

**UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

DP 76

**GENDER AND URBAN
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**
WOMEN'S COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO
RESTRUCTURING AND URBAN POVERTY

by Amy Lind
and
Martha Farmelo

UNRISD Discussion Papers are preliminary documents circulated in a limited number of copies to stimulate discussion and critical comment.

DRAFT May 1996

**United Nations Research Institute
for Social Development**

Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

☎ (41.22) 798.84.00/798.58.50
Fax (41.22) 740.07.91
Telex 41.29.62 UNO CH
E-mail: info@unrisd.org
Internet: <http://www.unicc.org/unrisd>

United Nations Volunteers

Postfach 260111
D-53153 Bonn
Germany

☎ (49 228) 815 2000
Fax (49 228) 815 2001
E-mail: enquiry@unv.org
Internet: <http://www.unv.org>

Inter-American Foundation

901 North Stuart Street
10th Floor
Arlington, Virginia 22203
U.S.A.

☎ (1 703) 841-3800
Fax: (1 703) 841-0973
E-mail: correo@iaf.gov

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ISSN 1012-6511

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The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous agency that engages in multi-disciplinary research on the social dimensions of contemporary problems affecting development. Its work is guided by the conviction that, for effective development policies to be formulated, an understanding of the social and political context is crucial. The Institute attempts to provide governments, development agencies, grassroots organizations and scholars with a better understanding of how development policies and processes of economic, social and environmental change affect different social groups. Working through an extensive network of national research centres, UNRISD aims to promote original research and strengthen research capacity in developing countries.

Current research themes include: The Challenge of Rebuilding War-torn Societies; Integrating Gender into Development Policy; Volunteer Action and Local Democracy: A Partnership for a Better Urban Future; Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Change; Crisis, Adjustment and Social Change; Participation and Changes in Property Relations in Communist and Post-Communist Societies; Ethnic Conflict and Development; Political Violence and Social Movements; and Socio-Economic and Political Consequences of the International Trade in Illicit Drugs. UNRISD research projects focused on the 1995 World Summit for Social Development included Rethinking Social Development in the 1990s; Economic Restructuring and Social Policy; Ethnic Diversity and Public Policies; and Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban Dimension.

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The United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1970, under the aegis of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to promote volunteer contributions to development. It works together with governments, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, United Nations agencies and other volunteer-sending agencies to mobilize national and international volunteer resources throughout the world. UNV's contributions are made directly to programmes and institutions in the countries concerned, or through programmes funded and implemented by the United Nations and its agencies. The majority of UNV's volunteer contributions continue to be made to the long-term economic and social development efforts of member countries. In recent years, its activities have grown quickly in the electoral, humanitarian relief and peace-related efforts of the United Nations system, together accounting for nearly half the current total of serving UNVs. Some 2,500 United Nations volunteers serve at any one time internationally in over 100 countries; they come from over 120 countries, with the majority from developing countries.

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent agency of the United States government, was created in 1969 as an experimental US foreign assistance programme. Its operating budget consists of congressional appropriations and funds derived from the Social Progress Trust Fund. The IAF works in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote equitable, responsive and participatory development by awarding grants directly to local organizations throughout the region. It also enters into partnerships with private and public-sector entities to scale up support and mobilize local, national and international resources for grassroots development.

The IAF boasts a myriad of partners ranging from community groups and non-governmental organizations to local corporations, banks, philanthropic organizations and public institutions. Together, the IAF and its partners have created a grassroots experimental laboratory for testing cost-effective, participatory models for social and economic development, including practical methods for training primary school teachers, boosting agricultural production, protecting the environment, managing community pharmacies, and financing micro-entrepreneurs. These models are often replicated and expanded by governments and larger donor agencies, providing access to services and the promise of improved standards of living for hundreds of thousands of poor families throughout the hemisphere.

◆ Preface

As one of their contributions to preparations for the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, March 1995), UNRISD and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) undertook a project on **Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban or “Pavement” Dimension**. Its purpose was to survey and highlight the current and potential contributions of volunteer effort towards social integration at the local level. The project emphasized two elements: to hear from the volunteers, as far as possible, in their own words; and to provide an urban “pavement” perspective from marginalized communities in large cities around the world.

The project was implemented quickly, with much of the survey work completed between July 1994 and March 1995. In this short span, field visits were made to 17 cities on four continents; in each city local researchers prepared several case studies of innovative or especially instructive efforts by community organizations and volunteer groups to combat grave urban social problems. With some 40 case studies underway, the project’s researcher-activists and supporters met in Cyprus in late November 1994 to discuss the main themes raised by their studies, as well as to plan a series of short-term exchanges between community groups participating in the project and to formulate recommendations for strengthening community and volunteer action for inclusion in the Social Summit’s Plan of Action. At the Summit itself, UNV and UNRISD organized a series of roundtable discussions to present the early findings of the project. Some of these findings are contained the project’s draft report **Their Choice or Yours? Global Forces or Local Voices**, released at the Summit. The report is being revised and will be published along with other case studies and reports in a series of UNRISD Discussion Papers on the theme of Community Perspectives on Urban Governance.

In the course of the project two themes emerged with force: women are at the forefront of many of the most important and innovative community responses to urban crisis; and community responses to urban social problems, regardless of their gender components, could achieve much greater multiplier effects if they occurred in a context of genuine support from a stronger, more open local government. Taking the latter theme as a point of departure, UNRISD and UNV have embarked on a new project to better understand the successes of and constraints on collaboration between community organizations (including volunteer groups) and local authorities. This project, **Volunteer Action and Local Democracy: A Partnership for a Better Urban Future**, which is under way in eight cities, presented its preliminary findings at the Habitat II Conference in Istanbul.

The present paper represents a collaborative effort by UNV, UNRISD and the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) to extend and deepen the analysis of UNV-UNRISD Social Summit project case studies and recent work carried out by IAF. Following discussions at IAF in the summer of 1995 in which UNV, UNRISD and IAF found that their recent work on urban community-based organizations would lend itself to and benefit from a focused analysis of the gender dimensions of women’s community action and local governance, the three institutions decided to pool their case studies and undertake a collective analysis. The analysis highlights the fact that far too little is known about the

social impacts of development (economic) policy on low-income groups where women, either individually or collectively, have become the main providers of their community's social safety net. Drawing from IAF studies in Latin America, the study also points out that decentralizing political and administrative functions to the local level will not always result in the empowerment of women. Rather, such processes may have the opposite effect, if decentralization creates new structures of local decision-making that are monopolized by men.

The UNRISD Discussion Papers on the theme of Community Perspectives on Local Governance will draw upon the research from both the Social Summit project, **Social Integration at the Grassroots**, and its follow-up project, **Volunteer Action and Local Democracy**. As the first paper on this theme, the present paper signals the Institute's intention to continue to integrate gender concerns fully into its research programme. This process began in 1992 with the inception of Institute's five-year project on **Integrating Gender into Development Policy** and deepened progressively with the projects the Institute carried out in preparation for the Social Summit.

The dual concerns of this paper — mainstreaming gender in development policy and strengthening local governance through support of community action and reform of local government — find attention in the operations of both IAF and UNV as well.

In recent years UNV has worked to ensure that gender concerns are addressed through the action of international and national volunteers (UNVs) at the community level. UNVs work closely with women to support their efforts to identify and develop solutions within the context of their own cultures and communities. Volunteer contributions are strengthening initiatives of women's organizations, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations that facilitate the empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of gender in national development plans and policies. Feedback received so far on volunteer contributions to gender mainstreaming as an integrated part of community-based activities suggests that UNV can have a significant role to play in advocacy at the policy level.

Amy Lind is a Visiting Faculty Fellow at the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Martha Farmelo was, until May 1996, Foundation Representative for Bolivia at the Inter-American Foundation. At UNRISD, research on **Community Perspectives on Local Governance** is co-ordinated by David Westendorff. Research on **Integrating Gender into Development Policy** is co-ordinated by Shahra Razavi. This paper will be distributed in both English and Spanish by UNRISD and IAF.

June 1996

Dharam Ghai
Director

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◆ Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACT-UP	AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
CCH	Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
CDC	community development corporation
CEAP	Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas (Centre for the Articulation of Marginalized Populations)
CNC	Comisión Nacional de Comedores
ESIF	Emergency Social Investment Fund
FCPA	Federación de Comedores Populares Autogestionarios (Federation of Self-Managed Popular Kitchens)
FEPOMUVES	Federación Popular de Mujeres de Villa el Salvador
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
MAV	Mothers Against Violence
NEW	New Economics for Women
NGO	non-governmental organization
SAP	structural adjustment policy
UCC	uniform civil code
WEP	Women's Empowerment Project

◆ Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank reviewers at UNRISD and IAF for their comments, as well as Lourdes Benería and Guillermo O'Donnell for their review of an earlier version of this paper.

The world is in dramatic flux. Global concerns force themselves on people's everyday lives at the same time that local events, with unprecedented speed and frequency, become global matters (Fisher and Kling, 1993: xi).

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, countries throughout the world have adopted neoliberal development policies and initiated dramatic restructuring of state, economic and civil institutions. In North America and Western Europe, traditional welfare states have been downsized and restructured, with the goal of decentralizing services and redistributive subsidies, along with decision-making authority and accountability, from federal to municipal levels and from public to community organizations (Clavel et al., 1996). In many developing and post-Soviet countries, this process has been initiated through structural adjustment policies (SAPs), and through the general adoption of neoliberal policy agendas by national governments (Smith et al., 1994). One obvious outcome of this process has been that local communities have had to seek independent survival and development strategies.

Many have observed the responses of communities to urban poverty in this context (see Fisher and Kling, 1993; Pickvance and Preteceille, 1991). What has been less observed is the global emergence of women's grassroots efforts to confront economic restructuring and poverty, despite the fact that women have participated massively in urban social movements and have created their own organizations and survival networks to address the social reproduction of their communities (Rowbotham and Mitter, 1994; Basu, 1995a; Walton and Seddon, 1994). This oversight can be partly explained by the general difficulty in accounting for volunteer action, yet it is also due to conceptual biases in development frameworks which overlook women's crucial yet unaccounted-for roles in social reproduction and in urban social change (Elson, 1991; Benería, 1992; Corcoran-Nantes, 1993). Women's organizations have been the first to point out the gender impacts of state development policies on local political, economic and family structures, and the first to make connections between global development and everyday life (Benería, 1991). In addition, they provide examples of how women have responded collectively to the (often hidden) transfer of welfare responsibilities to the community level — something which remains largely unexamined in the planning and development literature — and of how women have integrated themselves into local decision-making and planning processes.

This paper addresses the gender dimensions of women's community action in the context of economic restructuring and urban poverty. It begins with the assumption that gender, like other constructs such as race, class, sexuality, religion and nationality, fundamentally shapes the social order in which people live, and therefore deserves attention as a category of analysis (Scott, 1991). This has implications for state development processes and the policy frameworks they rely upon, as well as for the types of women's community action that arise in these processes.

The similarities and differences in local movements within a global context depend upon a number of related factors that reflect locations of both the organizations and the participants within community and urban structures; their institutional networks; and their roles in the household and family, and, by extension, in their communities — roles which are often unacknowledged because they are not accounted for in the market and have been undervalued culturally (see Heyzer, 1995; UNDP, 1995). Whether it be through participating in one of the more than 2,000 communal kitchens in Lima, in neighborhood women's organizations in Quito, in mothers' anti-violence movements, or in homeless and housing movements in United States cities, women's organizations have played key roles in generating women's involvement in community decision-making and addressing the daily impacts of economic restructuring. In this sense both their community involvement and the implications of their action for policy frameworks merit further attention, if we are to promote more equitable national and urban policies. This paper is the result of a collaborative effort of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), and the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) to better understand women's volunteer action in large cities.¹

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section addresses some important conceptual issues related to gender and community action and serves to contextualize the case studies presented in later sections. We discuss different types of women's organizations and movements, and the specific ways in which gender motivates, shapes and constrains women's local participation. This is analysed within the context of neoliberal reform, when various sectors of poor women have been forced — or have felt compelled — to create their own, relatively autonomous, strategies for survival and social change.

The second section analyses three examples of women's community action (neighborhood, anti-violence and housing) and their gender implications for state policy. It discusses the diverse ways in which organizations have confronted structural economic inequalities and more pervasive forms of gender, ethnic and racial discrimination in these countries. The third, concluding, section addresses the strategic and conceptual implications of these forms of women's community action for community development and for broader policy processes, focusing on issues of sustainability, institution-building and the gender effects of decentralization measures on community action.

¹ Some 40 case studies were carried out in 17 cities on four continents. An overview and list of cases can be found in D. Westendorff and K. Dey (eds.), **Their Choice or Yours? Global Forces or Local Voices**, report to the World Summit for Social Development, UNRISD, Geneva, 1995.

II. STRUGGLES FOR LIVELIHOOD: WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

In fighting for what appear to be particularistic goals — finding their voices, setting their own agendas, and creating their own social spaces — women's movements are seeking the most universal objectives. But note that at such moments when the particular and the universal coincide, the subject may no longer be women. Thus, the tensions between local and global feminisms reverberate within the relationship between women's movements and the movements of other oppressed groups. The strengths of women's movements lie in their insights into that which distinguishes them and that which joins them to others who have suffered. And from these encounters come the most exquisite knowledge, vitality and power (Basu, 1995b: 20).

Much research has been conducted on women's organizations and movements in Western, industrialized countries; until recently, much less research has been conducted on developing regions (see Basu, 1995a; 1995b). The literature on Western women's movements has tended to focus on middle-class movements, although many studies document the important contributions of poor and working class women's organizations and movements in the United States, Canada and Western Europe (Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987; Lovenduski, 1986; Wolfe and Tucker, 1995; Bookman and Morgen, 1988). These and other studies point out that poor women's organizations and other urban social movements have arisen in response to de-industrialization, massive unemployment, and struggles for decent living spaces in deeply segregated and economically over-burdened cities. For many, this is coupled by a lack of citizenship rights, insufficient health and educational systems, and growing rates of political and racial violence in urban areas. In contrast to other urban social movements, women's organizations and movements address a set of gender-specific issues including violence against women, their roles as mothers and as working women, gender-based discrimination in the workplace and/or in the informal sector, the gender impacts of social policies, and children's rights. To our knowledge, many studies which focus on community development and local power often overlook women's protagonistic roles in these processes (see, for example, Fainstein and Fainstein, 1982; Fisher and Kling, 1993; Logan and Swanstrom, 1990; Pickvance and Preteceille, 1991). Studies that focus specifically on women's organizations provide an important basis for explaining why women choose to create their own organizations and movements, and how gender-specific forms of community action might inform local government, urban and national policy.

Studies of poor women's movements in developing and in post-Soviet countries focus attention on their relationship to processes of development, democratization and state formation. This is due to concrete historical reasons — such as the fact that many countries in these regions have undergone state transitions — as well as to the trajectory of scholarship on movements in these regions (Basu, 1995a). In Latin America, poor women's

organizations emerged massively during the period of economic crisis and democratic transition in the late 1970s and 1980s. These movements have been explored extensively (see, for example, Jaquette, 1989; Jelin, 1990; Alvarez, 1990; Schild, 1991; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1993; León, 1994; Friedmann et al., 1996). While early research focused on women's struggles against military authoritarianism and participation in processes of democratization, more recent scholarship has focused on the dynamics of power and structural inequalities which emerge and become consolidated under formal democracy (Alvarez, 1996). In the 1990s, further attention has been placed on women's collective responses to economic crisis and structural adjustment policies (Friedmann et al., 1996; Barrig, 1996; Benería and Feldman, 1992). This literature discusses the political potential and limitations of contemporary women's organizations, including their long-term impact on institutional and social change. In many countries where structural adjustment and/or neoliberal social and economic policies have been introduced, scholars and policy makers have begun to analyse women's collective survival strategies in this context: in Africa (Parpart and Staudt, 1989; Tripp, 1992), Latin America (Benería, 1996; Moser 1989b), South Asia (Feldman, 1992); Eastern Europe (Moghadam, 1994); and North America and Western Europe (Gordon, 1990; Bookman and Morgen, 1988; Cohen, 1994).

In Latin America, a proliferation of research has documented women's collective responses to urban poverty and economic restructuring. This is due in part to the rich tradition of women's collective organizing, and to the explicit responses made by many women's organizations to adjustment measures (Lind, 1995). In this section we draw from this literature and suggest its relevance for other regions undergoing similar processes. An initial question is the extent to which grassroots women's organizations are likely to sustain themselves through crisis periods, and influence state policy agendas in the long run. Sonia Alvarez (1996) argues that neoliberal development policies have served to institutionalize what were once viewed as spontaneous strategies to cope with a momentary crisis. Alvarez contends that women's organizations are increasingly placed in a paradoxical position under neoliberal development policies. On one hand, many community-based women's organizations were initiated in the late 1970s and early 1980s to confront the economic crisis and the negative impacts of structural adjustment policies. Their struggles therefore emerged out of economic necessity, although many developed more complicated critiques of power and structural inequalities through the process of organizing, and their political demands, similar to those of traditional party politics and class-based movements, were directed at the state. Under neoliberal reform, as the welfare state is dismantled, poor women's organizations have lost crucial state funding — as well as access to state welfare services — and have become even more dependent on an “undependable” state.² Women's

² In many cases, neighborhood women's organizations have received state funding to manage and facilitate state-designed projects, such as daycare centers, local stores, communal kitchens and educational programmes. Many of these projects have been discontinued as states decrease social spending, eliminate their direct support for community-based projects, and promote the role of private organizations in development. In Ecuador, for example, 300 local organizations lost funding for daycare centers when the current government of Sixto Durán-Ballén (1992-present) modified the social policies of his predecessor, Rodrigo Borja (1988-1992), including the Community Network for Child Development, a programme designed to

organizations are therefore left with little recourse but to continue their efforts on their own, or to seek funding elsewhere — primarily from international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies. Alvarez's paradox, therefore, refers to the institutional crisis that organizations face as they are no longer certain where to direct their demands.

Indeed, many organizations have had to develop new strategies in order to secure funding and maintain their institutional structure. In the context of state retrenchment, as international donors increasingly channel funds to local NGOs and grassroots organizations in their new roles as service providers, Alvarez's paradox holds true. Women's organizations may in fact benefit from donors' emphasis on NGO participation, if they are incorporated into the new local structures. However, most development frameworks either do not account for gender or assume that women have indefinite time to participate in volunteer-based community groups. Thus, despite donors' intentions to promote the participation of NGOs, strengthen civil society and build democratic practices, women's organizations are likely to lose out entirely — or continue serving in their roles as unpaid managers of social reproduction. This depends, to a large extent, on country-specific neoliberal measures, as well as on the policies which preceded them and the effects of the shifts in welfare provision on local communities.

A related problem is the extent to which people will seek collective answers or retreat to the private realm of the family and other informal networks for survival. Lourdes Benería (1992) found that there has been a "privatization of the struggle" for daily survival along with the broader process of privatizations taking place in Mexico. In her study of 55 households in Mexico City, Benería concludes that poor households become increasingly responsible for social reproduction, with little or no help from the state, or even from private organizations or informal networks. Thus Benería's work suggests that, in the case of Mexico City, rather than becoming more dependent on the state, poor women and their families have become more reliant on direct family networks than on any other form of welfare provision and/or social support. Benería observes a lack of collective action. Alvarez observes that women are acting collectively and have no alternative but to continue doing so, even if funding is scarce. Both analyses reflect accurately the dilemmas faced by neighborhood and other local women's organizations (and individual households) in cities throughout the world.

Studies of household survival strategies indicate that women's motivations for participating in organizations depend not only upon their poor economic situations, but also upon the particular relationships they develop with public institutions and social movements (McFarren, 1992; Moser, 1989b;

address the needs of children under the age of six, primarily through the daycare initiative. The Durán administration initiated an Emergency Social Investment Fund, designed to address the direct costs of adjustment measures, and many local women's organizations lost their only source of funding (see Delgado, 1992; Ojeda, 1993). This has occurred in many other Latin American countries as well, where traditional welfare states have been downsized and community-based projects such as daycare centers de-prioritized. Thus, following Alvarez's argument, the crucial funding that many women's organizations have depended upon disappears while the general economic situation remains difficult for poor sectors, leaving women's organizations and poor sectors in general dependent upon an increasingly "undependable state".

Lind, 1995). This observation merits further attention, as it remains unclear why some women choose to participate, and others do not. Research which focuses on the political, institutional context within which community-based women's organizations develop their strategies is one way to examine why certain groups of women initiate organizations and what relationships they develop, over time, with public and community organizations. It also sheds light on why some groups deeply influence policy agendas, while others do not. Maruja Barrig (1996) argues that the communal kitchen movement in Lima, Peru is a "needs-based" movement. She draws from Nancy Fraser's (1989) original work on needs-based discourse³ and argues that members of communal kitchens in Lima position themselves politically as "consumers" and/or as "clients" of the state, rather than as a political class pushing for more fundamental institutional change. Specifically, Barrig argues that as kitchen members struggle for their rights and needs as poor women, mothers, and members of collective kitchens, they compete with other kitchens for scarce state resources. This has led to a situation in which the kitchens position themselves, hierarchically, as "clients" of the state and fail to make strategic connections between their own struggles and those of other kitchens, organizations and movements. Barrig suggests that these organizations are increasingly isolated from other movements, and often do not build coalitions or envision a broader transformation of society, a situation, she suggests, which results both from institutional constraints and from the organizations' inability to conceptualize new political strategies. Thus, communal kitchens are largely reactive and unable to influence state policy in meaningful ways.

Other research concludes more positively, although cautiously, about the potential of women's organizations to influence policy agendas and negotiate power in their local communities — through interactions with neighborhood associations and/or co-operatives, political parties, municipalities, religious institutions and NGOs. Veronica Schild (1991) analyses women's roles in local (mixed) organizations in authoritarian Santiago, Chile (1973-1980). She contends that women's participation in these organizations — and their struggles to establish their own, gender-specific organizations — deeply engendered⁴ the traditional arena of class politics and human rights struggles in Santiago. Their participation, therefore, must be viewed not only in terms of their actual involvement, but also in terms of how they negotiate gender and class relations and political ideologies in their daily lives, and the consequences of these actions for changing consciousness. She contends that much of what is decided politically within the organizations depends upon their relationships to, and interpretations of, state development practices in Chile. Thus women's struggles for the seemingly most basic needs — such as the basic right to life and the right to a decent living space — are often ideological struggles

³ Fraser's (1989) work analyses the political arena in which "basic needs" are defined, operationalized and contested by different political actors. In particular, she analyses the ways in which "poor black women" have been constructed as the stereotypical welfare recipients in dominant political discourse in the United States (also see Fraser and Gordon, 1994).

⁴ By "engendered" we refer to: 1) women's increased participation in class politics and human rights struggles, and generally speaking, to their increased visibility in the public sphere; and 2) the ways in which gender as a conceptual category is incorporated into frameworks which address women's roles in development processes and in political movements.

over gender (and other) inequalities deeply engrained in state policy frameworks, in the law, and in community structures (also see Lind, 1995; Alexander, 1991).

Schild's analysis allows us to make connections between women's political identities and state development policies. Poor women's massive participation in (both mixed and gender-specific) organizations in Santiago, and social solidarity networks established between middle class and poor women's organizations, contributed a great deal to the incorporation of gender issues into the state policies developed by the transition government of President Patricio Alwyn (1990-1994). This assertion is confirmed by other researchers such as Teresa Valdés (1994), who argues that the wide production of knowledge about Chilean poor women through grassroots, anti-authoritarian, political activism in the 1970s, provided the basis upon which policy makers could make a case for incorporating gender issues into the public agendas of the 1980s and 1990s. While important criticisms have been raised about studies which attribute the emergence of urban social movements directly to international solidarity and development policies (see Mohanty, 1991; Basu, 1995a; 1995b), these historical factors in Chile exemplify the complicated and intertwined relationships of women's organizations in poor countries with public institutions since the inception of their collective strategizing.

All of these studies provide important examples of the transformative power and limitations of local women's organizations in the 1980s and 1990s. They also point out that women's struggles for livelihood are often determined as much by their dire economic needs as by their positions, roles and relationships in family and political structures. In the remainder of this paper, we examine some regional cases and draw out their gender implications for state policy and economic restructuring.

III. SHARING THE COSTS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION: COMMUNAL KITCHENS IN LIMA, PERU

In Peru, the state has implemented a series of measures to liberalize the economy, decrease spending and transfer the responsibility for social reproduction to the private realm of the family, economy and civil society. Unlike most other Latin American countries, Peru originally carried out its SAPs in a highly unorthodox fashion, which differed from the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Breaking somewhat with Peru's heterodox policy tradition, the administration of President Alberto Fujimori (1990-present) has applied an IMF-inspired structural adjustment programme which has escalated the cost of living and doubled poverty rates, factors that are closely correlated with social crisis (see Barrig, 1996). Throughout the past twelve years, the Peruvian state's project has been implemented during a period of intense civil war, promulgated by Shining Path, which has cost over 25,000 lives (Barrig, 1996).

One result of these measures has been that poor neighborhoods have organized to collectivize costs and confront the economic and political crisis in Lima, the capital city, which has almost doubled in size in the past 10 years (from seven to 12 million inhabitants). Communal kitchens in Lima's *pueblos jóvenes* (literally "young towns", or poor neighborhoods) exemplify how women have developed a strong activist network to address the problem of poverty — in particular, food consumption and distribution. Every morning, some 40,000 low-income women belonging to the Federación de Comedores Populares Autogestionarios (FCPA, or Federation of Self-Managed Popular Kitchens) gather at 2,000 sites throughout Lima's poor neighborhoods, pooling their human and material resources to feed their families, some 200,000 persons. Twenty to 30 female friends, relatives, churchmates and neighbors participate in each *comedor*. Women are joined by shared concerns and are welcomed, in theory, regardless of political positions or religious affiliation. The women rotate in positions of leadership, and all take turns collecting dues, buying foodstuffs and preparing the meals, usually in one of the member's kitchens. The kitchens accept donations but are no longer dependent on them.

The first kitchens were organized between 1979 and 1986, as a response to the impact of structural adjustment programmes which drastically cut real incomes and reduced — or eliminated — public food subsidies. Until 1990, participants were mainly middle-aged women migrants seeking to escape rural poverty and violence. Rather than directly demand social benefits from the state, the women designed autonomous, self-help solutions based on their own resources.

Between September 1988 and March 1989 alone, the number of kitchens jumped from 700 to more than 1,000 in response to implementation by the Fujimori administration of a particularly drastic structural adjustment package, commonly known as the *paquetazo*. A similar surge took place in 1990, incorporating thousands of younger, newly impoverished Lima residents. A combination of intense economic reforms, coupled with historically unprecedented levels of violence associated with Peru's internal war, led to the growth of new forms of poverty among Lima's settlers and to the emergence of the "new poor". Many women in this group sought refuge in the communal kitchens that already existed in their neighborhoods, or followed the example of other communities to create their own. Organizational support for some of the kitchens came from the Catholic Church, political parties or the state. Other "autonomous" kitchens receive support elsewhere. There are many differences between these kitchens, including their levels of democratic structure and participation, reliance on external funding, self-sustainability, and quantity and quality of food served. Much debate surrounds the relative autonomy of the different types of kitchens, and two major studies concluded that those kitchens organized in a "top down" fashion by the church or state were less likely to transform gender roles and consciousness than were autonomous organizations. In autonomous kitchens, members participated more actively in decision-making and became more active in broader community planning processes (see Sara-Lafosse, 1984; Blondet, 1991; Barrig, 1996).

Today the communal kitchens are organized into federations and confederations, including the FCPA, which represents the movement to government officials, purchases wholesale inputs, organizes micro-enterprise activities, and elaborates and transmits a broader view of gender and women's community participation. In December 1988, the FCPA's predecessor, the Comisión Nacional de Comedores (CNC), achieved passage of a law which called for the creation of a fund to support the kitchens, and a new legal status for them as a "social base group". This achievement resulted from the efforts of the CNC leadership, the base group membership, professionals from local support organizations, and sympathetic government officials.

The communal kitchens serve as a powerful example of women's community action. Fifteen years of successful results, despite the political and economic odds, demonstrate the sustainability of the kitchens. Their expansion also demonstrates their replicability. Members of the organizations have gained a new awareness of their roles, not only in social reproduction, but also in community and civic action. The kitchens constitute an important part of the broader "popular" women's movement in the country.⁵ Their perspectives and demands have elicited a great deal of attention from NGOs, political parties, feminist activists, church groups and other base groups who work in poor neighborhoods.⁶ This was particularly evident when María Elena Moyano, ex-Vice Deputy of the municipality of Villa El Salvador, and ex-President of the Federación Popular de Mujeres de Villa El Salvador (FEPOMUVES), a women's federation which has organized several communal kitchens in Villa El Salvador, was assassinated by Shining Path in front of a local meeting on February 15, 1992 (see Miloslavich, 1993). For many neighborhood and feminist activists, her death represented the severe contradictions that local communities had faced since the inception of heavy political violence and economic crisis. In this context, communal kitchens in this slum area and in other areas came to represent much more than a struggle to put "bread and butter" on the table. Rather, members of the kitchens were forced to deal with the infiltration of violence, and particularly death threats from Shining Path were they to take an explicit stance against Shining Path's presence in their community (Burt, 1995). This led to a situation in which members of communal kitchens were forced to strategize even the most seemingly mundane or "basic" aspects of their daily lives — the provision of food — under highly adverse, difficult and often dangerous conditions.

⁵ Virginia Vargas (1992a and 1992b) distinguishes between three streams of the Peruvian women's movement: feminist (e.g. self-defined feminist organizations that maintain autonomy from traditional male-based parties and institutions), political (i.e., those women's organizations allied with traditional political parties and institutions), and popular (e.g. poor, working class, indigenous women's organizations).

⁶ Communal kitchens and other popular women's organizations in Lima have developed strong ties with outside professionals and activists who dedicate themselves to popular education and/or political organizing in marginalized neighborhoods in Lima. In general, there has been a strong tradition of solidarity work, as well as of charity work, by political parties, feminist and labour organizations, church groups and other NGOs in Lima's poorest neighborhoods. While communal kitchens and other popular women's organizations have different perspectives and agendas than, for example, middle-class feminist research centers, they nevertheless have negotiated relationships and collaborated in many political struggles, projects and planning processes. This has been especially true since the surge of political violence in the 1980s and 1990s. For more information, see Burt, 1994; Blondet, 1991 and 1996.

Moyano's death brought about an even stronger awareness of the strength and persistence of women's community action in Lima and in other cities of Latin America. In this context, researchers and activists have debated whether or not these organizations provide long-term solutions (see, for example, Barrig, 1989; Alvarez, 1996). Indeed, many women who participate in these organizations are doing so out of economic necessity, and some comment that, once they enter the organizations, they cannot afford to leave them. In a sense, they are structurally bound by the space and resources that the kitchens provide. As long as the crisis persists, they can find no other alternative.

But there are other reasons, as well, for women's long-term participation in these kitchens. While it is not easy to generalize, and much depends on their relationships with other actors such as the Catholic Church, NGOs and donor agencies,⁷ it has been argued that these organizations provide an important political base for members to debate community and national issues. Comparative results from studies on women's organizations demonstrate that women contribute in important ways to challenging gender inequalities and misconceptions in local planning processes and in national development (Friedmann et al., 1996; Schild, 1991; Rodríguez, 1994; Valdés, 1994; Basu, 1995a). These studies argue that even the poorest women, once collectively organized, tend to question basic structural relations such as gender and class (among others), which shape and constrain their daily lives, their communities and countries. This is true for communal kitchens in Lima as well, such as the case of FEPOMUVES, where women necessarily have become involved in issues of political violence and women's rights, as well as urban poverty.

The fact that younger, Lima-born women are currently participating in the kitchens may also point to a broader understanding of women's community action. Their participation may result purely from economic necessity. However, it also may be due to the fact that the kitchens have become an accepted practice in daily life for young *Limeñas* or, more positively, that they provide a sense of empowerment for many of their members. It is clear from the UNRISD case study and the other cited research that, while the struggle for survival is a key motivating factor, the organizations have become an accepted means to raise awareness about other community issues (see Lora, 1994). The perseverance of members to keep the kitchens active, despite the political and economic odds,⁸ testifies to the continuing broad need for more adequate distribution of social welfare. In addition, the participation of many members has transformed their own understandings of domestic labour as well as the broader community's understandings of the shared costs of reproduction, something which has proved invaluable for the efforts of poor women in Lima.

⁷ For a historical analysis of communal kitchens and their relationship to the Catholic Church and NGOs, see Sara-Lafosse, 1984; Barrig, 1996 and Blondet, 1996.

⁸ In some poor neighborhoods in Lima, such as Villa El Salvador, communal kitchens have been under direct attack from Shining Path. Despite Moyano's death and the temporary dismantling of FEPOMUVES from 1992-1995 due to Shining Path infiltration, kitchen members continue to struggle to maintain the kitchens and the broader organization.

The weaknesses in this form of organizing lie in the fact that women members may become “burnt out” from participating for so many years. After 15 years, the original excitement about the kitchens has worn off. Many women are tired and would prefer to seek employment opportunities elsewhere, rather than participate as volunteers in the kitchens (Barrig, 1996). Their volunteer participation, furthermore, is above and beyond their already strenuous (unpaid) domestic workloads. While the kitchens generally remain a successful survival strategy, the women members nevertheless face many constraints. To begin with, women are the primary, if not exclusive, members of the kitchens. While awareness of the shared responsibility of reproduction has increased, women remain responsible for preparing and distributing food in the kitchens. In this regard, the fact that communal kitchens have become accepted practices may not mean that they are desired, but rather necessary for survival.

Policies and projects which support the kitchens often exacerbate this problem by leaving unexamined women’s unequal burdens in community food provision and by assuming that women have expendable time and energy to participate in social reproduction. Economic restructuring and social policies deepen gender inequalities when and if the hidden transfer of reproduction to families is left unexamined (Folbre, 1994; Elson, 1991). Communal kitchens exemplify contradictions in women’s entry into community decision-making. On one hand, women have organized a massive movement which has transformed how central governments, local municipalities and NGOs understand women’s traditional, “private” role in food provision. It has politicized the women around issues of class and gender inequalities as well as political violence — a public awareness which cannot be removed from the historical record for the participants themselves or for the communities in which they live.⁹

This, however, is not enough to change important policy and political approaches which continue to reinforce gender inequalities by excluding gender as a variable in their frameworks, although initial efforts have been made to engender development frameworks by feminists and other social scientists.¹⁰ Nor is it enough to improve the lives of the participants and their families in significant ways. Extremely poor communities in Lima are particularly strained under current economic and social policies. For communal kitchens, this seems to imply a long-term struggle to provide for

⁹ For an analysis of women’s collective responses to political violence in Lima with examples of communal kitchens, see Wappenstein, 1993.

¹⁰ There are some important exceptions to this. The 1995 **Human Development Report** (UNDP, 1995), for example, focuses exclusively on gender as a variable of human development indexes. This report will undoubtedly influence future research and policy agendas. Likewise, UNIFEM’s (Heyzer, 1995) publication prepared for the Beijing conference introduces the gender dimensions of new development issues such as international trade, global markets and social policy. The concept of gender equity is centrally integrated into the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995, indicating a fundamental shift in — an engendering of — Realpolitik (Somavía, 1995). In addition, many feminist economists have begun to integrate gender into economic models and theoretical frameworks. See, for example, Ferber and Nelson, 1993; Kuiper and Sap, 1995; Bakker, 1994; Kabeer, 1994; Moser, 1993; Benería, 1995. Also see the special issue of **World Development** entitled “Gender, Adjustment and Macroeconomics” (Cagatay et al., 1995) and the journal **Feminist Economics** of the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE).

their families and seek basic levels of dignity in an urban system characterized by deep-rooted structural inequalities.

Other Latin American countries have undergone similar measures, and women's organizations have provided crucial networks for community survival. Ecuador, for example, has undergone a series of restructuring measures since 1981, which fall within the general recommendations of the IMF and World Bank. The current government of President Sixto Durán-Ballén (1992-present) has accelerated this process through its "modernization plan", which includes economic liberalization and the further dismantling of the welfare state. To date the Durán administration has significantly reduced trade barriers, promoted export-led development, and decreased social spending. It has restructured and downsized social and economic ministries, laid off over 20,000 state employees, centralized social policy concerns in the President's Office, and implemented a World Bank/IMF-designed Emergency Social Investment Fund (ESIF, or Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia) to address the social costs of structural adjustment. These measures have largely been a response to the growing economic crisis which, in the case of Ecuador, had its origins in the Ecuadorian state's reliance on its leading export product, oil, and the global oil crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s, coupled with overspending of the military governments in that same period.

In this context, and in response to state authoritarianism and to the lack of conventional forms of democratic representation, neighborhood women's organizations emerged throughout Ecuador, although primarily in its two largest cities, Quito and Guayaquil. A conservative estimate of organizations with *personería jurídica*, or legal status, may be 80-100 at a national level (Centro María Quilla/CEAAL, 1990). If one includes all types of grassroots women's organizations, both those with *personería jurídica* and those without, in rural and urban areas, there may be as many as 500 or 600 groups (Rosero, personal communication, 21 November 1993). Unlike the Peruvian case, these organizations have not coalesced into a massive movement; rather, they remain relatively small-scale and isolated instances of women's community action.

In Quito, over 50 neighborhood women's organizations exist, all of which have distinct relationships with other women's organizations, traditional (male-based) neighborhood associations or co-operatives, the Municipality of Quito, political parties, the church and NGOs. While their impact is less dramatic in terms of actual numbers, their emergence and presence is nevertheless significant for current policy discussions on state reform (Rodríguez, 1993). This is particularly true in regard to the new ESIF, which replaced an important institutional structure and funding source for community daycare centers and women's organizations throughout the country, without providing a comparable alternative (Delgado, 1992; Ojeda, 1993).¹¹ In this context, neighborhood women's organizations in Quito have served as crucial providers and distributors of social welfare during a period

¹¹ Specifically, the Emergency Social Investment Fund replaced an earlier programme initiated under the Rodrigo Borja administration (1988-1992), the Community Network for Child Development, a programme which provided funding for 300 local organizations (see footnote 2).

of intense crisis, exacerbated most recently by the Ecuador-Peru border war, in which the Ecuadorian government has prioritized its military defense over other policy concerns (Lind, 1995).¹²

Little research has been conducted to analyse whether or not Ecuadorian families are becoming increasingly self-reliant, rather than seeking collective answers. However, existing studies indicate that, while many women and their families rely upon community organizations and informal networks, in contrast to Lima, there is another largely unrecognized group which has retreated to the private realm rather than seek community support.¹³ These results reflect the trend towards “the privatization of women’s struggles” found in other countries such as Mexico (see Benería, 1992), where women have relied upon individual rather than collective forms of action to confront the process of economic restructuring and crisis.

¹² Ecuador and Peru have disputed 78 kilometres of frontier, along the southeast border of Ecuador and northeast border of Peru, which was never determined after the Rio Protocol ended a short war between the two countries in 1941. The border area has been a point of contention in relations between Peru and Ecuador ever since. In January 1995, open hostilities broke out, leading to the eventual death, on official count, of at least 28 Ecuadorian soldiers and 46 Peruvian soldiers, with over 100 additional people wounded. Unofficial estimates are much higher, putting the overall toll at 500 dead (see EIU, 1995).

¹³ There are unrecognized groups of poor women — and poor sectors in general — in Quito, Lima and cities throughout the region and world. In the cases of Peru and Ecuador, there is a stronger tradition of collective action in Lima than in Quito, which is explained by a number of related political, institutional, social and cultural factors (see Lind, 1992). In the case of Ecuador, Caroline Moser’s (1989b) research on survival strategies in poor neighborhoods in Guayaquil is one example which begins to analyse women’s different (collective and individual) responses. Moser concludes that the women she interviewed fall into three general categories: 1) those who are coping; 2) those who are hanging on; and 3) those who are burnt out. In her study, those who are burnt out have become increasingly isolated from collective efforts to deal with the crisis. While it is difficult to estimate the size of the most marginalized groups of women, it is clear from Moser’s study and from others that this sector is growing (see also Benería and Roldán, 1987; Friedmann et al., 1996).

IV. URBAN POVERTY AND VIOLENCE: MOTHERS' MOVEMENTS

In other cases, women have not mobilized directly to confront the economic crisis, but their efforts reflect related issues of urban violence and poverty. Mothers' movements, or movements of women to combat violence and human rights abuses against their families, have emerged throughout Latin America and other regions in the past 20 years (Jelin, 1990; Navarro, 1989). These movements must be understood in the context of authoritarianism — both under military and democratic states — as well as in the context of rising rates of random violence in urban areas. UNRISD's study of the *Maes de Acari*, a mothers' movement in the Acari slum neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, highlights one example of this type of mobilization (see Lobato, 1994). This organization began when Marilene de Souza and five other mothers learned that their children had been abducted and "disappeared" in July 1990. Motivated by extreme distress and indignation, the mothers began a long process of investigation and protest of the "Acari Eleven" case. They carried banners before the Police Secretariat building, and made appointments for interviews with the Secretaries of Justice, Public Safety and with the Civil Police. With the participation of local government officials, they organized public rallies. These efforts led them to coalesce with the *Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas* (CEAP, or Center for the Articulation of Marginalized Populations). CEAP mobilized support for the mothers from local and international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, which continues to pressure the Brazilian government on this case.

Despite the fact that the mothers have not learned what happened to their disappeared children, the fact that two lawsuits are in process for such a politically loaded case involving indigent slum-dwellers is an impressive victory. In the press the Acari Eleven are no longer considered criminal youngsters, but 11 citizens — even if second class citizens. The murders are now appropriately treated as a political event by activists, the media, and even by some state officials, rather than as a common crime.

The struggle of the Mothers of Acari has contributed to greater solidarity among the members of the Acari community, encouraging them to fight with greater strength for their social, economic and political rights. The Acari slum has become a symbol of resistance to abuses by government officials and related violence, and the Mothers of Acari have become a reference and a motivator for the broader human rights movement in Rio de Janeiro.

Interestingly, the mothers attribute the violence and the disappearances of their children to the conditions of poverty that they face as poor people, and not explicitly to their gender roles and their conditions as Afro-Brazilians (da Silva, personal communication, July 20, 1995).¹⁴ They perceive

¹⁴ Joselina da Silva observes that in general, Afro-Brazilians do not identify themselves as constituting a racial minority. Relatively few Afro-Brazilians coalesce politically around a shared sense of racial identity or oppression, and economically marginalized Afro-Brazilians (including

themselves as constituting an economic class, rather than a class of women and/or a racial class. Nevertheless, they play increasingly strong public roles as women and continue to organize for a less violent society (da Silva, personal communication, July 20, 1995). For the Mothers of Acari, this includes a fundamental transformation in class relations.

The themes of urban poverty and violence appear in women's community strategies throughout the world. In post-colonial states of Africa and South Asia, women's organizations often address these issues in relation to their struggles for cultural, religious and ethnic survival (Moghadam, 1994; Basu, 1995a). In these cases, their survival often depends as much upon securing material needs as it does on changing discriminatory laws and policies that reinforce one religious/cultural perspective over another. Indeed, this is true for organizations such as Rah-e-Haqq in Bombay, a Muslim women's organization which has struggled to reform both Muslim personal laws and to oppose the proposed uniform civil code (UCC). If passed, this proposal, spear-headed by the ruling Hindu party, will establish universal family laws for all Indian citizens, regardless of their religious and cultural beliefs (Kapur and Cossman, 1993). Likewise, in the new South Africa, women's organizations are fighting not only for material needs, but also to restructure the law in the aftermath of apartheid and to broaden people's understandings of the relationships between racism and sexism (Kemp et al., 1995).

Increasingly, mothers' anti-violence movements have emerged in cities in the United States. Here, in the context of an uneven income distribution, poor communities have been faced with growing problems related to poverty, housing, homelessness, racial violence, domestic violence and lack of affordable healthcare. In the midst of deep racial tensions in urban areas, some women have acted in their roles as mothers to combat violence and reclaim their urban spaces. New York City-based Mothers Against Violence (MAV) is one such organization which was created in 1991 to address neighborhood violence at a city-wide level, and to focus attention on the multiple dimensions of the problem of violence — its impact on individuals, families and communities — and to develop practical community responses to this complex problem. In New York City, violence is the leading cause of death among young people aged 15-19, and the fourth ranked cause of death for children aged 5-14. MAV is unusual in that it was initiated by City Hall staff, but immediately became an independent non-profit organization in which the power and decision-making emanate from the neighborhoods. The deputy mayor and a number of city commissioners supported the creation of a new non-profit organization because they did not believe that government policy was the right vehicle for addressing racial violence.

Members of MAV are victims of violence from diverse cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. However, they share the view that the criminal justice mindset with which the problem has usually been addressed has to be changed to a public health mindset, seeing violence as a disease

the Mothers of Acari attribute their social and economic conditions to the fact that they are poor, rather than explicitly to racial factors (da Silva, personal communication, July 29, 1995). This phenomena contrasts starkly with countries such as the United States, where many African-Americans are identified, and self-identify, as African-American or "Black", etc., or South Africa, where apartheid created rigid, official racial categorizations, leading people to identify themselves much more explicitly along racial lines.

rather than a crime. MAV seeks to increase programmes to fight community-based violence, to advocate better services for victims and survivors, to raise awareness of the extent of the problem, and to reduce the presence of violence in the media. Pain, trauma, fear and apathy have been transformed into effective local prevention and advocacy strategies for programme and policy reforms at the city-wide level. MAV's proactive role in mobilizing the community against violence is key in healing the mothers themselves, and also enables young people, parents and others affected by violence to have similar opportunities, promoting community activism in the process.

MAV activities include public advocacy, providing safe havens for youth, memorial events, and a youth leadership project that involves peer counseling and youth employment initiatives. MAV develops gun violence elimination strategies, convenes annual conferences and publishes conference proceedings and other reports to disseminate information about the problem and prevention strategies for communities and individuals. The youth in the programme have articulated their need for a safe place to come together with their peers, so MAV facilitates recreational programmes that keep youth off the streets. MAV has reached over 2,000 people through activities in seven neighborhoods, and thousands more through the media.

Like the Mothers of Acari and other mothers' movements, MAV members originally acted out of sheer anger, frustration and pain at the disappearance of their children. In doing so, however, they have become important public voices in neighborhood and city-wide decision-making processes. From its inception, MAV has addressed an intersection of issues ranging from violence to economic poverty to the stigmatization of working class and minority communities. This perspective on violence has led MAV through a transformative process from a purely reactive movement to a proactive one, placing it at the forefront of citizen actions to promote positive institutional and policy reforms, such as youth leadership training and public advocacy for under-represented groups.

V. ENGENDERING URBAN SPACE: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS MOVEMENTS

Women's responses to urban poverty and their entry as a visible political class into community decision-making often occur indirectly, through their struggles for seemingly non gender-specific needs. Lack of affordable housing has been one such catalyst for women's active involvement in local development. Amrita Basu describes poor women's movements as processes of "shared oppression", in which women mobilize around certain issues, only to discover later the gender dimensions of their actions and/or be described as "women's movements". She argues that it is less important whether or not a particular movement defines itself as a "women's movement", and more important if it responds to the women's concerns and to those of external actors:

What initially motivates many women to organize is not necessarily a belief in the distinctive nature of their problems but rather a sense of shared oppression with other groups that have been denied their rights. Patriarchal domination is no more apt in and of itself to provide a catalyst to women's activism than class exploitation is likely in and of itself to stimulate class struggle ... whether women organize on their own or as members of a larger group is not really what determines whether their activism is likely to endure. The more important issue is whether women's activism responds to their own concerns or to those of external actors, such as political parties and the state (Basu, 1995b: 10).

Like other struggles for livelihood, women's participation in affordable housing movements provides a starting point — a shared oppression — from which women have entered community decision-making and, in some cases, influenced state development policies. Lack of affordable housing and unprecedented rates of homelessness in the world's largest cities is a problem for many poor families. Poor women have developed their own strategies to address gender discrimination in housing and employment markets and to seek safe living situations for themselves and their families. In the increasing absence of state subsidies for low-income housing — exacerbated most recently by cuts in social policy in many countries, both developing and industrialized — groups of women have taken the issues into their own hands rather than expect or rely upon external help. In urban housing markets in developing countries, this is exacerbated by the virtual lack of housing options for migrant families. In these cases, women operate within their roles in social reproduction to secure land, build houses and take care of their children, often while their male partners seek employment outside the local community (Moser and Peake, 1987). Despite women's low representation in formal community leadership, their participation in these struggles testifies to their importance as participants in community development (Bookman and Morgen, 1988; Moser and Peake, 1987; Radcliffe and Westwood, 1993).

In the United States, high rates of homelessness in the last 15 years can be attributed to the transformation of social welfare policy, which included radical reductions in spending on low-income housing and other social programmes,¹⁵ gentrification of residential areas in center-cities, increasing unemployment rates, and the de-institutionalization of the chronically mentally ill (Sweeney, 1994). All of these factors combined have led to a situation in which people who are already on the “emotional and economic brink” become homeless under the weight of these cumulative pressures (Sweeney, 1994:7).

These structural changes have specific gender dimensions. For women, these dimensions reflect most directly their unequal burden in caring for children and seeking employment outside the household. Many, for example, lose their jobs and are left with little or no welfare support, thus throwing them into homelessness. Others have not become homeless, although their options for affordable housing have become increasingly

¹⁵ During this period, both the national government and municipal governments throughout the country changed their policies and spent increasingly less on low-income housing (see Sweeney 1994).

limited. For both homeless and poorly housed women, a number of issues dealing with childcare, employment generation and personal safety become crucial, leading them to coalesce as a group.

The Casa Loma Housing Project in Los Angeles is one example of women mobilizing to secure affordable housing for their families. Located in the Belmont area of Los Angeles, residents of the Casa Loma Housing Project must pass burnt-out storefronts destroyed in the 1992 riots, provoked by the acquittal of the police officers whose videotaped beating of the young African American male, Rodney King, is etched in the memories of US residents of all races. Casa Loma residents are low and moderate income families, primarily single-parent Latinas (70 per cent). The women are organized into committees responsible for everything from the design of the building and apartment layouts to management policies and social services (such as a family development programme) to be provided in the 110-unit rental complex. Opened in May 1993, Casa Loma is the first and most innovative project of New Economics for Women (NEW), a local non-governmental organization founded in 1985 by a group of leaders of the *Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional*, a national organization that advocates for the rights of Latina women in the United States.

NEW seeks to address urban challenges, such as the lack of affordable housing and community economic development. To reach this goal, NEW focuses on empowering Latina women by organizing collective access to affordable housing and quality childcare, jobs and employment training programmes, community support networks and other social services. In addition to Casa Loma, NEW's projects include La Posada, a 60-unit rehabilitation housing project with daycare and an on-site parent and child development center for teen mothers and their children, launched in November 1995. La Posada will house predominantly Latina and African-American families. In the future, NEW plans to organize a neighborhood council to address issues in the Belmont area and run job training and small business development programmes with strategies such as technical assistance for minority-run businesses and peer-to-peer revolving loans.

NEW's leadership understands that the problems of low-income families and community development in Los Angeles affect large cities throughout the United States and other countries. They view projects like Casa Loma as prototypes that can be replicated elsewhere. In the short run, they plan to replicate Casa Loma in a new project, Villa Mariposa, a 115-unit project scheduled to open by the end of 1995. Demand for affordable housing is high in Los Angeles, where over 2,000 applications were made for the 110 units at Casa Loma, and where there was a waiting list of more than 500 applicants for Villa Mariposa even before NEW officially advertised them. This demand is partly a reflection of the fact that low-income families in Los Angeles spend an average of 50 per cent of their monthly income on rent alone (Villalobos, personal communication, July 19, 1995).

Participants in the Casa Loma project view their struggle as one which concerns issues of social reproduction as much as issues of citizenship, race and class. NEW's overall project testifies to this fact, by emphasizing an integral approach to economic development and addressing an array of

social issues which reflect the complexities of living and working in Los Angeles. The organization addresses employment and housing issues, and provides support and training for women and their (male and female) family members to articulate their roles in community development. In the family development programme, residents of Casa Loma address access to education, instruction in English, alternative forms of employment to paid domestic work, and the transition from welfare to stable forms of employment (approximately 40 per cent of Casa Loma's single mothers are welfare recipients). These issues have become even more important since the passage of Proposition 187, California's ruling which denies basic health care and educational opportunities to undocumented residents, most of whom are of Latino origin. In response to this situation, leaders of the Casa Loma project organized a workshop on the Proposition, allowing the residents to determine strategies for addressing the reforms.

Fundamental to the Casa Loma project's philosophy is an understanding of the intersection of gender, race and class. In the context of growing conflict around issues of race and immigration in California, Casa Loma residents are faced with increasing levels of hostility — something which affects numerous aspects of their daily lives. A focus only on gender, in this case, might pose the problem in a way which does not reflect the complicated aspects of securing housing for low-income Latina women in Los Angeles. Women residents of Casa Loma are acting not only as women, but as parents and as members of low-income Latino families affected by broader city and state policy reforms.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is another example of women's participation in movements for affordable housing. Beginning in 1991, CCH, comprising formerly homeless people and homeless advocates, began to organize homeless women with children in emergency shelters and transitional facilities in Chicago, Illinois. In response to the rapid increase in homelessness among these populations and in an attempt to seek long term solutions to their problems, the Coalition subsequently initiated the Women's Empowerment Project (WEP). WEP's primary goals include: 1) organizing and developing leadership among homeless women with children, advocates, concerned citizens and social service providers; 2) developing strategies to change public policy; and 3) supporting existing public policies and initiating new policies which will provide protection, services and new rights for homeless women. In addition to these goals, WEP has built coalitions with other organizations to develop programmes on violence against women and job skills training. In the former case, this effort has linked the affordable housing and women's movements, which have not necessarily worked together in the past.

WEP's philosophy is that homeless women must be involved in identifying their issues, and that by creating the opportunity for homeless women to shape their present environment, they will develop the self-esteem and skills necessary to regain control of their lives outside the shelter. To achieve this, WEP trains homeless women to advocate for themselves, allowing them to establish permanent self-sufficiency. To date, over 1,000 homeless women from 20 shelters have worked with WEP in many different capacities. Furthermore, WEP has developed strong women leaders who have

successfully advocated for services and policies to address the problem of homelessness. Examples of their successes include the precedent-setting public funding of a private residential development that created 1,179 new units of affordable housing in Chicago, and victory in a lawsuit against a shelter that subjected residents to sexual harassment in exchange for shelter.

WEP employs two community organizers who work to develop relationships with homeless women and to address the issues that the women themselves identify in bi-weekly training sessions. Residents of each shelter choose two women to represent them on WEP's Coordinating Committee. About 40 women comprise the Coordinating Committee, which meets with the Project's community organizers every other week to plan and implement the day-to-day work of the Project and to give feedback. The shelter representatives are then responsible for reporting back to the residents of their respective shelters.

WEP participants are faced not only with homelessness, but also with overcoming their histories as victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and with systemic abuse against them as single — and homeless — mothers (Mitchell, personal communication, July 25, 1995). They therefore must struggle to regain control of their economic and social lives and achieve new senses of self-worth. For this reason among others, WEP focuses on helping homeless women to develop leadership skills, empowering the women and equipping them with tools to organize in other contexts. It provides an important foundation for the growing constituency of homeless women who have effectively promoted policy reform and institutional change at the municipal and national level.¹⁶

Like the Casa Loma project, WEP and other homeless movements operate from a sense of shared oppression around issues of violence, drug abuse and illness, as well as social stigmatization around issues of race and sexuality. WEP and the Casa Loma project both testify to the fact that, as women mobilize to address seemingly single issues such as housing, they develop more elaborate understandings of their roles in community development processes. WEP volunteers, for example, have developed skills in lobbying, mediation and negotiation, and community organizing.

Other housing and homeless movements have placed demands on a number of public institutions from the start. Housing Works of New York City, a non-profit organization and the city's largest provider of low-income housing for people living with HIV/AIDS, emerged directly through HIV/AIDS activism. Specifically, the organization grew out of a discussion of the People with AIDS Housing Committee of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), and held as its original goal, "to provide housing, supportive services, and advocacy for homeless families and

¹⁶ For example, WEP's achievements include: 1) successfully advocating for a demonstration project with the Illinois State Public Aid Department to expand childcare and medical benefits from twelve to twenty-four months for women making the transition from welfare to work; 2) winning a federal lawsuit against a shelter that subjected residents to sexual harassment in exchange for shelter (shelters are now covered under the Fair Housing Law); and 3) participating in national housing forums and meeting with top Federal Housing Department officials in order to develop President Clinton's federal plan to end homelessness (Miller, 1994).

individuals with AIDS and HIV-related illness” (Sweeney, 1994:8). Since 1991, the Staff of Housing Works has grown from 2 to 110, some of whom are former clients. Two thousand people have been assisted; 450 have been placed in supportive housing. Their project addresses HIV/AIDS populations and works to challenge stereotypes about gender and sexuality which affect both women and men, and which have particular consequences for sexual and racial minorities. In this regard they are at the forefront of redefining community development initiatives to meet the needs and demands of single heads of households, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and other sexual minorities — groups which have been ignored in traditional community and urban development schemes (Castells, 1983; Adler and Brenner, 1992). Out of necessity, this organization has interacted with actors outside of the housing sector, including public health, medical, legal, and other professionals and activists.

Women’s participation in housing movements in developing countries has been influenced to a large degree by their roles in family migration to urban areas and general social disintegration in cities. Often their struggles are for equal rights to tenure, access to adequate community services and infrastructure, and access to credit (Moser, 1987). In public housing schemes, as in industrialized countries, women are allowed little input into housing design and settlement (physical/social) planning, thereby contributing to a built environment in which certain groups of women, as primary users of household space, are subjected to living conditions unsuitable to their gender, cultural or religious needs, and often face discrimination in housing and credit markets (Moser, 1987; Gilroy and Woods, 1994). In the poorest neighborhoods where migrant families typically stake out territory through “land invasions” and build their own houses, either with or without government recognition, women protagonists have often gone on to participate in or create their own women’s organizations, as is the case of the above-mentioned neighborhood women’s organizations in Quito, and similar groups in other Latin American cities (see, for example, Corcoran-Nantes, 1993; Alvarez, 1993). Reproductive-based struggles such as housing movements, and others mentioned above, tend to emerge at the nexus of “popular”, or poor and working class, and “feminist” movements. They voice a combination of interests which reflect these two types of movements. Yet, they maintain a vision and a set of relationships with external actors which reflect their positions as urban poor women and distinguish them from their male counterparts and from their middle class feminist allies (Rodríguez, 1994). In the next section we discuss their significance for community development, urban social movements and state development policy.

VI. ENGENDERING COMMUNITY ACTION

These types of women's organizations — neighborhood, anti-violence and housing — reflect the diverse ways in which women coalesce around a shared sense of oppression to meet their needs and those of their communities. They raise a series of questions about the significance of women's organizations for community development and for overcoming gender inequalities in local and national development practices. For example, how do the relationships of women's organizations with public and community institutions — including local and national governments, political parties, NGOs, international organizations and urban social movements — contribute to their success or failure? How does this relate to their sustainability? To what extent have these forms of community action engendered broader political and policy arenas? To what extent have their efforts been acknowledged by their families and communities? How does the (often hidden) transfer of welfare responsibilities to the community level overlook — and perhaps deepen — women's unequal burden in community and household work? How does this process serve as a catalyst for women's collective action? Conversely, when does it serve to dissolve organizational networks and lead to women's retreat from community action? In this section we will address these questions and make some suggestions for future research and policy.

◆ Sustainability and Community Development Approaches

Lora's study and other research on communal kitchens in Lima (as one example) indicate that the success or failure of the kitchens depends at least as much on institutional relationships and networking, as it does on the will of the kitchen members or their desire to continue collective food provision (see especially Barrig, 1996). Changes in state development policy — such as decreases in social spending and in welfare programmes — directly affect the kitchens economically and institutionally. Economically, the members are forced into a situation of permanent dependence in which they rely upon the relatively inexpensive provision of food for their families and, in some cases, for the small salaries that their participation provides. Institutionally, the kitchens are constrained by the types of available funding, and by the guidelines they must follow to be funded. An emphasis on vertical relations between local organizations, NGOs, national governments and international organizations often pre-empts local attempts to forge new, horizontal alliances between local groups. In this respect, the fact that communal kitchens are part of an umbrella organization (the FCPA) suggests that they have been successful at bridging local concerns against the odds of time, space and institutional constraints. However, as mentioned earlier, Barrig (1996) warns us of the structural and ideological dilemmas faced by these types of consumer-based or needs-based struggles. Neighborhood women's organizations in Quito, in contrast, have not been as successful at creating institutional links with other grassroots organizations. The successes or failures of community organizations, therefore, depends upon a number of

related factors, including institutional constraints, as well as their ability to address and/or co-operate with broader constituencies such as local governments, religious communities, urban social movements, and business and non-profit sectors.

These factors are directly related to the sustainability of women's community organizations and to their long-term impact upon urban policy, and community and state development. Organizational sustainability is a tricky issue, since it implies that very informal, grassroots, often activist-oriented organizations must somehow integrate themselves into the official political and economic system to survive over the long term. Some organizations do not have the skills or resources to do this; others do not want to compromise their ideological principles to work within the official system; yet others find it essential and necessary to do so, even if at political or personal costs. Some members of the Mothers of Acari, for example, lost personal family support because of their increased visibility and participation in public arenas and decision-making (da Silva, personal communication, July 20, 1995).

Sustainability is even more complicated in the context of state restructuring, as the decentralization of local services and redistributive subsidies, along with decision-making authority and accountability, leads to the double-bind discussed by Alvarez (1996) in relation to Latin American women's organizations. On one hand, decentralization measures provide opportunities for previously unacknowledged groups to participate in community development and decision-making, thereby giving historically marginalized groups such as women an entry into planning and political processes. On the other hand, the most disenfranchised groups — immigrants, racial minorities, recent urban settlers, and poor women and men in general — are forced into mobilizing for resources in contexts in which funding, training and skill-building are difficult to acquire, and urban inequalities make it increasingly difficult for marginalized groups to feel they can promote change.

Despite these difficulties and contradictions, many seemingly disenfranchised groups have developed integral, comprehensive approaches to community development, even when their organizations focus on a "single issue" such as housing, human rights, or daycare. New York's Mothers Against Violence, Chicago's Women's Empowerment Project and Los Angeles' Casa Loma Housing Project all testify to this fact in varying degrees. In each case, the participants have developed strategies to address the immediate problems of violence, homelessness, or affordable housing, but with a broader perspective on citizen rights and responsible community development.

Neighborhood women's organizations in Quito have also developed an integral approach to community development. From the beginning, they have focused on establishing daycare centers as well as on numerous other projects to enhance women's community involvement, their political participation, and their economic empowerment. These contributions to the local development process have been invaluable, despite limited documentation and conceptual biases in analyses of planning and

development. Such biases overlook local development strategies that do not operate entirely through conventional institutional channels, as is the case of most of the organizations examined in this paper.¹⁷ In fact, these community-based approaches deeply influence electoral and official planning processes, and this is clear when one considers the fact that IULA's (International Union of Local Authorities) six-year project on women and local power has observed that the majority of elected local women politicians in Ecuador and in seven other Latin American countries gained political recognition and support through their previous (informal, unpaid) community activism. IULA's finding and the examples above begin to break down conceptual biases in studies of women's "formal" and "informal" community participation. Indeed, the emphasis on community and local power — as opposed to local government, electoral politics and/or official planning institutions — implies a breakdown of traditional categories of political participation and of public/private relations, as politics are defined more broadly to include women's "community" and "official political" roles (see Arboleda, 1993). These cases also suggest that women's locations in community structures remain largely unexamined due to conceptual, methodological and cultural biases, and that uncovering these biases in future research and practice is key to understanding the effects of economic restructuring and decentralization measures on local communities and households, and ultimately, to promoting self-sustainability and integrating women into decision-making processes.

◆ Gender, Structures of Constraint and Local Power

All of the examples discussed in this paper suggest that what catalyzes women's collective action (or conversely, what prevents women from participating at the community level) stems from the ways in which gender is structured into families and communities, development frameworks, and political and ideological movements (among others), and from how specific groups of women perceive and respond to these structures and practices. One way to understand why community action is (or is not) important to women is by analysing local power in terms of gender. This includes an analysis of power relations within households, an approach developed in the feminist literature on household survival strategies. Despite the fact that this literature has focused largely on intra-household relations and has not theorized the community or larger public sphere (see, for example, Benería and Feldman, 1992), it has nevertheless positioned the household as a central analytical category and has analysed the links between households and broader institutions and structural changes (Moser, 1989a, 1989b; Sen, 1990; Folbre, 1988). Disaggregating the household on the basis of gender and identifying it as a site of conflict and co-operation, as socially constructed and as an essential part of the economy, rather than as a non-market, natural unit characterized by altruism, provides a different — and indeed complementary — starting point for understanding why and how women develop strategies and approaches to community development that broaden our understandings of economic and political participation. As

¹⁷ For a history of alternative planning practices and a reconceptualization of planning from the perspective of marginalized groups such as African-Americans, women, and gays and lesbians, see Sandercock, 1995.

opposed to studies which posit households vis-à-vis the economy or civil society without analysing power relations within them (see, for example, Friedmann, 1987), the feminist critiques suggest that households, like broader societal institutions, are not neutral, safe or cohesive with respect to gender. Women in particular observe this in their daily lives; and in cities characterized by severe economic crisis or restructuring measures, gender inequalities in family structure, job opportunities, household maintenance and childcare tend to increase, often catalyzing women's collective action.

The UNRISD studies and several others demonstrate this point and suggest, at the very least, that men and women experience and interpret urban poverty differently, according to their roles in everyday life: their perspectives on parenting, violence, safe living environments, the provisioning of food, schooling, health care, etc. Benería's (1992) Mexico study, for example, demonstrates how the Mexican debt crisis and subsequent structural adjustment policies also led to the "restructuring of everyday life", including: 1) an intensification of domestic work; 2) changes in purchasing habits; and 3) changes in social life. The particular ways in which women experience these effects contribute to the survival strategies they develop — whether they be individual (i.e., family/household-based) or collective (i.e., through community participation). The UNRISD studies suggest a similar process in other cities and demonstrate that community participation can empower women, yet also increase their reproductive workloads if and when community participation is not analysed in terms of gender. This is especially evident in the communal kitchens, where women complain of being "burnt out" and of their unequal burden in food provision, despite increased community awareness of the shared costs of social reproduction. It is also evident in the case of the Mothers of Acari, where members have had great difficulties in balancing their activism with their family responsibilities. Thus the restructuring of everyday life is both an effect of broader restructuring measures and structural inequalities, as well as the locations of communities in that process, and the distributive and decision-making mechanisms they develop, both formally and informally.

The general move towards the dismantling of welfare in many countries — and the specific decentralization measures that emerge from the new policy frameworks — make it even more urgent to understand the gender dimensions of community action. For example, national policy proposals such as the "community option" in the United States and "laws of popular participation" in some Latin American countries may potentially shift major distributive and decision-making responsibilities to local communities,¹⁸ potentially shifting responsibilities to households — and therefore to women. In Bolivia, the new *Ley de Participación Popular*, initiated in 1995, has been passed in conjunction with a decentralization policy which promises to shift federal responsibilities to the local level and to incorporate indigenous and other community groups into the planning and political process. This law is quite dramatic when one considers the fact that over a dozen of the local municipalities that have acquired this new responsibility were created for the first time with the passing of this bill. Prior to this

¹⁸ On the community option in urban policy in the United States, see Clavel et al., 1996. On decentralization measures and laws of political participation in Latin America, see, for example, Arboleda, 1993; IULA/CELCADEL/USAID, 1991.

legislation, local decision-making structures were defined by the residing indigenous communities. These local and historically resilient structures are now being replaced by the new municipalities — based on one universal model. Most positively, this new law may integrate historically underrepresented communities into the official political system. If this occurs, indigenous groups, women's and other community organizations will acquire new political and advocacy roles in local planning processes, although much of this depends upon the decisions that are made at local leaderships levels — levels which are still highly marked by indigenous male leaders concerned primarily with preserving indigenous communities vis-à-vis the modern state.

In Bolivia, the tension between prioritizing ethnicity over gender in policy debates is reinforced by intellectual debates on gender relations in Andean vs. Western cultures. Many have argued, for example, that gender relations within Quechua and Aymara communities are complementary, rather than dichotomous and unequal as in Western traditions. (On the notion of complementarity, see Harris, 1978; Silverblatt, 1987.) Based on this notion, many policy makers assume that gender is not a problem (or at least is not the most crucial problem) and overlook the important need of discussing gender relations within indigenous communities, both in rural and urban areas. Despite this, Bolivian women's long history of activism in anti-authoritarian, indigenous, leftist and anti-poverty struggles cannot be ignored (see, for example, Zabala, 1995; León, 1990; THOA/Rivera Cusicanqui, 1990), and many women's organizations have actively worked to incorporate gender into the local planning and political agendas that result from this law. In addition, feminist policy makers have worked to incorporate gender into development frameworks, primarily by emphasizing gender equity, a development concept which has many parallels in the Andean concept of complementarity, and therefore has been politically salient in Bolivian policy circles (see, for example, Montaña, 1992). In general, women's organizations and the *Sub-secretaría de Género*, the government office designed to integrate women into development, have addressed two issues in regard to the new decentralization laws: 1) the potential gender impacts of the *Ley de Participación Popular* in local communities; and 2) the incorporation of women, and women's organizations, into the new planning structures (Bejarano, personal communication, November, 1995).

These two issues are deeply related, as the successful incorporation of women into the new structures and the acceptance of gender-aware planning agendas would most likely transform the outcome. The literature on urban social movements tends to overlook the important questions of how gender inequalities are reproduced in community structures, why more men are in community leadership roles than women, and how this determines policy agendas in general and women's participation in particular. Urban planners may applaud increases in local power — such as in the role of community development corporations (CDCs), local governments and social movements — without considering how local power is structured along gender lines, and the differential effects of community restructuring for women and men. In other words, increases in local power may not automatically translate into

power for women; at the very least, this needs to be explored in future research.

An analysis of gender in this context would include the assertions that 1) gender is an analytical category affecting the allocation of political, social and economic resources; 2) perceived sex differences help determine patterns of social, political, and economic organization; and 3) the concept of gender is used to assign men and women to different areas of the economy and society and thus contributes to the distribution of power in both public and private spheres (Fernandez-Kelly, 1994). The gender dimensions of decentralization measures and shifts in local power depend largely upon the structures of local production, local government, civic organizations, and family networks (among others), and on the nature of the shifts that take place and their resulting gender impacts. In terms of economic development, what policy makers may regard as a more productive local economy may instead be a shifting of costs from the paid to the unpaid economy, much of which falls upon women (see Elson, 1992). In terms of local power and community action, it is important to engender analyses of local power structures as well as to broaden the scope of the question. For women and women's organizations, empowerment begins with addressing inequalities within their families as well as in society at large. The new decentralization laws in Bolivia demonstrate the tensions that local communities face when they must both develop a cohesive strategy vis-à-vis the nation-state and address unequal power relations within the communities themselves. One way to understand the gender aspects of this process is to broaden working definitions of community development and planning to encompass both formal and informal, or both institutionalized and grassroots, planning practices. Indeed, Bolivian feminist policy makers and activists have been at the forefront of pushing for this type of definition in the new laws and planning practices in the country. The gender effects of these laws will depend largely upon the ways in which local communities negotiate and implement this process, and upon the extent to which women integrate themselves into decision-making positions and/or influence local leadership.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that shifts resulting from economic restructuring, combined with the demands generated by increased urban poverty, have incited women to organize collectively, ultimately contributing to new gender-based understandings and community practices in cities around the world. Women's organizations have responded to the local effects of globalization by creating their own organizations that reflect their gender locations in family structures and in the broader political economy. Throughout the world, women have played protagonistic roles in housing, anti-violence and neighborhood movements (among others) and have engendered the landscape of urban social movements and change. Despite this, the roles of grassroots women's organizations in community development and planning processes remain largely undocumented, and both their collective work and the private household work of women in general have yet to be more fully incorporated into analyses of restructuring,

decentralization and other measures associated with the new neoliberal policy frameworks.

Community development approaches that integrate gender analysis may provide some answers to how gender serves as a structure of constraint for many women (Folbre, 1994), and how this does (or does not) catalyze women to participate in local organizations and decision-making processes. The cases in this paper suggest that mobilization is possible. However, the extent to which these types of organizations sustain themselves and become more influential actors in the public sphere has yet to be determined. This depends upon how planning and political processes are defined, and whether or not local power is understood to include power relations within households. Women's roles in reproduction — in the family, household and community — after all, characterize all of the movements cited in this paper and serve to guide the organizations in developing their strategies, their networks, and their perspectives on community in the context of structural change and urban poverty. Household relations, therefore, provide a starting point for understanding both the diversity and the similarities in local women's approaches to mobilizing for resources and responding to global change.

It is clear that moves towards integrating nation states into the global economy and shifting welfare responsibilities to local (public and private) levels are not likely to subside or be reversed. Given these circumstances, it is especially important that researchers and policy makers begin to address the gender dimensions of these processes in order to prevent further structural constraints and burdens for women and to integrate them into community development. What kinds of strategies can be supported and/or developed to foster this process? Below are some suggestions.

- 1) Neoliberal policies and their impacts — upon local communities, households, community organizations, local power (governance and private organizations), and production structures, to name a few examples — should be analysed from a gender perspective.
- 2) Urban policies need to account for gender differences in their frameworks by examining more systematically the relationship between formal and informal community development, and the gender dimensions of and relationships between these processes. Women's active participation in decision-making should be promoted and, given the fact that many women participate in informal community organizations and networks, efforts should be made to tap into these organizations and networks.
- 3) Local women's organizations should be supported and horizontal networking should be fostered among them, and with other urban social movements, to develop a broader perspective on their locations in national, regional and global contexts.
- 4) National governments and international organizations could promote the engendering of all social and economic policy frameworks, rather than designing specific frameworks for addressing "women's issues". Examples of efforts to do so include the Human Development Report (UNDP, 1995),

which incorporates gender as a variable in the human development index, and UNIFEM's proposal for the Beijing conference (Heyzer, 1995). Engendering mainstream development frameworks, programmes and projects will better lead to policies which promote and sustain more equitable development along gender lines from the beginning. Initial conceptual work has been done to engender macro-economic frameworks and models (see Cagatay et al., 1995), although much needs to be done to translate these ideas into practice, particularly in regard to local development and urban policy.

These measures respond to some of the immediate problems of daily survival, although they do not address the root of the problem (Benería, 1992). Long-term solutions would include a rethinking of international, national and urban policies that support the transfer of responsibilities, authority, decision-making and redistributive mechanisms to local communities, to take into account the parallel transfer to (and increased burden upon) poor households and poor women in particular. Viewing this process through the lens of gender could lead to more equitable policies and could provide a different outcome, one more beneficial to women's organizations and to poor communities in general.

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