work as volunteers, mothers, secretaries, service providers, and help-mates, women are losing ground; and many are at great risk of poverty and homelessness.

As women struggle to achieve economic

and social equity, women require housing that responds to their needs and their realities. The conference affirmed "women want to change the way we house people in B.C. and across Canada" ... "we want community not commodity based housing." B.C. Women want more affordable housing built across the province. Women around the world are starting to build strategies to ensure that their needs are provided for as part of any healthy community. Women want to build, plan, own, rent, and manage housing at prices they can afford.

Housing is a right – and housing becomes a critical health need when we don't have it or when its form is inappropriate. Women's groups have worked hard for years for each ground-breaking effort, each cluster of units geared to meet the needs of women. Why has it taken so much time and struggle to house so few in safe, affordable, and sustainable environments? The B.C. Women's Housing Coalition has agreed to carry forward women's voices and to promote the devel-



"Women are living in one room with their children"

credit: B. Sterner

opment of "gender awareness" in housing planning and practice. We know women want safe, affordable housing in every community and women want policies to make this possible. ♻️

**Leslie Stern** is a housing activist, researcher and development consultant. She was a founding member of *Entre Nous Femmes* and assisted in the development of *Bridge Housing for Women in the Downtown Eastside*. Leslie is interested in the links between housing, health and community economic development and can be contacted by e-mail at [womeshousing@hotmail.com](mailto:womeshousing@hotmail.com). To contribute to "Our Practices" - an expanding catalogue of women's initiatives in housing and housing related services - contact Marnie Tamaki at (604) 261-2901 or [mtamaki@home.com](mailto:mtamaki@home.com)

### Excerpts from Table Discussions at the "Women and Housing: What Then? What Now? What Next?" conference in Vancouver, Oct. 2000

#### Appropriate Housing and Community Planning

What constitutes "appropriate housing" varies according to life stage, family size, ability and includes special situations like illness or approaching death. The issue of suitability should also address different needs defined by different cultures.

Most of the time, architecture and urban planning focus on form at the expense of function. Participants expressed a need for more first and second stage and supportive housing. Women-only housing should be available for those who require it, although difficulties for women responsible for male children or parents would need to be resolved. Design and affordability are issues, particularly for single mothers. Most of the affordable units are one-bedroom or bachelor units which don't meet the needs of mothers and children. Within certain social housing programs and projects management priorities and rules are inflexible and do not reflect recent societal change.

## Excerpts continued.

### Seniors and Mature Women

Mature women with low-paid jobs need housing they can afford. They also need housing appropriate to a range of health levels. In addition, we must be sensitive to issues of isolation, invisibility, loss of power, loss of community, and the need for involvement that mature and senior women face. Because women live longer, huge numbers of women will be getting old and be in need of affordable housing. Senior women don't think of themselves as a group and need a variety of options.

### Cultural Issues

Some cultural elements affect the housing supply in general. Our society has a long-standing bias against renters, and most housing is built for singles or traditional nuclear families, whereas many other family and household formations need to be accommodated. We need to build for communities, rather than a particular family formation. Misogyny, racism, and traditionalism are additional cultural factors that limit women's access to housing. Women may be denied access to transitional housing because they don't meet arbitrary standards. People living in social housing are often stigmatized. Women's access to resources is affected by their under-representation as elected officials and absence from the decision-making process in general.

### Economic Issues

Women continue to find themselves in positions of poverty, relative to men. Lack of equal opportunity and equal pay are still perceived as important issues to be addressed when resolving housing issues. Low-status volunteer work or low-paying jobs cannot provide the means to become independent. Yet the feeling was expressed that women must pursue economic independence from men. Unstable marital relations can have a serious impact on the economic status of women. Separation or divorce almost invariably leads to a lowering of the woman's economic status and great difficulty in maintaining independent housing arrangements.

Homelessness will not be resolved by leaving housing and property to market forces. Housing and land should not be thought of as commodities, but as infrastructure, in the same way that water and roads are managed. Housing is a right and it must be available to everyone. Market forces must be challenged if we are to develop communities that are healthy and sustainable also for women.

# WE Globetrot

Vaia Barkas

## WOMEN UNDER ISLAM Nigeria

International protest both helped and failed to protect Bariya Ibrahim Magazu. The teenager was sentenced last September by an Islamic court in the northern Nigerian state of Zamfara to 180 lashes with a cane. In accordance with Sharia, Islamic sacred law, the judge sentenced Magazu to 100 lashes for having premarital sex and 80 lashes for "falsely accusing three men" of the offence. Initial international protest convinced the judge to postpone the lashings until Magazu,

pregnant at the time of sentencing, gave birth to her baby. After that Magazu had 45 days to appeal her sentence, scheduled for January 27, 2001.

Human rights groups and governments in Nigeria and across the globe condemned the sentence and appealed to the Nigerian central government to intervene in the Zamfara court's decision. On January 13, Zamfara State's chief judicial registrar reduced Magazu's sentence to 100 lashes. On the morning of January 19, preempting an appeal against the conviction and sentence, Zamfara state officials flogged



Magazu one hundred times for having sex outside marriage. Human Rights Watch has since pressed the Nigerian government to ensure that all its country's courts, including Sharia courts, comply with the due process of law according to international human rights standards and the Nigerian constitution.

## Egypt

In November 2000, Egypt's high court allowed women to travel freely. The court's decision overruled a common practice that permitted men to blacklist their wives at the interior ministry and prevent the women from obtaining passports.

## Arab Nations

At the first summit of Arab Women held in Cairo in November 2000, the wives or female delegates of Arab leaders declared 2001 the "Year of the Arab woman." Although debate focused on ways to rally for the plight of Palestinian women in the clashes with Israel that exploded last fall, delegates also probed ways to involve women in political decisions and to promote the activities of NGOs that help women. The Arab fund for economic and social development allotted 10 million dollars to support Palestinian women.

A second summit in November 2001 will celebrate the close of the Year of the Arab women. Delegates plan to attend future summits every two years.

## Bangladesh

On New Year's Day, the Bangladesh High Court issued an order banning Muslim clerics from issuing fatwas, Islamic religious decrees aimed mostly at women. Punishments imposed by the religious practice include flogging, stoning, head-shaving, insults, and beatings. Rural village clergy, the Fatwabaz, issue most fatwas against women who assert themselves in family life. Critics claim the clergy impose fatwa for financial income and use religion to justify the practice.

The High Court ruling determined that only the Bangladesh courts can interpret Islamic law and that parliamentary acts will punish fatwas. The judgement forms a legal foundation for Bangladeshi women who struggle to protect their human rights.

## Iran

In January, Iran's Guardian Council overruled parliament's September 2000 attempt to allow unmarried women to study in foreign universities with the financial aid of a state scholarship. The Guardian Council rules over all laws passed by parliament to guarantee that laws comply with Iran's constitution and with Islam. Reformist President Mohammed Khatami has fought to grant women greater freedom and function in the social and political life of Iran

## Kuwait

On March 17, a Kuwaiti parliamentary committee rejected a draft law that would have granted women full political rights in the Gulf Arab state. On the same day, Kuwait's Constitutional Court rejected a case filed by two women who sought to participate in municipal and parliamentary elections. Earlier, the court had rejected a similar case, filed by a man who sued the elections department for refusing to admit five women, including his wife, as eligible voters. Women in Kuwait have fought for decades for the right to fully participate in politics, even though the country's constitution guarantees equality of the sexes.

## WOMEN IN THE AMERICAS

### Puerto Rico

In early January, Puerto Rico elected its first woman governor. Sila Marva Calderón of the Popular Democratic Party took the leadership of the Caribbean island, defeating New Progressive candidate Carlos Pesquera, who campaigned to include Puerto Rico in the United States as the 51st state.

## Argentina

In October 2001, a new quota law will ensure that women account for 30% of the candidacies for Senate elections. With the electoral system currently in place, women hold only 2 of the 72 seats in the Senate, the upper house of Congress. Application of the quota law results from the efforts of female political leaders who vowed at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to fight for gender equity in politics by 2005.

The quota law will grant women more equitable treatment in politics and focus attention on issues traditionally advocated by women, including reproductive health, sexual harassment, abortion and education. Female politicians, however, worry that party leaders will manipulate the quota law and block women's access to Congress.

## US

On January 22, 2001, the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion, and less than a week after taking power, US President George W. Bush banned US funding for international organizations that deliver family planning services to women in poor countries. He wanted to ensure that US taxpayers did not fund abortions in the developing world where such services are already difficult to find. The ban also affects non-abortion family planning programs that rely on the American funds to battle AIDS by encouraging condom use, or to provide reproductive health services that empower women to contribute to family planning policy debates. ☛

# World March of Women

Vaia Barkas

The year 2000 marked a momentous time of mobilization and empowerment for women. In October, hundreds of thousands of women across the globe rallied to celebrate solidarity in the World March of Women. Since the launch

states to eradicate poverty, ensure an equitable distribution of the world's wealth, and eliminate violence against women. By March 8, 2001, the Campaign had collected over five million signatures to present to UN Secretary-General Kofi

... urge the UN and its member states to eradicate poverty, ensure an equitable distribution of the world's wealth, and eliminate violence against women.

of the World March on March 8, 2000, women have gathered locally, nationally and regionally to raise voices, organize initiatives, and present concrete solutions and social policies to governments. Last spring, the March organizers launched a Signature Campaign to back its 17 demands that urge the UN and its member

Annan, demanding action and radical policy changes from global decision-makers.

Worldwide activities culminated last October in events that crowned the March organizing efforts. On October 15 in Washington, crowds of women marched past the World Bank and International Monetary Fund at the US national rally.



World March of Women  
2000

Two days later, women from across the globe joined in New York for the World Rally. Over 5,000 groups from 161 countries and territories mobilized to demonstrate and stride through the streets, while the 200 international women delegates of the World March met with the UN's representatives.

The World March of Women galvanized the women's movement and propelled the issues of poverty and violence against women to the centre of the global stage. As women celebrate the victories and evaluate the impacts of the March, the national coordinating bodies vowed to continue to organize. They will meet in October 2001 to draft a framework for future action to end poverty and violence against women. The March goes on! For further information e-mail: [march2000@ffq.qu.ca](mailto:march2000@ffq.qu.ca)



"World March of Women, Ottawa, October 2000". Photo by A. Lamoureux.

to feel  
less lonely

another. I can see the flash of  
light as you turn papers

in front of the computer in your  
apartment // across

the street from mine if I'm moving //

from in three weeks, what with  
the domestic violence the

brown flaking wood balcony

I lean on into to

get a view of you

working over a machine  
like a mind

like lightness like light

your fingers are

that quick-thick of thought

and the thump like

the block of anger in

the logic of our divorce.

(even after all of it, what)

I lean still into your thin body

in my imagination

it had less lonely.

poem by Anne F. Walker

# Lunch with Dina Vaiou,

PROFESSOR AT THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL  
UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS, GREECE

Regula Modlich

**W**e met at the gates. After the initial hug – we hadn't seen each other since the 1992 "Women in Cities" conference in Hamburg – we strolled to one of the nearby side streets. Tables had replaced cars, and at the end of February we were able to sit outdoors, delve into the famous Greek "Mezes" (appetizers) and chat.

Dina teaches urban planning as well as a gender-based course which, she happily adds, has attracted increased interest in recent years. As women have long been well represented in architecture, and as most community planners enter the field from architecture, there have also been many women in the planning field.

Greece, like most countries affected by globalization, is experiencing an increased polarization of rich and poor. Vaiou's students in her gender-based course are currently conducting a survey of migrant women who end up in Athens from countries such as Eritrea, Ukraine and Albania. She explains: "The survey aims to determine how these women and their dependents manage to survive in Greece, as they exist at the very bottom of the social and economic scale." The results will shortly be available.

Socially and financially, Greek women are still strongly tied to their own and their spouses' families. The government provides no financial assistance for single mothers. When women suffer domestic abuse, they are therefore reluctant to leave their husbands or take them to court. Yet there are SOS phone lines and a few shelters in Athens which are being used. "In the public sphere, women have little concern for their safety," comments Dina.

She wasn't aware if safety had been studied in newer, lower density suburban areas. In the older parts of cities most streets are lively until the early hours of the morning, with apartment balconies and windows on upper floors and even at grade overlooking the streets. Most streets are lined with stores, workshops, and restaurants. Some of these are always open. In Greek cities, even the "exclusive residential" land use permits commercial neighbourhood support services, such as bakers, food stores, hairdressers and hardware, and stores. "General residential" permits just about everything but major industries.

When asked about Women & Environments International Magazine, Vaiou responded: "At the beginning, the journal was critical for me. It provided news, analysis and theory about gender in my field. I still find a few articles of interest in every issue and wouldn't want to abandon it. It is the students, however, who most enjoy and benefit from WE, as the articles are relevant, concise and readable, even for non-native English speakers." ❧

Dina Vaiou can be e-mailed at:  
divaiou@central.ntva.gr

# WE Bureau Chief Helps World Water Council

## EMBRACE GENDER AND GRASS ROOTS

Ceylan Orhun, our Bureau Chief in Turkey, was recently appointed to the Board of Governors of the World Water Council (WWC). The WWC is the international umbrella organization working for local and global strategies and policies on management, conservation and use of water resources. Ceylan is the general coordinator of Anakultur, one of the almost 250 member groups of WWC, but one of only a few groups in the Council to be committed and actively working at the grassroots level. Anakultur is a Turkish NGO working on water-based development programs in the South-eastern Development area.

As one of only two women on the Board, Ceylan has already had an impact on WWC. She got the Board to agree to set up a taskforce on gender for both the analytical and operational dimension of the Council. Moreover, all five upcoming board vacancies are to be filled by women. Candidates need to represent NGOs in the realm of water/gender/grassroots. Nominations for Council are invited as well as suggestions for the terms of reference of the Task Force on Gender. Ceylan Orhun can be reached by e-mail at [herana@superonline.com](mailto:herana@superonline.com) ✉

## Women at the IGC 2000 in Seoul

The Gender and Geography Commission at the International Geographers' Congress (IGC) 2000 in Seoul, Korea, offered a day of gender-based sessions, from across the world, touching on issues including housing, violence, work, and mobility. They visited the Korean Women's Hot Line, an active and effective support organization for women facing violence and other problems. The Commission had its mandate renewed around a 4-year theme of Gendered Spaces of Inclusion and Exclusion. This will allow for:

- research into ways physical space is organized to produce gendered inequalities;

- a focus towards social-scientific debates about identity and difference; and
- questions about how gender combines with factors like age and ethnicity to produce particular life experiences of inclusion and exclusion; especially significant are political and social spaces that have gendered characteristics.

The new Chair of the Commission, Lisa Bernal, can be reached at: [lbernal@e-mail.arizona.edu](mailto:lbernal@e-mail.arizona.edu) ✉

if the house  
is ours.

if the corridor is dark metal  
like a shopping plaza

back freight tunnel, and the  
room emits light. if the walking  
almost exists in

computer generation the desk  
the parchment this love letter

and ink does not. if  
there you are the man in  
my room I trace the contours of  
your body lost

in the breath along your spine  
muscle

Poem by Anne F. Walker

After earning a BFA from York University and an MFA from Mills College, Anne Walker edited an anthology of poetry and poetic prose, "bite to eat place," a book of poetry, "Improvisation" (Redwood Coast Press), *Precipitous Poems* and *Six Months Rent* (Black Moss Press) and *Into the Peculiar Dark* (Mercury Press). Her poetry has appeared in more than 50 literary journals internationally. In 2000 her *Love Poems* were awarded the Eisner Prize for literature, the highest literary award presented by the University of California, Berkeley, where she is completing interdisciplinary doctoral work in urban poetics. To contact her, e-mail: [randomchaos@excite.com](mailto:randomchaos@excite.com)

# In Print

## **GENDERING THE CITY: WOMEN, BOUNDARIES, AND VISIONS OF URBAN LIFE**

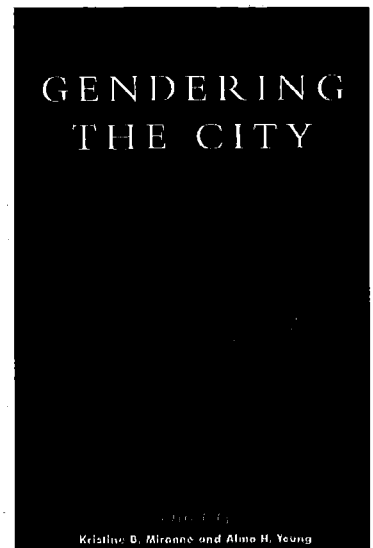
Kristine B. Miranne and Alma H. Young, ed.  
Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000. 229 pp.  
US \$65.00 (hardcover), US \$24.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Sherilyn MacGregor

Kristine B. Miranne and Alma H. Young demonstrate the richness of contemporary feminist urban scholarship in North America with this edited collection that takes up a diverse range of issues, from housing policies to planning history. The book contains 10 articles, written as a collaboration among geographers, urban planners, political scientists, historians, and social policy researchers. It is an example of interdisciplinary work, which will be useful to scholars and professionals in many fields.

Each chapter shows that, while planned and symbolic "boundaries" constrain women's options, they also hold out the possibility for resistance and change. The authors aim to challenge "the institutional ways in which cities have been designed, developed, and maintained" at the same time that they are interested in the way in which women interpret their experience of/in cities. To do the latter, several authors examine the particular stories of different groups of urban women; for example, Evelyn Peters writes about First Nations women and Melissa R. Gilbert reports on her interviews with working class women. In addressing the impacts of planning on women's lives, other authors take up the exclusion of women from decision-making positions, as Sue Hendler does in her chapter on the history of the planning profession in Canada. The contribution by the late Marsha Ritzdorf depicts the deep-rooted sexist and racist assumptions that have informed the practice of zoning.

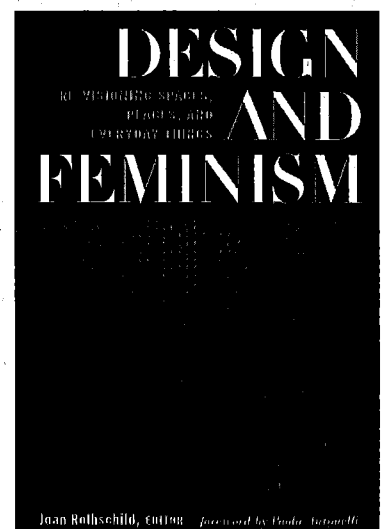
Many articles deal very effectively with the concept of "intersectionality." This is a concept that signals a shift away from looking at women's gender in isolation from other aspects of their identities, such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, towards an analysis that takes the interrelationships and tensions among these aspects into account. The scale of most of the articles in *Gendering the City* is the local context, with a focus on the role of the state as a provider or reformer of social welfare. Little mention is made of the global or of how such forces as technological change and cultural and economic globalization shape and constrain women's opportunities. Yet Beth Moore Milroy's epilogue brings the collection to a thought-provoking close with such issues in mind.



## **DESIGN & FEMINISM: RE-VISIONING SPACES, PLACES, AND EVERYDAY THINGS**

Joan Rothschild, ed., Rutgers University Press 1999; 202 pp, soft cover, CAD \$38.95

This interesting and wide ranging collection contains essays by both new and established authors in the field of gendered design and analysis, such as Dolores Hayden, Susana Torre, and Leslie Kanes Weisman. The introduction provides a useful history of the evolution of the consciousness, analysis, activism, and achievements in "women and environments." Contributions range from theoretical to historical, from the North to the South, from activist groups' to individual women's contributions in industrial, domestic, and urban design. It is this broad range of spaces, places and everyday things which make the book so fascinating. In "Claiming Women's History in the Urban Landscape," Dolores Hayden recalls the struggles of her Power of Place group to establish landmarks for the incredible lives of some of Los Angeles' earliest black women settlers and trade unions. Meanwhile, Nancy Perkins shows what difference a woman's experience and perspective can make to a vacuum cleaner. Well-placed illustrations enhance the book's readability.





## HOMELESSNESS, THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF A CRISIS

Jack Layton, Penguin/McGill Institute Toronto, 2000, soft cover, CAD\$19.99

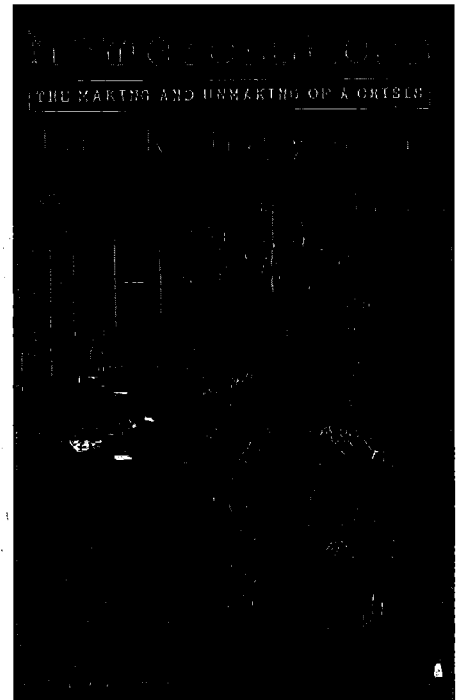
Reviewed by Regula Modlich

Back in 1996, along with most other countries in the world, Canada signed the Habitat Agenda. It contained a commitment to make "Housing a Human Right" and to provide all citizens with adequate shelter. Five years later, this book should not have had to be written. Yet it documents the ruthless growth of homelessness that in Canada's climate means physical, emotional and mental illness, and frequently death.

*"Homelessness, the Making and Unmaking of a Crisis"*, is a readable, comprehensive, though at times somewhat uneven account. Layton's extensive personal experiences with most aspects of the issue make it a captivating read. While there are relatively few references to gender, it is well documented – statistically, historically and geographically – a challenge, given the complexity of the subject. Layton illustrates the frightening consequences of the private market's inability to ensure secure housing for over 1.5 million Canadian households in core need in 1996. At that time, these households – almost 3 million persons, or 10% of the population – had to pay more than 30% of their incomes for shelter. Since then, conditions have only grown more desperate: the bottom 10% of Canadians lost 18.8% of their incomes; 6,200 children and youth were homeless in 1999, in Toronto alone.

The federal and most provincial levels of government have washed their hands of housing responsibilities. Practically no new affordable rental or social housing has been built. Shelter allowances for the poor have been cut drastically. Support for rental rehabilitation has decreased and rents continue to escalate. The "Globalization Gospel" that private enterprise alone must meet human needs, resulted in the dismantling of community programs, facilities, and responsibilities. For Canada, this has meant that the rich have been getting richer and the poor – mostly women, elderly, single mothers with children, and first nations – are getting poorer.

Layton provides extensive suggestions for policies, concrete measures, and processes for the three levels of government, community groups, and individuals. Yet the road towards eliminating this cruel and worsening reality is painstakingly slow. Many more lives will be wasted and destroyed. Ironically, Layton documents, providing temporary shelter for a homeless person for a year costs more than providing him/her with affordable housing.



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## HABITAT INTERNATIONAL COALITION – WOMEN & HOUSING (HIC-WAS) NEWSLETTER

Note the new address

This valuable newsletter, produced in Tanzania, reports on women and habitat, governance, and housing issues. Regular sections from Asia, Africa, Latin, and North America provide information not available elsewhere. For subscriptions contact: HIC-WAS, Women Advancement Trust, P.O. Box 5914, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania; phone: 255-51-667091, fax: 255-51-77563; e-mail: [wat@tembo.ud.co.tz](mailto:wat@tembo.ud.co.tz)

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## GROUND WORK: INVESTIGATING THE NEED FOR NATURE IN THE CITY

Evergreen, 2000, 25 Pages, CAD \$15.00. To order, contact Evergreen at their website: [www.evergreen.ca/en/about/contact.html](http://www.evergreen.ca/en/about/contact.html)

This research report examines the environmental, social, and economic benefits of restoring healthy natural landscapes in the urban environment. It also contains a comprehensive literature review. This book is a must for anyone seeking to develop a solid rationale for creating and enhancing urban nature.

## CANADIAN WOMEN AND THEIR HOUSING, 1997

SPR Associates,  
Research Report, cat. # 313, CMHC, Ottawa, 1998, 33 pp.

## WOMEN ON THE ROUGH EDGE: A DECADE OF CHANGE FOR LONG-TERM HOMELESS WOMEN

Sylvia Novac, Research Report, CMHC, Ottawa, April 1999, 69 pp.

Both reports are free to Canadians,

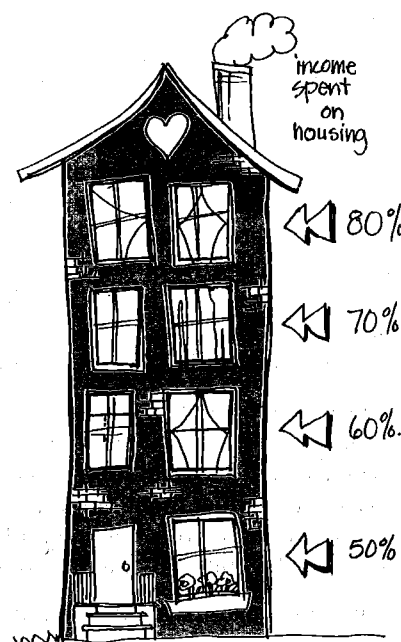
(requests from US, CAD \$ 25.00, from all other countries, CAD \$37.00, shipping included)

These CMHC Research Reports are the most recent in an impressive list of gender-based housing research sponsored by this federal agency. Over the past decade, CMHC has been systematically cut back so that it is now mainly a documentation centre and mortgage guarantor.

"*Canadian Women and Their Housing*" provides valuable insights, data and references on Canadian women and housing issues, based on secondary analysis of existing national data and the input from a delphi panel. The report is well organized and takes a comprehensive look at housing as an important component of well-being and at changes which have taken place since the early eighties. Among the demographic findings: more women head households, frequently with dependents. More women are gainfully employed, often within their homes. More women are elderly and more belong to minorities. All this makes women more vulnerable in the increasingly privatized housing market. For most women-led households, the traditional housing issues have become worse since 1983: more women rent than own, and these have less security of tenure; fewer women own cars which allow for greater flexibility in housing and job location. Since 1981, the portion of income women-led households need to pay for a roof over their head has risen from one third to over 47%, double the increase male-led households experienced. At the same time, however, a small number of women have improved their housing.

"*Women on the Rough Edge*" focuses on the growing number of women who depend on the temporary shelter system. Among these, women with traumatic histories of abuse and mental illness tend to be long-term users. As more Canadians become homeless, more shelters are needed. Where these are large-scale and mixed-sex, they further traumatize these vulnerable women. Supportive secure housing is the only answer for these women. This would also free up valuable beds for the growing number of people with short-term needs.

Novac is currently finalizing a report entitled: "On her Own - Young Women and Homelessness in Canada," funded by Status of Women, Canada. This report is based on case studies conducted in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Novac can be reached by e-mail at [sylvia.novac@utoronto.ca](mailto:sylvia.novac@utoronto.ca)



Credit: Brigit Sterner.

## HOUSING POLICY OPTIONS FOR WOMEN LIVING IN URBAN POVERTY

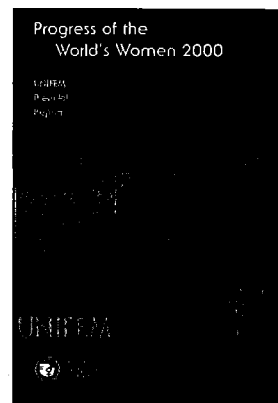
Marge Reitsma-Street, Josie Schofield, Brishkai Lund and Colleen Kasting  
Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 2001, 124 pp. downloadable free from  
[www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html)

The report documents housing concerns of women on low incomes in the Canadian cities of Victoria, Regina and Saint John and presents seven housing policy options for urban policy makers. The options range from increasing the economic capacity of women and broadening the eligibility criteria for social housing to including categories such as unattached older women.

## PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2000, UNIFEM BIENNIAL REPORT

UN Development Fund for Women, New York, 164 pp., obtainable for US \$ 16.95 from WomenInk, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA or downloadable from the following websites: [www.womenink.org](http://www.womenink.org) or [www.unifem.undp.org](http://www.unifem.undp.org)

This well-illustrated report undertakes the daunting challenge of assessing and comparing women's progress across state boundaries and over time. It evaluates progress in terms of empowerment and economics, using indicators such as unpaid labor, poverty, violence, and education. The context of globalization adds further relevance.



## WE Surf

### Genderwatch

[www.sinfo.com](http://www.sinfo.com)

A comprehensive text database with in-depth perspectives on the impact of gender across a broad spectrum of subject areas.

### Planners Network

[www.plannersnetwork.org](http://www.plannersnetwork.org)

The Planners Network is an association of professionals, activists, academics, and students involved in physical, social, economic, and environmental planning who promote fundamental change in our political and economic system.

### Status of Women Canada (SWC)

[www.swc-cfc.gc.ca](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca)

Status of Women Canada is the federal government agency, which promotes gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country. SWC services include research, publications and funding in areas of priority.

### The Heterosexism Enquirer (THE)

[www.mun.ca/the](http://www.mun.ca/the)

This electronic magazine is dedicated to challenging heterosexism in society's institutions, individuals, families, and communities. THE originates from Memorial University, St. John's Nfld., Canada.

### UNCHS (Habitat)

[www.unchs.org](http://www.unchs.org)

Everything about Habitat, from publications to events, from the Habitat Agenda to research.

### UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

[www.unifem.undp.org](http://www.unifem.undp.org)

Unifem works for women's empowerment and gender equality and is part of the UN Development Program.

### Women and International Development Program at Michigan State University

[www.isp.msu.edu/wid](http://www.isp.msu.edu/wid)

The program was established in 1978, and is recognized nationally and internationally for its unique courses, publishing papers, sponsoring speaker series and providing resources relating to women and international development. The program also produces a very informative quarterly bulletin.

### Women, Ink

[www.womenink.org](http://www.womenink.org)

A project of the International Women's Tribune Centre, marketing and distributing publications on a wide range of women and development issues - focusing on the perspectives of women from the Global South.

Come visit us at [www.weimag.com](http://www.weimag.com)



# Announcements

## **MCGILL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING ON WOMEN** Visiting Scholar Positions 2002-2003

The Centre invites applications for Visiting Scholars positions. These are open to any scholar who wishes to spend one or two academic terms in a university environment and carry out research in Women's Studies. The Centre offers office space and support, an ongoing seminar program, and contact with other Women's Studies scholars at McGill and neighbouring universities. Scholars may wish to apply for external grants; limited research funding of \$1000 is available from the Centre. If interested, please send a copy of your curriculum vitae, a brief outline of the research to be undertaken, copies of two recent short publications, and the names of two referees, to:

Dr. Shree Mulay, Director,  
McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women,  
3487 Peel St., 2nd floor,  
Montreal, P.Q. H3A 1W7, Canada  
phone: (514) 398-3911; fax: (514) 398-3986; e-mail: mcrtw@leacock.ian.mcgill.ca

Closing date: November 15, 2001-03-30

### Call for Papers

The Journal of Women's History invites submissions for an issue on "Revising the Experiences of Colonized Women." Guest editors Nupur Chadhuri and Claire Robertson hope to provide new perspectives that incorporate such topics as gender, sexuality, national identity, political and social activism, feminism, and pedagogy during the colonial and neo-colonial periods. Deadline August 2001. For further information contact Ohio State University 230 W. 17th Ave., Columbus, OH, 43210-1367 or e-mail: jwh@osu.edu

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

June 21-24, 2001, University of Rochester, US – Planners Network Conference on the theme of "The Impact of Globalization on Local Communities: Challenge and Opportunities for Citizen Planners and their Allies," for further information contact Ken Reardon, phone: 607-255-1971 or e-mail: kmr22@cornell.edu or website: [www.plannersnetwork.org](http://www.plannersnetwork.org)

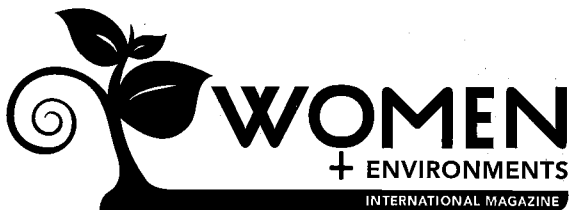
July 4 – August 14, 2001, Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-8 p.m., OISE, University of Toronto – "Creating and Sustaining Feminist Space in Africa – Challenges and Strategies," a summer course in Women & Development and Community Transformation. Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi will give the course under the Dame Nita Barrow Distinguished Visitor program. The course is sponsored by the Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology and the Centre for Women's Studies in Education, OISE. The Course Number is 3232HS. For further information e-mail: [cpriec@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:cpriec@oise.utoronto.ca)

August 31 – September 7, 2001, South Africa, – UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. For further information visit: [www.un.org/rights/racism](http://www.un.org/rights/racism)

September 16-20, 2001, Utrecht, Netherlands – The 37th Congress of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) will take place with the theme, "Honey, I Shrank the Space" – Planning in the Information Age. Young Planners' workshops precede the conference, Sept. 12 – 15 at the Telematica Institute, Twente. An Implementation Lab will follow, Sept. 21 - 23 at the University of Delft. For further information e-mail: [secretaria@isocarp.org](mailto:secretaria@isocarp.org) or fax 31-70-361-7909, website: [www.isocarp.org](http://www.isocarp.org)

October 11 – 14, 2001, University of Salford, UK – International Conference on Gender, Identity and Nationalism in Europe, from the 19th to the 21st Century, including the effects of the European Union and the Collapse of the Soviet Union. For further information contact: [v.tolz@salford.ac.uk](mailto:v.tolz@salford.ac.uk) or [agb@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:agb@globalnet.co.uk)

June 6-9, 2002, in Storrs, Connecticut, USA – The 12th Berkshire Conference of Women's History will be held with the theme, "Local Knowledge – Global Knowledge." For further information contact: [smyohn@erols.com](mailto:smyohn@erols.com) or visit the website: [www.berksconference.org](http://www.berksconference.org)



# YOUR TURN TO LET US KNOW Reader Survey 2001

Your thoughts about the magazine will help Women & Environments International Magazine (WE) reflect your expectations. Please take a minute to fill out this questionnaire and send it back to us today. The results will help us plan for future issues and will be published in the Network Directory/Index issue planned for 2002/3.

How long have you been a reader of WE? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you get your copy of WE?

- I am a subscriber   
  I found it in a university library   
  I found it in a public library   
  I purchased it in a store  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the following main sections of WE on a scale of 1 (like very much) to 5 (dislike very much). Circle the number that best represents your opinion.

Feature Articles	1	2	3	4	5	WE Research	1	2	3	4	5
In the Field	1	2	3	4	5	Book Reviews/In Print	1	2	3	4	5
WE Focus (featured artist)	1	2	3	4	5	Network Directory/Index issue	1	2	3	4	5
Information Items (WE Globetrot, WE Surf, petitions, announcements, calendar,)	1	2	3	4	5	Other Comments:	_____				

What sections would you like to see added, changed, or deleted from the magazine? \_\_\_\_\_

What specific topics would you like to see covered: \_\_\_\_\_

WE seeks to maintain a balance between academic discussions of issues and the diverse experiences of activists and professionals in their communities. Tell us how you feel about this balance:

- I would like to see more academic content   
  I would like to see more activist content  
 I would like to see more professional content   
  I think the current balance is just right

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

WE tries to promote dialogue on a wide range of issues affecting women and their environments. Issue themes address women's relations to the **built** (housing, transportation, services, community planning), **natural** and **social** (economic, cultural, political) environments. Which environments are you most interested in, on a scale of 1 (like very much) to 5 (dislike very much)? Circle the number that best represents your opinion.

Built Environment 1 2 3 4 5     
 Social Environment 1 2 3 4 5     
 Built Environment 1 2 3 4 5  
 Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about yourself:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

First language: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_ Highest degree/diploma/program completed): \_\_\_\_\_

Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see yourself as an:

ACTIVIST                      STUDENT                      ACADEMIC                      PROFESSIONAL                      ENTREPRENEUR/FARMER

OTHER EMPLOYED                      RETIRED                      OTHER (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle your primary and bracket your secondary vocation. Please list your Professional, Community Involvement or Area of Interest related to women and environments: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be included in our next Network Directory/Index Issue, scheduled for 2002/3?

Yes                       No

A \$10.00 contribution towards publishing this issue, which receives no other outside funding, would be appreciated.

If yes, please provide the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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If you are a subscriber, is this a change of address?

Yes                       No

Would you like to become a regional or national correspondent or Bureau Chief for the magazine? This would involve reporting on events, issues, activities, and organizations related to women and environments in your area. You would let friends, libraries, and bookstores in your area know about us. In return you will receive a free subscription, extra copies, promotional material, and a listing in our upcoming Network Directory/Index Issue.

Yes                       No

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The information you have provided will allow us to make upcoming issues of the magazine more reflective of your interests and concerns. Please mail this survey in the attached envelope to:

Women & Environments International Magazine  
Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Studies  
New College, University of Toronto  
40 Willcocks Street, Rm. 2042  
Toronto, ON, M5S 1C6, Canada

# FES



Faculty of Environmental Studies, Toronto, Canada

## INTERDISCIPLINARY, UNIQUE, INDIVIDUALIZED

With nearly 400 graduate students and 350 undergraduates currently enrolled, the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) at York University is internationally renowned as a place to learn, explore, discover and lead environmental change. The Faculty's mission is to provide unsurpassed opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching, learning and research about social, natural, built, and organizational environments and the relationships among them. The scope of studies is deliberately broad to ensure that students have the flexibility, insight and skills to respond to evolving 21st century priorities.

### Bachelor in Environmental Studies (BES)

The four-year BES Specialized Honours Program combines breadth and focus to meet students' individual interests while providing academic structure. Areas of inquiry include: Nature, Technology and Society; Environmental Policy and Action; Global Development, Peace and Justice; and Human Settlements. BES students can choose to study towards Certificates in Environmental Landscape Design, Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing, or Refugee and Migration Studies. Or, they can pursue a Joint Program with a community college, in the areas of International Project Management, Urban Sustainability, or Ecosystem Management. Further options through which students can complement their studies include majors or minors in a related field.

### GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University offers unique, interdisciplinary opportunities for those interested in graduate work leading to a Masters or PhD degree. Students pursue their own academic objectives, building on past experience and exploring ideas in the broad spectrum of natural, social, built and organizational environments. Individualized and flexible programs cover a wide range of areas, including:

- environmental education and critical pedagogy
- environmental planning and design
- gender, environment and development
- health and environment
- sustainable food systems
- non-profit and voluntary sectors
- housing and human settlements
- communication, advocacy, and social change
- environmental politics and ecological economics
- global, international, and Canadian development
- Native/Canadian relations
- environmental thought and ethics

### Master in Environmental Studies (MES)

Areas of concentration are diverse: each of our 350 Masters candidates design their own Plan of Study in consultation with two faculty advisors. To see a list of current and recent MES Areas of Concentration, visit [http://www.yorku.ca/fes/mes/mes\\_aofc.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/fes/mes/mes_aofc.htm)

### Professional Programs and Diplomas:

- Joint MES/LLB program with Osgoode Hall Law School
- Professional planning program (MES) through FES and the Canadian Institute of Planners
- Graduate Diplomas in areas such as Refugee and Migration Studies, or Business and Environment

### PhD in Environmental Studies

FES offers the only doctoral program in environmental studies in Canada, based on the 30-year success of the MES Program. Students specialize in areas such as Nature, Culture, and Society, or Environments, Institutions, and Interventions.

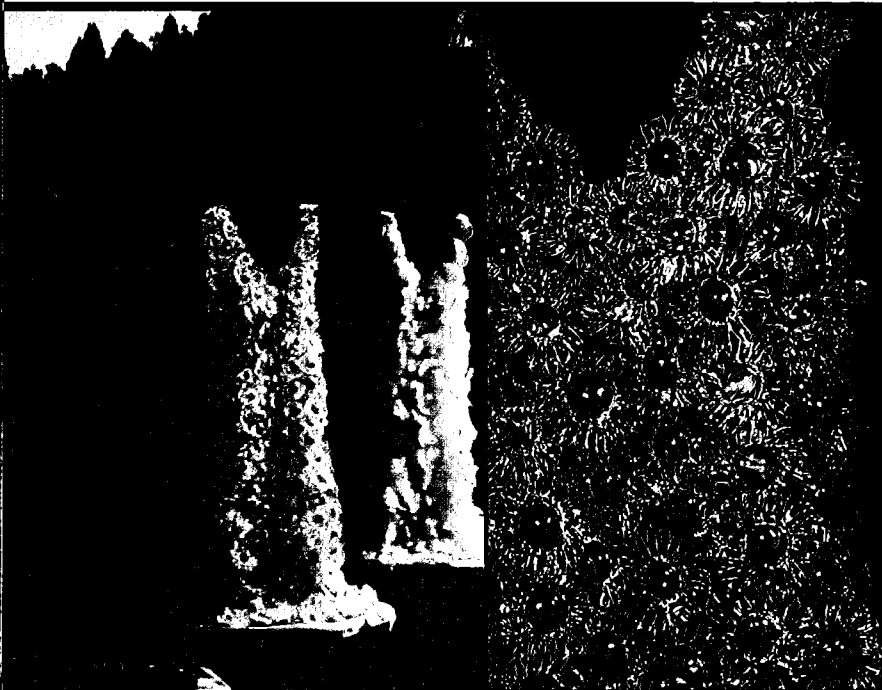


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# Tanya Lyons

On many levels Tanya's latest works "Mood Changing" and "In Between" seem an appropriate artistic expression of the themes evoked by our current issue "Women and the Built Environment." In "Mood Changing" three bodiless dresses stand, as if by magic. There is a certain fragility and uncertainty about them, yet they are held in place, suspended on an internal structure and firmly rooted on the ground. They are unmistakably feminine. Each dress presents a different image; each evokes a different sensibility and emotional response. Each element of their design is unique yet painstakingly built in a repetitive pattern; layer after layer linked until its form is created. With "In Between" she attempts to capture the flowing motion of the glass as it freezes and becomes fragile. She contrasts the transparency and fragility of the glass with stylized and abstract forms as a reflection on change and life's many transitions. By combining the elements of structure and design, fragility and transition, public image and personal experience, Tanya Lyons has created a metaphor for the feminine experience and the building of the female psyche.

## Mood Changing



A graduate of Japan's Toyoma Institute of Glass Art, this Canadian artist found her artistic voice while studying at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki, Finland, where "I let go of colour, and began really looking at the material, and all the potential it has in its raw state." She currently works as an instructor at Sheridan College and artist in resident at the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, Canada.