BUILDING COMMUNITIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN NON-PROFIT HOUSING

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1994

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ABSTRACT

Social housing in Canada is at a crossroads. Continual government cutbacks have put the very quality of life in social housing communities at risk. The management of social housing, from the development of policy down to the control residents have over their housing, is a crucial component of the quality of life in these housing communities. However, all too often residents do not have the opportunity to participate in the management of their housing.

This thesis explores the role, significance and consequences of participatory management styles in non-profit housing through a literature review and case studies of two Vancouver Non-Profit Housing Societies: Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society (ENF) and Red Door Housing Society (Red Door). Participatory management stresses the importance of good human relations and resident participation in management decision making. For this study, management was conceived of in broad terms, representing issues around property, as well as the health of the community. The key element in any model of resident participation is power—who has it, who makes the decisions, and whose lives are affected. The primary assumption behind this research is the belief that resident participation in non-profit housing management leads to increased control for residents over their living environment and results in benefits for all of the stakeholders involved in non-profit housing.

The case studies were developed on the basis of 37 open-ended interviews with residents living in four of ENF and Red Door's communities, ENF and Red Door staff and board, and people working within the non-profit housing sector, related advocacy areas, market rental housing, and the British Columbia Housing Management Commission. In addition, a focus group discussion was held with staff and board members of ENF and Red Door.
The study discovered that non-profit housing has unique goals and aims which make it inappropriate to rely solely on private market rental management techniques. The existence of organizational and civic cultures which emphasize inclusion and empowerment are crucial factors of participatory management. However, this philosophy must coincide with the reality of each housing community. The first step in any participatory management scheme is to ask residents if they want to be involved, and in what issues and how. Resident participation will mean different things to different people, so it is necessary to create a variety of ways residents can be involved. It is also important to recognize issues of accessibility and voluntary participation, while balancing diverse needs and realities.

Participatory processes take time and energy. Therefore, education and training, community development and identifiable results for all those involved are fundamental to creating effective participatory management schemes. Participatory management recognizes that the most valuable assets of non-profit housing are the residents. It replaces the top-down, hierarchical model of conventional management schemes with one based on partnership and shared decision making. Finally, this research highlights the need for women to be part of all aspects of housing from the creation of policy and programs, to development and management.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my advisors, Dr. Aprodicio Laquian and Dr. Penny Gurstein for their advice, patience and support over the last two and half years, and Jill Davidson for being the external reader for the thesis defence. Thanks to Robin, John, Elena and Ghislain for their brilliant editing and "technical support". I want to say a special thank-you to my family and friends for their constant support and sense of humour throughout what sometimes seemed an ordeal. I would also like to acknowledge and thank those people working within the non-profit sector and British Columbia Housing Management Commission who generously gave of their time and knowledge. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank the women and men who work for, volunteer for, and live in the communities of Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society and Red Door Housing Society for sharing their experiences. I hope the readers find their stories as interesting and inspiring as I did.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social housing in Canada is at a crossroads. The co-operative housing program has been cancelled, the non-profit housing program severely cutback, and federal and provincial government focus is increasingly on deficit and debt reduction. It is unlikely the situation will improve in the near future. With fewer housing units being built, questions regarding type and quality of housing become more important. Is it enough to create "modest shelter" or should Canada be attempting to facilitate the creation of communities where people have choice and control? In the words of one resident who lives in non-profit housing in Vancouver:

BCHMC's definition of a home boils down to 'a roof over your head. That's not a home! A home is a community, its people living, its people sharing, its people crying, its people having choices. I think they should redefine their meaning of home. That's what this is, its the people that make a community, its the people that make this a home, not the building (Debi Prey, personal communications).

The impetus for this thesis comes from past research on the housing needs of female-led single parent families. This research, done by talking directly to women who live in non-profit housing, highlighted the importance of management. The women voiced the opinion that the ability to make choices about the community in which they live allowed them to take greater control over their environment. They also felt that by including tenants in decision making, the housing better met the needs of the people who live there.

The management of non-profit housing, from the development of policy down to the control residents have over their housing, is a crucial component of the quality of life in these housing communities. Participatory housing management is of particular relevance in British Columbia at this time. Residents in some non-profit housing communities are demanding more of a say in their housing. They are forming tenant committees and lobbying for greater input. In the recent Report of the Provincial Commission on Housing Options, fifty-seven recommendations were made which attempted to provide a basis for action on housing in British Columbia. The
recommendations related to residential land, home ownership, rental housing, special needs, homelessness, secondary suites, provincial and local government, and management. From their consultations, the Commissioners discovered that:

there is very little participation by tenants in the ongoing operation and management of the projects in which they live...we believe that the provincial government should take a leadership role in encouraging tenant participation in property management (Audain and Duvall 1992: 63).

The Report recommended that the Province "require that the boards of all societies which provide housing through the Non-Profit Housing Program must include tenant representation" (ibid.: 63).

Management styles vary from housing society to housing society, and the degree of tenant participation depends on the philosophy of the society. While one standardized model would not be appropriate for every situation, certain principles regarding participatory management may be universally applicable. Although the Report only discussed tenants sitting on non-profit housing society boards, there may be other ways of increasing tenant participation. It is hoped this study will begin to highlight some of those ways.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the role, significance and consequences of participatory management styles in non-profit housing. Experiences with resident participation in non-profit housing management are documented to study the methods, expectations and results, and to ascertain what structures are needed to make resident participation viable. This study focuses on management as a way of creating community. As such housing management is conceived of, not only in terms of service provision, but also as a support system and decision making mechanism which can heighten resident satisfaction and quality of life within the housing community.
1.1 Objectives of Study

This study has three long term and four short term objectives.

1.2.1 Long Term Objectives

The long term objectives of this study are:

• to contribute to the theoretical discussion of non-profit housing management;
• to expand the conventional view of non-profit housing management to include meaningful resident participation; and
• to acknowledge the gender implications of non-profit housing management.

1.2.2 Short Term Objectives

The short term objectives are:

• to evaluate participatory management styles in non-profit housing through case studies of two non-profit housing societies;
• to document ways residents can and do participate;
• to determine what structures are needed to facilitate resident participation, and how these structures facilitate the desired results of resident participation; and
• to document levels of women's participation in all levels of non-profit housing management.

1.3 Scope of Study

This study focuses solely on non-profit family housing in the Greater Vancouver Regional District built in the 1980s under the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program\(^1\) and the Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program. Case studies of two non-profit housing societies,

\(^1\) The "Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program" refers here to the non-profit housing program funded and administered by the federal government through CMHC. Although the provincial non-profit program also falls under Section 56.1 of the National Housing Act, and receives funding from the federal government, it is administered by the provincial government through BCHMC, and is referred to here as the "Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program".
Red Door Housing Society (Red Door) and Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society (ENF), both of which have included residents in management and decision making, are examined to discover successes, challenges and obstacles inherent in participatory management.

1.4 Research Methodology and Philosophy

This study is an exploratory examination of non-profit housing management, and does not attempt to prove a specific hypothesis. Instead, it attempts to discover the importance of resident participation and how it can be effectively implemented. It is intended to serve as a beginning or spring-board for further research and action. Exploratory research "is a beginning. It is a mapping of territory. It is an exciting first step and a frustrating realization of where the researcher could go" (Herringer cited in Nairne 1991: 2).

A participatory or action research framework was used as the basis of the research for a number of reasons. Firstly, participatory research is about creating change, it is the "systematic collection and analysis of information for the purpose of informing political action and social change" (Barnsley and Ellis 1987: 4). Secondly, participatory research, "by linking the creation of knowledge about social reality with concrete action...removes the traditional separation between knowing and doing" (Maguire 1987: 4). It allows or even demands that different ways of knowing be validated and a person's personal bias be acknowledged.

Thirdly, the research was carried out in as much a participatory manner as possible so that it is done "with" rather than "on" people (ibid.: 34). In this sense it is hoped the roles between the researcher and the people participating in the research were flexible enough to break down. Conscious efforts were made to respect people's privacy and homes and ensure that the research fitted the societies and the communities. The people involved in the research, while they did not develop the research question nor the objectives, did have a choice about whether or not to participate and how their participation would be established. Some also gave feedback on the interview questions and the material describing the two housing societies. The
participating non-profit housing societies also had control over certain aspects of the research such as deciding to omit the name of the specific communities involved in the interview process.

Finally, a participatory framework was adopted because it facilitated a feminist analysis. As Patricia Maguire has written "participatory research taught me the necessity of being explicit about personal choices and values in the research process. Feminism taught me that the personal is political" (ibid.: 6). Traditional analysis on urban structure and housing has tended to ignore distinctions between the experiences of women and men in the name of "gender less humanity" (Andrew and Moore Milroy 1988: 1). The intention of this research was not to ignore nor negate the experience of men. It was to acknowledge the "distinctive experience of women--that is seeing women rather than just men at center stage, as both subject matter of and creators of knowledge" (McCarl Nielsen 1990: 20).

1.4.1 Data Collection

The data collected for this research were largely qualitative, although some quantitative data, such as housing statistics, were used in order to support the qualitative findings. Qualitative research "produces findings not arrived at by any means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 17). It "is a way of grounding our analysis in real life and ensuring that the theories we develop have a basis in reality" (Barnsley and Ellis 1987: 4). Open-ended interviews with residents, staff and Board members of Red Door and ENF, as well as people working within the non-profit sector attempted to discover experiences and beliefs regarding resident involvement in non-profit housing management. In addition, a focus group was utilized to expand on personal experiences through group discussion. Secondary sources of data included literature on housing management, non-profit housing, and women in housing. Documents such as housing society by-laws and constitutions, government regulations and guides were also consulted.
Specific methods included:

- An examination of relevant literature on housing management, housing programs and women in housing. From this research, models of comparison were discovered.
- Open ended interviews with people working in the non-profit housing sector, staff at the BC Housing Management Commission (BCHMC), and staff at housing and poverty advocacy groups.
- Open ended interviews with staff and Board members of two selected non-profit housing societies (Red Door and ENF), both of which have attempted to include residents in management.
- Open ended interviews with residents who live in communities run by the two non-profit housing societies (Red Door and ENF).
- A focus group discussion with staff and Board members of the Red Door and ENF.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Housing is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "any shelter, lodging, or dwelling place" or alternatively as "the act of one who houses or puts under shelter". However, in this study the definition of housing is linked more to the concept of human settlements and therefore, encompasses, but also transcends the existence of the building or shell. Housing is generally considered an important factor in the lives of individuals and families, and the social health of communities. It is the "base". Simon has suggested that Canadian social housing programs in "providing a secure home base from which to deal with the larger world...anticipated that individuals and families would be better able to cope with their personal problems" (Simon 1986: 10). In the words of the Toronto Department of Public Health:

The concept of adequate housing goes beyond the simple notion of a physical structure that meets certain standards of acceptance. Ideally, in addition to providing shelter, housing should support needs associated with physical, psychological and social well-being to be considered adequate for a healthy life (as cited in Doyle 1992: 5).
As Turner advocated in *Housing By People*, housing should be considered a 'verb' or a process by which people continually provide and manage their own housing, "the importance of housing lies, not so much in how it looks or what it is, but more in what it does for people's lives" (Turner 1976: 97).

Further, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in its *Strategic Plan 1992-1996*, committed itself to promoting "good living environments for all Canadians" (CMHC 1991c: 11).

(Housing) is more than bricks and mortar. Whether in rural areas, or in any of Canada's cities, housing is a key element in the quality of our living environments (*ibid.*, 11).

Doyle and Melliship acknowledge that this view of housing is promising "as it encompasses house and community and suggests a broader understanding of housing may be developing" (Doyle and Melliship unpublished paper: 103). In short, the idea that "shelter alone is not housing", (*A Women's Housing Manifesto* 1987: 5) may have come of age.

### 1.6 Participatory Housing Management

Management is a crucial factor in the conceptualization of housing cited above, and in the type of environment created. Housing management is complex. Anne Power, who has written extensively on Council housing in Great Britain, describes it as being about "responding to infinite variations in problem-solving around people and property. Their constant interaction makes neat and fixed prescriptions impossible" (Power 1991: 2). For this study, management was conceived of in broad terms, representing not only issues around property, but also the health of the community. Fundamental to this definition of management is decision making, and who makes the decisions.

The answer to the question "who makes the decisions?" depends heavily on the type of management style adopted. Management style is defined in the *International Dictionary of*
Management as the "approach adopted by management to exercising authority, encouraging participation in decision making, motivating staff, delegating authority, communicating information and maintaining control" (Johannsen and Page 1980: 206). While housing management will vary from office management because of the existence of residents and property, management theories are useful in defining non-profit housing management styles.

Participatory management can be defined as "a style of management that lays stress on the importance of good human relations and of workers' participation in management decision making" (ibid.: 251). Power describes participation in housing management as "tenants having a share in housing decisions" (Power 1991: 15). Participatory housing management includes resident involvement and, in some cases, control over decisions which affect their community and living environment. In this study the term "participatory management" becomes synonymous with "resident participation".

A historical precedent for this type of management comes from nineteenth century England where Octavia Hill and the Society of Women Housing Managers advocated social responsibility in housing management. Hill perceived housing management to be about more than income generation. She was concerned about the moral and housing conditions of her tenants, saw the importance of dealing with the tenants and dwellings together, and emphasized the moral imperative by enforcing punctual rental payments (Clapham, Kemp and Smith 1990: 206; see also Brion and Tinker 1980 and Power 1991). It was a new and more intensive style of management, and while Hill's methods appear dated now, it was a personal style of housing management concerned for the well being of the residents as well as the value of the property.

In order to study non profit housing management in BC, the relationship between the four basic stakeholder groups was examined. These groups are:
1) government which is responsible for policy development, program implementation and funding. (In B.C. this involves BC Housing and Management Commission (BCHMC), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the provincial Ministry of Housing.);
2) non-profit housing societies which have responsibility for program delivery;
3) paid staff who handle property management within the housing communities; and
4) residents who live in non-profit housing.

None of these stakeholder groups exist in a vacuum. As the diagram below demonstrates, all are shaped by the "organizational" and "civic" cultures in which they function. The civic culture refers to the context of the larger community or society, its rules, patterns of participation and cultural norms. The organizational or bureaucratic culture refers to the specific culture of an institution or organization. The nature of these cultures, to a large extent, shape the answers to such questions as how residents fit into the decision making, and how policy effecting housing management is determined.

Figure 1: The Four Stakeholder Groups of Non-Profit Housing Management
1.7 Assumptions Behind the Research

An important part of qualitative research is the recognition and acknowledgment of the bias and assumptions of the researcher (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 18). The primary assumption behind this research is the belief that resident participation in housing management is fundamental to achieving housing goals. Not only does it contribute to the quality of life, but also to the successful functioning of the housing community. The ability to participate in the decision making about one's housing results in a greater sense of control over one's environment and life. This sense of control, in turn, can lead to feelings of ownership and responsibility toward that community. It was also assumed that the opportunity to participate results in tangible benefits for all of those involved, from skill acquisition to better decisions. Resident involvement in management and decision making was believed to result in housing which better meets the needs of the people who live there. However, this is not to imply everyone will react in the same way to having the opportunity to participate. For example, participatory management practices may be in place, but a resident may not be able or may not want to take advantage of them. In this sense choice, to participate or not, is crucial. The basis of this research lies in the assumption that housing, in providing a stable environment for living, can serve as a base for work, leisure, self-actualization and family life.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Because of the pressures on social housing, perhaps it seems irrelevant to be studying participatory management at a time when the very existence of publicly funded housing is in question. However, management style is at the heart of non-profit housing. With the increased interest in participatory methods, be it in research or citizen participation, it is an opportune time to begin discussing resident participation in non-profit housing management. Further, as women's housing needs become recognized, it is crucial this recognition be extended to the discussion of management.
The examination of different types of resident involvement in social housing management is not new. However, research on this topic that specifically relates to non-profit housing, particularly in B.C., is scarce and it is hoped this study will generate issues for further investigation. Concern has been voiced at the idea of increased resident control, for fear it could lead to discrimination against certain groups. The intention of this research is not to "dump" the responsibilities of housing management onto the laps of the residents or insist on volunteerism by the residents. Nor is it to promote or in any way facilitate discrimination. The intention is to explore whether participatory management is one part of creating healthy communities, and from the degree of interest in this topic, it would appear that it is an approach worthy of serious consideration.
2.0 CANADIAN SOCIAL HOUSING

2.1 Canadian Housing Policy

Housing policy can be described as "intervention in housing production, distribution or consumption that affects the location, character and availability of homes, or the rights associated with housing occupancy" (Clapham, et al., 1990: x). Conceptualized this way, housing policy falls broadly under the rubric of domestic social policy, encompassing "those activities oriented toward education, health and welfare of the population" (Jackson, Jackson and Baxter-Moore: 1986: 567). However, social policy is not always implemented solely with welfare objectives in mind (Clapham, et al., 1990: 21). In Canada, housing policies have traditionally had economic goals, as governments have been attracted to housing development as a way of easing unemployment and producing economic "multiplier" effects (Harris 1991: 372).

In *Housing and Social Policy*, Clapham, Kemp and Smith present two philosophical models with regard to welfare provision: the market model and the social democratic model (1990: 24; see also van Vliet 1990). The market model advocates the view that:

social services should, where possible, be provided by families, friends or the market, rather than the state...the very term 'welfare state' has come under attack from those who regard the legitimate role of the state as being a minimal one, primarily concerned with upholding private property rights and with creating conditions that are conducive to the smooth running of the market (ibid.: 24).

As Nairne has observed, "the central problem with this model is the assumption that all market actors have the wherewithal to exercise choice in the housing market" (1991: 10). In contrast, the social democratic model rejects "the market as necessarily the most efficient and beneficial mode for the delivery of welfare", and argues that "state intervention is necessary and desirable because of the failure of the market to supply essential welfare services to an adequate standard" (Clapham et al. 1990: 29). Central to this model are the principles and goals of citizenship and equality (Nairne 1991: 10). While these models serve as useful tools for
2.1.1 Housing As A Commodity

The provision of housing in Canada has been and continues to be primarily reliant on the private, capitalist market which treats housing as a commodity, dependent on the forces of supply and demand (ibid.: 9). Although this system has delivered housing to a majority of people, leading some politicians and authors to proclaim Canadians are among the best housed people in the world (Harris, 1991; Hulchanski, 1988; Rose, 1980), many are still unable to secure affordable, adequate housing which is appropriate to their needs. According to CMHC, in 1991, one in eight or 1.16 million households in Canada did not have the resources to obtain housing meeting current standards, and therefore were considered to be in 'core need' (CMHC 1994). While the national average of households in core need was 12.2 per cent, in B.C. the average was 14 per cent (164,000 households), among the highest rates in the country.

These statistics become more revealing when they are broken down and examined according to particular sub-groups. Renters are five times more likely to face housing need than people who own their homes. Of all core need households, 72.9 per cent are renters (CMHC). Tenants make up 36 per cent of the households in BC and 58 per cent in the City of Vancouver, but their household incomes are only 61 per cent of those of homeowners (Statistics Canada, 1991 Census and The Tenants' Rights Action Coalition (TRAC) 1993: 3). In Vancouver, almost one in four tenant households pays more than 50 per cent of their income on rent (City of Vancouver 1993a 5:2).

Further, because these statistics do not consider gender, they do not fully reveal the situation of women, especially single mother families and elderly women who live alone. In 1991, two in five single parent families, almost all of whom were women, lived in core housing need, and
women outnumbered men three to one in senior's housing (Canadian Housing Coalition 1993a: 1). As will be discussed later, women's housing needs, although often extreme, have largely been ignored or overlooked by government policy makers in the name of gender neutrality.

**Figure 2: Core Housing Need Population, 1991**

What becomes clear from these numbers is that housing need is directly related to poverty. According to Donnison, "inequality and exclusion from the wider society define poverty" (1969: 31). In 1991, household income for families in core need was one quarter of that for those not in need (CMHC 1993: 3). Housing affordability is perhaps the most important factor related to income, as the Healthy Toronto Subcommittee wrote,

> the cost of housing also has adverse effect on health; when housing costs are high, those on low incomes have less disposable income. This is stressful in itself and may lead to a reliance on food banks (Healthy Toronto Subcommittee 1988: 75).
However, there are other factors such as security of tenure, stability and choice that are also greatly affected by income. In a society where housing is valued primarily as a commodity, security comes through ownership, something often unattainable for people with low or even middle incomes. In the City of Vancouver, the median price for a new single family detached house was $300,000 in 1992, while condominiums averaged at $192,000 (Real Estate Weekly Friday, August 13, 1993).

In response to those whose housing needs are not met by the private market, government has attempted to intervene through public and social housing policies and programs. Social

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2 The terms "social" and "public" housing can be confusing. Social housing, in its general sense, refers to all publicly built and subsidized housing. More specifically, social housing refers to housing owned and operated by municipalities, cooperatives and non-profit housing societies. Social housing complexes are generally smaller in size and scale than public housing, and are intended to fit into the existing fabric of the community. Public housing, while it is a form of social housing, refers to dwellings owned and operated by the government. For CMHC, it refers specifically to housing funded jointly with the provinces and territories under Sections 79 and 81/82 of the National Housing Act (CMHC 1991: iii). Both types of
housing is "housing that is subsidized to assist people in need who can't find adequate, affordable shelter in the private market" (BCHMC 1992a: 1-1). However, these actions have always been taken with the clear intention of not interfering with the smooth functioning of the free market. As Wichman observed, government in Canada has played a "residual role, intervening only to fill the gaps of housing need not met through market housing activity" (Wichman 1981: 20). Since World War Two there have been many different national and provincial housing programs, but it has been argued that these programs have been primarily reactive rather than based on coherent policy goals (see Dennis and Fish, 1972; Hulchanski, 1988). As Hulchanski has written:

Canadian housing policy has focused almost exclusively on the supply of housing units in the private sector. Rather than a housing policy as such, there have been a series of housing programs designed to stimulate private residential construction as an instrument of macro-economic policy (1988: 16).

Housing has rarely been considered by governments in Canada as an end in and of itself. Rather, it has been a side effect of government efforts to achieve other macro-economic policy goals, and its importance in the eyes of policy makers has depended on their ideological view of housing, whether a commodity or a basic right.

2.1.2 Housing As Part of Urban Policy

In the 1960s, as concepts of social policy expanded, housing policy became linked more closely to urban policy. In 1968, the first national housing conference was convened by the Canadian Welfare Council, and in keeping with the tone of the day, housing was considered, not in isolation, but as an integral part of the broader social context. The recommendations from the conference emphasized issues such as "quality of life in the community, community consultation, and more choice in location, design and form of tenure" (Anderson 1992: 33).
Perhaps the most important concept coming from the conference was the first recommendation, which advocated the right of all people to housing:

The Canadian Conference on Housing (1968) declares that all Canadians have the right to be adequately housed whether they can afford it or not (Wheeler 1969: 331).

In 1973 two new programs were introduced: Non-Profit Housing Assistance and Co-operative Assistance. These programs were intended to "make it easier for non-profit housing organizations to develop housing projects" (Rose 1980: 57). Loans were provided to non-profit corporations, either charitable or co-operative, owned and occupied by members or by a municipality. In addition, start up funds were provided by CMHC. The 1973 changes to the National Housing Act were significant in that they encouraged local community and third sector (non-profit, non-governmental or cooperative groups) involvement in housing, and emphasized smaller scale housing developments.

2.1.3 The Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program

In 1979 further amendments were made to the National Housing Act. As explained in a CMHC report:

The changing intergovernmental context, together with factors such as declining production levels in traditional low-income housing programs, growth capital requirements at the federal level, and increased local interest in non-profit and cooperative housing, led to the federal announcement in May 1978 of a basic shift in housing policy. Using existing legislative provisions to begin with, the federal government has sought to consolidate its low and moderate income housing programs into a single simplified program (as cited in Wichman 1981: 13).

The Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program and 56.1 Cooperative Housing Program, named after the section of the National Housing Act in which they were contained, were supposed to:

extend the social status benefits of quasi-homeownership to two groups: first, a moderate income group which probably could not afford to purchase a dwelling; and second, low-income residents who received further assistance to reduce housing charges to a maximum of 30 per cent of adjusted family incomes. (Wekerle 1988: 106).
Key to these programs was the intention of creating a social mix, rather than 'ghettoizing' low income people. As Hulchanski has written:

This shift from public housing to the more socially mixed public, private and co-operative non-profit housing programs resulted from dissatisfaction with large scale public housing projects only for the very poor (Hulchanski 1988: 20).

The Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program was funded and administered exclusively by the federal government through CMHC. Rather than receiving capital funding from CMHC, non-profit housing societies secured mortgages from private lending institutions which the federal government insured at a guaranteed interest rate write-down to 2 per cent for 35 years. This interest rate write down allowed subsidies to be provided to residents so that they did not pay more than 30 per cent of their income towards housing (CMHC 1983: 13). CMHC also provided project start-up funds to assist sponsoring groups from their initial incorporation through to project development (ibid.: 22). These funds gave non-profit housing groups control over their projects by allowing them to secure a site, hire an architect, and work through the preliminary stages of development without the financial support of a developer. Once the development was built, an Operating Agreement between CMHC and the non-profit housing society laid out the terms and conditions on how the community would be run.

Under the Federal 56.1 Non-profit Housing Program 45 communities with a total of 2,387 units were built in the City of Vancouver. One-third of the units were for families and the other two-thirds were for seniors and people with disabilities (City of Vancouver 1993b: v).

The Federal 56.1 Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Programs were canceled in 1986 when the Conservative government altered the orientation of social housing policy. Concerns over the "effectiveness and cost of social housing programs as well as their delivery to households in need of assistance" led to a review initiated by the Minister (BCHMC 1986: 1). According to CMHC, depending on the criteria used, between 47 and 69 per cent of households served by
The Federal 56.1 Program were low to moderate income, and the Program did not necessarily provide housing at minimum cost (CMHC 1983: 319). CMHC concluded:

> the costs associated with income mixing and rental market stimulation should be clearly recognized. Even if Section 56.1 were totally effective in meeting objectives, the high subsidy cost for each low-income unit provided prohibits the extent to which social housing problems can be resolved through these programs (ibid.: 323).

The Program which replaced the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Program targeted only low-income households. In the opinion of Hulchanski the elimination of "income mixing from private and public non-profit housing...in effect, reintroduced the public housing program" (Hulchanski 1988: 21).

2.1.4 The Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program

The Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program as it existed until the spring 1993 Federal Budget was established in 1986 in order "to help needy households who cannot obtain suitable, adequate and affordable rental housing on the private market" (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 1989: 1). Under the Global Social Housing Agreement, the program is jointly funded by the federal government through CMHC, which provides 67 per cent of the funding, and the provincial government through BCHMC, which provides 33 per cent. It is administered solely by BCHMC.

The Program assists public and private non-profit organizations to build or buy housing which they own and manage and make available to households which are in "core housing need" (ibid.: 1). As with the Federal 56.1 Program, CMHC insures the mortgage which covers development costs, such as land construction and architect's fees (BCHMC 1992a: 1-5).

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3 The name of the program discussed in this paper is more specifically the 'Non-Profit Regular Program', but here it is referred to as the 'Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program'.

4 In the 1993 federal budget, the Conservative government virtually eliminated the Non-Profit Housing Program by cutting funding for further development of social housing outside of a small amount for shelters for victims of family violence, improving the homes of people with disabilities and on-reserve native housing.
Operating costs, including maintenance and administration, are covered by the federal and provincial rent subsidies and rent contributions from tenants (ibid.: 1-5). Once the housing is developed, the non-profit society receives subsidies that make up the difference between the break-even rent for the project and the portion paid by the tenants. As the table below shows, the economic rent which is the cost per unit to operate a building at a break-even level\(^5\), less the tenant rent contribution, the amount of which is based on the tenant's income, equals the subsidy provided by the government (ibid.: 2-3). The subsidy lasts up to 35 years (BCHMC 1993a: 2).

### Figure 4: Funding For Non-Profit Housing

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<th>Tenants</th>
<th>Operations</th>
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<tr>
<td>CMHC, 67% (Subsidy)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BCHMC, 33% (Subsidy)</td>
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In the project selection process non-profit societies must give details to BCHMC about their age, number of members, and previous experience in general management, community involvement and housing management (BCHMC 1993b: 7). After completion of the building, the societies handle the day-to-day property management (BCHMC 1992a: 2-7). Therefore, they are also required to outline expected staffing requirements, types of files and service contracts, and most importantly for this study, a discussion of the operating philosophy in relation to the intended client group, and whether tenant participation in management will be encouraged (BCHMC 1993b: 8).

\(^5\) As opposed to the market rent which is the rent which could be obtained if the unit was rented on the local private market.
Under the Non-Profit Housing Program, an Operating Agreement which lays out all the terms and conditions of how the society manages the program, the building and the subsidy is signed by both the non-profit society and BCHMC. This agreement "formalizes the relationship between BCHMC and the Sponsor over the expected 60 year life of a project" *(ibid.: 8)*. The sponsor society must also provide a detailed Operating Plan and Operating Budget which is approved by BCHMC prior to the completion of the housing development.

Tenants are selected in keeping with the terms and conditions set out in the Operating Agreement. Typical target groups include: families, where there is at least one adult and one or more dependents; seniors, aged 55 or older; and people over 40 with specific housing needs *(ibid.: 4)*. In all cases, applicants must provide proof of their household income, assets and current rent *(BCHMC 1992a: 3-1)*. To be eligible for housing under the Non-Profit Housing Program, a household must have an income below the Core Need Income Threshold*6*, and be paying more than 30 per cent of its gross household income for shelter, and/or be inadequately housed *(ibid.: 3-4)*.

After determining whether or not the applicant is eligible, the housing society must then evaluate the household's need for housing. This is done through a point system which evaluates housing need based on six main factors:

- termination notice without cause from present accommodation;
- present accommodation is unsatisfactory, such as overcrowding, living with family or friends, inadequate kitchen or bathroom facilities, lack of recreation space or affected health;
- percentage of income support allowance being used to pay rent and heat;

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*6* The Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT) is the annual household income sufficient to pay market rent for adequate accommodation within a certain community. CNIT levels vary according to unit size and from community to community. CNIT tables are adjusted annually. For example if the average market rent for a 1 bedroom apartment is $450 per month, and if rent is 30% of income, then income or CNIT must be at least $1,500 per month or 18,000 per year *(BCHMC 1992a: 3-13)*.
• gross household income;
• assets; and
• other discretionary factors such as the location of the applicant's home and work, or the health of the applicant.

Once accepted and in residence, the relationship between the residents and the society is governed by the *Residential Tenancy Act* of BC, which gives both the tenant and the society or 'landlord' rights and responsibilities.

Since 1986 a total of 12,359 units have been allocated in B.C. under the Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program. Of these 5,288 were for families, 4,820 for seniors and 2,251 for 'special needs' (BCHMC 1993c). Of the 4,322 units of family housing that are currently under BCHMC administration, 1,116 or 34 per cent are two parent families and 3,206 or 66 per cent are lone parent families, the majority headed by women. Single parent families also make up the vast majority of families currently on the waiting list for social housing. Of the 5,068 active applicants from the Lower Mainland in June of 1993, 3,311 were families; 1,889 or 60 per cent were single parents and of these 343 or approximately 20 per cent were considered to be in the 'high need category'.

### 2.1.5 From Quality to Affordability

Over the years the emphasis of Canadian housing policy has shifted from 'quality' to 'affordability' with rising housing costs, especially in urban centres, and an increasing lack of rental housing. Recurrent throughout the last four decades has been the theme that the production of housing units is essential to solve housing problems.8

Production goals are adopted on the assumption that all Canadians will be decently housed if a sufficient number of units are produced so that there is

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7 The statistics quoted in this paragraph were obtained directly from the BCHMC Housing Services Department, some are found in *BC Social Housing Programs Status Report, May 1993.*

8 Despite this general theme, since 1984, with successive Tory governments, the production of housing units for moderate and low income people has been dramatically reduced.
one adequate dwelling for every Canadian family (Dennis and Fish 1972: 17).

However, the emphasis of these production goals has been on the private market through government incentives such as homeownership grants. Non-profit housing is still only a fraction of total housing in Canada. From 1971 to 1991 non-profit and co-operatives rose from 4,000 to almost 18,000 units in the City of Vancouver, accounting for 9 per cent of the total housing stock and 15 per cent of the rental housing stock in the City (City of Vancouver 1993a: 3). As already stated, in June 1993 the number of people on BCHMC's active waiting list was 5,068 for the Lower Mainland alone. Housing need is still a long way from being met in Canada. As the Ontario Association of Housing Authorities wrote in 1964:

Housing performance under the National Housing Act has been production oriented rather than distribution oriented, a quantitative operation qualitatively devoid of broad social objectives and economically inaccessible to many Canadians. The production of new houses should be a means to an end, not the prime policy objective (Dennis and Fish 1972: 1).

In addition, the bias government housing policy and programs have shown for homeownership has resulted in more money being spent on tax-subsidies for owner-occupiers than on social housing (Harris 1991: 372). As Doyle and Mellish reported,

Only once, in 1980, were estimates of Federal Government tax expenditures published by the Department of Finance. This publication shows that in 1979 the estimated expenditures for non-taxation of capital gains on a principal residence was $3.5 billion. The cost of social housing programs for that year was less than a tenth of that, i.e. $305.7 million (unpublished paper: 72).

Hulchanski has similarly written that "tax expenditures in general, and housing tax expenditures in particular, mainly benefit the highest income households" (1985: 29).

Harris has argued that these biases are likely to continue for two reasons. First, "the powerful interests that have shaped housing policy in the past still hold sway at both the federal and local level". Second, the past bias toward homeownership has created expectations among "the
large, relatively affluent and therefore powerful electorate that would resist any attempt to reduce the tax subsidies that they currently enjoy" (Harris 1991: 372).

The nine years of Conservative government from 1984 to 1993 witnessed an ever shrinking role for government in social housing policy development and provision. While CMHC spends about $2.1 billion annually on operating grants for existing social housing units, the emphasis has been increasingly on who the government perceived to be 'neediest of the needy'. Examples include the elimination of income mixing in social housing in 1986, the cancellation of the co-operative housing program in 1992, and more recently the allocation of new housing units for 1994 going only to shelters for victims of family violence, housing for people with disabilities and on-reserve native housing. There is no doubt that these groups have unique and extreme housing need. However, this trend is disturbing in the context of housing as a social right, "the notion of public housing for general needs has been increasingly eclipsed by the view that only 'special' needs should require the direct attention of the state" (Clapham et al. 1990: 55). As Sylvia Haines of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association observed, "what is happening here is the federal government is getting out of the housing business" (The Vancouver Sun May 12, 1993).

It is too soon to tell whether the recently elected Liberal government will reinstate social housing as a priority. The early signs are not overly encouraging. In the Liberals' first budget, in February 1994, the focus was on homeownership. The annual subsidy to cover two-thirds of the operating budgets of the 652,000 households (approximately 50,000 in BC) living in social housing was maintained. However, the only "new" funding was $100 million for the reinstatement of the Homeowner and Disabled Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) which provides loans to low income people and people with disabilities to bring their houses up to health and safety standards. In addition, the First-time Homeowners'
Grant, which allows first-time home buyers to make a five per cent down payment, was extended.

The emphasis is increasingly on 'cost savings' within government, and in accordance with this, CMHC has recently established a National Task Force to look at savings within social housing. One of the initiatives to come from this is a return to direct lending by CMHC. This is projected to save $120 million over four years, and these savings will go back into housing. All social programs are under review in Canada, and social housing will certainly be part of this review.

2.2 Housing As A Women's Issue

Women, particularly single mothers, are negatively affected by changes in government housing policy and the resulting shortages in affordable housing (Audain and Duvall 1992: 51). In their 1984 pivotal work Women and Housing: Changing Needs and the Failure of Policy, Janet McClain and Cassie Doyle observed that as "family and household composition changes, more women become first order housing consumers" (1984: 3). By 1991, 30 per cent of Canadian households were female led, and of the 597,780 economic families led by women, 50.6 per cent were low income (Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Report).

Single mother families, along with elderly women living alone, are the largest group of female led households and primary housing consumers. Statistics Canada reported that in 1991 thirteen per cent of all Canadian families, and 12 per cent in British Columbia, were led by single parents, of which 82 per cent were female-led. In BC this translates into 107,375 single parent families, 88,245 led by women (Statistics Canada, 1991 Census Report). Further, women are less likely than men to own their own homes, thereby losing the security ownership provides. Women-led households represent 38.6 per cent of renter households and make up

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9 Information from this paragraph comes from the Vancouver Regional office of CMHC.
two-thirds of the residents in non-profit housing. The majority of people living in family housing are single mothers, and single parent households constitute 34.7 per cent of households in core housing need (Doyle 1992: 9; Doyle and Melliship unpublished paper: 17 and CMHC).

Despite these facts, the literature reveals that the housing needs of women have not been explicitly acknowledged nor dealt with in government housing policy and programs. In 1984, McClain and Doyle wrote, "research and policy development on housing have almost ignored the needs of women" (1984: 63). It was not until McClain and Doyle's study that housing statistics were actually broken down along gender lines. Prior to this census, households were categorized as "family" or "non-family" or by number of persons (Stern 1991: 6).

Housing is not a gender neutral issue. As Doyle and Melliship write:

To consider housing as gender neutral is in fact to operate under an implicit bias. This bias fails to recognize both the economic inequities which frame women's lives and the social assumptions about women's place and function which put them at a disadvantage if they live in household forms other than the male-led norm (unpublished paper: 8).

Doyle and Melliship further argued that "both economic and social factors combine to create a situation in Canada in which many more women than men have housing needs that are not met" (ibid.: 8). These factors include the reality that women earn, on average, 70 per cent of what men earn, thereby reducing their ability to compete in the housing market; a for profit housing market that operates under the capitalist system to make housing a commodity to be bought and sold; the greater need for safety in housing as a result of violence against women in our society; the fact that women more often have primary responsibility for children; and, the sexist assumptions that underlay housing policy and forms (ibid.: 9).

Lack of choices or control for women also extends to the management and design of non-profit housing. In 1986 Simon wrote that "women are still grossly under-represented at the financial
and technical area of government housing agencies" (1986: 11). In 1987, the Women's 
Housing Manifesto, which was adopted by the Canadian National Action Committee on the 
Status of Women, cited a lack of participation by women in housing at all levels, including 
management (1987: 5). In 1990s the situation has not changed greatly. Women still "have 
very limited role in the design, construction and management of market and non-profit 
housing--few women hold senior positions in those fields" (Audain and Duvall 1992: 51).

Cooperative housing offers many advantages to women, especially single mothers, over 
traditional models, specifically affordability, security of tenure, and importantly, a supportive 
community (Wekerle and Novac 1989: 225). Further, it provides the opportunity for women 
to be involved and in control of their own housing from the design and development to the 
daily management and maintenance. However, the literature suggests housing built by and for 
women better meets their needs:

By looking at the options that single mothers face in the housing market, 
and by contrasting them to alternative shelter arrangements developed by 
and for them, we begin to appreciate the disparity between the obsolete 
assumptions about gender role activities reflected in the environmental needs 
(Klodawsky and Mackenzie 1987: 10).

Wekerle and Novac came to a similar conclusion when examining case studies of women's 
housing cooperatives, "when women develop their own housing, their concerns with 
community are reflected both in the physical design of the housing and in the social decision 

As the "traditional" life cycle changes, so do housing needs. People are no longer following 
the pattern of living at home, moving into an apartment before marriage, and then moving into 
a single family home designed for father as the wage earner, mother as the homemaker and 2 to 
4 children (McCaman and Durrett 1988: 10). Rather, the family with two working parents 
predominates. The fastest growing family type is headed by a single parent. Thus, as the 
reality of people's lives changes, housing policies must also change to meet this new reality
and its needs. Otherwise, instead of working to negate systematic inequalities, housing systems can play an active role in sustaining societal inequity (Clapham et al. 1990: 71). As Diane Morisette concluded:

The philosophy, eligibility criteria, and direction of social housing programs are slow to take into account changes in the make-up of the Canadian family and the situation of women at different stages of life. Women must therefore be very closely involved in the development of social housing programs, since they are the main users (1987: 32).

2.3 Trends Toward Participatory Processes in Housing Policy and Management

In thinking about housing policies and programs it is important to ask "where and how are they drafted?". Are they formulated solely within bureaucracies or are they conceived of and drafted outside institutions and refined by bureaucrats? Policy drafted in these differing ways will reflect different concerns, values and perceptions of housing need. The familiar case of 'carpet under the dining room table' is a clear example. The 'expert' is imagining what the room will look like, while the single mother is imagining the crumbs and the stains. As Malpass and Murie have stated:

the political nature of housing policy and practice implies a focus not just on the content of policy but also on the processes by which it is made, implemented and evaluated. This means looking at who is involved (or excluded) and what resources they can deploy (1987: 25).

At present, housing policy and programs are developed largely within government and their bureaucracies, with the result that social housing has often failed to meet the needs of its residents. While there are some aspects of 'user input' through program evaluations, these usually come after the policy has been formulated and implemented. These processes are essentially 'top down' and therefore result in policies that reflect the values and priorities of government, rather than those people living in or delivering social housing. Exceptions may be Public Commissions, like the Provincial Commission on Housing Options, and consultations, such as those around rent protection, both of which took place in BC recently. In these cases,
people are asked for their input before policy is formed, but even here the timetable, scope and issues to be discussed are usually set by government.

As an alternative, a process of participatory policy making has been suggested. Clapham et al. describe this as the "new citizenship model" where the concept of citizenship embraces "a genuine commitment to infusing welfare services with opportunities for participation in flexible and decentralized structures rooted in local communities" (1990: 245). By adopting policy making processes that include a wide range of people, experiences and voices, it is argued that policy betters reflect the reality and needs of those it is intended to serve and whose lives it effects most.

These processes can be translated into the experience of day to day management of social housing. While there is a wide spectrum of management styles in social housing, traditionally it has followed the model of private market management in being primarily 'top down' in the form of a rigid 'landlord-tenant' relationship. This is not surprising, as it is hard to expect management styles to encourage resident involvement when the policy behind them was not created in this spirit. In a situation where non-profit societies are dependent on government funding, there is always the concern about "biting the hand that feeds us" by establishing policies which are not part of the accepted norm. However, increasingly, the values and benefits of involving residents in decision making on community issues, and the costs of excluding them, are being recognized.

Housing management has not received much attention in the housing policy formation process in Canada. As seen above, more attention has been spent on policies designed to increase the stock of housing and homeownership. In the United States the situation was similar until widespread operating difficulties and quality of life questions began to emerge in public housing developed for low and moderate income households. As Kolodny wrote in 1976:
Housing management has emerged as an area of serious policy concern and deliberate programmatic innovation only in the last half-dozen years. To observers unaware of the construction bias that has so dominated national housing policy, it must seem bewildering that so much official and professional attention could be lavished on a housing unit's first 12 to 24 months and so little devoted to sustaining it over the many decades of its economic and physical life (1976: 1).

However, the increased attention to housing management also came about due a changing understanding of what constituted shelter which, as Kolodny observed:

it involved a shift away from a standard based purely on input--the existence of a dwelling in acceptable physical condition--to one that focuses on the output--the actual delivery of those services (housing and not strictly housing) which are residentially based (ibid.:1).

In Great Britain, where one-third of people live in "council" housing (Silver, McDonald and Ortiz 1985: 213), resident participation had long been considered a good idea, but only recently have strides been made in terms of putting it into action. The Housing Act 1988 and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 have meant that "most landlords are keenly conscious of the need to rethink and reassess their services in the light of the challenges which they face" (Institute of Housing 1989: vii). One of the keys to this rethinking is involving tenants in the process of housing management (ibid.: vii).

In both cases, resident participation represents "both a direct and indirect response to social and political trends which have favoured equity, social justice and local democracy considerations" (Community Resource Services 1988: 1). However, resident participation can mean different things to different people. From the literature, there emerges a wide spectrum of resident participation in social housing. As Table I shows, resident participation can range from total resident control, as in co-operatives, to more direct management control where the residents are excluded from decision making processes (Ontario Ministry of Housing 1991: 14; see also Institute of Housing 1989: 18 and Simon 1977: 1).
Table 1: Resident Management Continuum

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<th>Direct Solicit</th>
<th>Solicit Input</th>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Social Impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident Control</td>
<td>Resident Management</td>
<td>Residents can be involved in decision-making</td>
<td>Community involvement in decision-making is encouraged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-operative Model</td>
<td>Resident-Managed Associations</td>
<td>Residents can be involved in decision-making</td>
<td>Community involvement in decision-making is encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Model</td>
<td>Resident-Controlled Management</td>
<td>Residents can be involved in decision-making</td>
<td>Community involvement in decision-making is encouraged</td>
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The key element in any model of resident participation is power—who has it, who makes the decisions, and whose lives are affected. As Turner has observed the issue of "who decides?" is central to housing and human settlements (Turner 1976:12). In 1969, Sherry Arnstein wrote an article entitled "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" in which she asked "what is citizen participation?". In response to this question, she stated:

"citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future (Arnstein 1969:216)."

Arnstein created a typology of citizen participation using "eight rungs on a ladder" as metaphors, each representing the extent of people's power to determine the end product (ibid.:217).

**Figure 5: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation**


At the bottom of the ladder were "manipulation" and "therapy". Here the real objective was "not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "cure" the participants". Next came "informing" and
"consultation" which were described as "tokenism" because they allowed citizens to hear and be heard, but provided no assurance these views would be heeded by the decision makers. "Placation", the fifth rung on the ladder, was "simply a higher level of tokenism", allowing citizens to advise while the decision making power stayed with powerholders. Rungs six through eight were characterized as "degrees of citizen power". "Partnership" enabled people to negotiate and enter into trade offs with traditional powerholders. At the top of the ladder were "delegated power" and "citizen control" where "have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power" (ibid.: 217).

Arnstein acknowledged the eight rung ladder was a simplification. In reality neither the "have-nots" nor the "powerholders" are a homogenous bloc. However, Arnstein's typology is significant because it attempts to address the issue of redistribution of power:

participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered, but it makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit (ibid.: 216).

The ladder illustrates that a broad spectrum of citizen participation exists, some of which is in fact "non-participation". While these observations do not refer directly to housing management, they are useful to consider when examining models of resident participation in social housing. As Edwards stated:

Where the power lies, where it should lie, who wields it and how: these kinds of issues are the meat of any serious debate about tenant involvement in decision making (1986: 2).
3.0 PARTICIPATORY HOUSING MANAGEMENT

3.1 Market Rental Housing Management

Traditionally market rental housing management has provided a model for non-profit housing, partly because many of the management tasks and responsibilities are similar. In both market rental and non-profit housing, the manager is responsible for maintenance, rent collection, tenant selection, upholding occupancy agreements and other aspects related to the property, and are responsible for maintaining good relations with the tenants by responding to their legitimate requests. The legal relationship between the owner and residents in both sectors is set out in a tenancy agreement, governed *The Residential Tenancy Act*.

Nevertheless, the objectives of market housing are different from those of non-profit housing. Market housing management focuses on property management which is an "economic service designed to create the greatest possible net return from a given building over its remaining economic life" (Brauer 1973: 3). Inherent to this is the concept of private property, "without which individual ownership and use of real estate would not be possible" (Downs 1980: 20). Property management can be divided into five main functions: (1) public relations; (2) administration; (3) financial controls; (4) marketing; and, (5) operations (Goodwin and Rusdorf 1989: 227).

While effective housing management means responding to the reasonable requests of residents, in market rental housing the landlord or manager makes the decisions. Residents have little room for input. "In this system, the people who have to live there have to put up with whatever decisions are made for them" (Lloyd 1973: 3). Ultimately the only recourse residents have is to move out, and this option is very dependent on the resources available to the resident and the state of the rental market. As stated in the *Landlord's Handbook*, "you're in business
and you must exercise control over who rents your property" (Goodwin and Rusdorf 1989: 19), hardly the type of relationship based on principles of partnership.

The underlying concern for market housing owners and managers is profit. The size of the building and whether it is owned by a company, family or individual will make a difference. As one market rental housing manager interviewed said in describing who he worked for:

We're lucky...it is a small company, family owned, so there is a name to the face...they are compassionate to tenants, it is not solely a money making venture (Market A). 10

Rental market housing managers must balance the owner's interests, with the right of tenants to create a home (ibid.). "The most important part of my job is to maintain the tenancy...(but) it goes further than collecting rent" (ibid.). However, the bottom line in market housing is that "rental property is a business" (Goodwin and Rusdorf 1989: 227), and the landlord-tenant relationship is basically a business relationship (ibid.: 12).

3.2 Non-Profit Housing Management

Non-profit housing has social objectives, which can be encouraged or discouraged through management. In managing non-profit housing, the functional needs of the property must be balanced with the social needs of the community. Housing management in more social terms is about "providing good quality housing and services to those who have been in housing need and about maximizing the useful life of a limited housing stock" (National Federation of Housing Associations 1987: vii).

The most direct result of the social goals of non-profit housing is the provision of affordable, secure and decent housing. In social housing residents have security of tenure. Rent

10 For this study interviews were conducted with people from two non-profit housing societies, the non-profit and private market rental sectors and BCHMC. Where results from these interviews are cited, they are indicated by category, i.e., Market A, Staff B etc. This notation preserves confidentiality of individual respondents, but indicates the category of data sources. For more of the details of this methodology, see Chapter 4.
contributions are set annually according to income, so tenants do not have to worry about rent hikes. Residents also have the security of knowing the building will not be demolished or converted into condominiums. As one of the staff people interviewed observed, "non-profit housing is more geared to the needs of the tenants, whereas market housing is mostly geared to the owner's needs" (Staff A). However, "non-profit housing is not necessarily about empowering the tenants" (ibid.). Many non-profit housing societies manage their housing in traditional 'landlord-tenant' terms. The existence of a broader social objective depends heavily on the philosophy of the society, and to an extent, the direction set by government. It can also be heavily influenced by management style.

Studies done in the 1970s showed management style was an important factor in resident satisfaction with their housing. As Wichman reported:

The general consensus arising from the results of these studies indicates that management style is, indeed, a very crucial factor in determining the sense of well-being that a resident experiences in his (sic) housing environment (1981: 25).

Wichman cited a 1973 study on senior's housing by the Canadian Council of Social Development which stated:

It is apparent that the character of the development's management is the most important factor in determining whether or not the quality of the residential environment will meet the needs of residents (ibid.: 25).

The importance of management is even more crucial if social housing is going to "afford its users a feeling of dignity and satisfaction with their environment, as well as basic shelter" (ibid.: 61).

Management of non-profit housing also differs from market rental housing in organizational structure. There are responsibilities unique to non-profit housing such as subsidies, income verification, and other issues as set out in the National Housing Act and the Societies Act. In general, there are four basic stakeholder groups with intersecting roles and responsibilities in non-profit housing: (1) government, through BCHMC or CMHC; (2) non-profit housing
societies; (3) staff of the housing communities; and, (4) residents who live in the housing (see Figure 1, page 9). The roles of the last three groups and the relationship between all groups will vary from society to society.

**Government**

While provincial governments have responsibility for housing under the Constitution, the federal government has the power to set federal funding levels and develop programs in partnership with the provinces. The policy directions set by the federal government have profound impacts on the provision of affordable housing. Provincial governments also develop policies and programs, but they are very reliant on the federal transfer of money for housing. They have the power to create legislation and to establish and amend regulations, such as the *Residential Tenancy Act* or the *Societies Act*. The provincial government is also responsible for building and health standards, repair and maintenance, and licensing requirements.

In addition, government, through its housing agencies, oversee the delivery of housing programs. CMHC and BCHMC interpret government policies and programs, set management standards and provide annual operating grants to non-profit housing societies. These roles give CMHC and BCHMC a substantial amount of power, and as one non-profit housing society Board member commented, "it sometimes feels like we have to kiss their feet or we will lose our funding" (Board C). BCHMC and CMHC also monitor financial aspects of the tenants and the societies, as well as the eligibility of tenants. Interestingly, BCHMC and CMHC are also the places disgruntled tenants sometimes go to complain about the non-profit housing society which runs their housing. To some of those involved in housing societies this is considered a paternalistic attitude and shows a lack of trust on the side of BCHMC and CMHC, but for the tenants it represents an avenue for problem solving.
Non-Profit Housing Societies

Unlike public housing where government also has the power of direct management, in non-profit housing this power, together with the accompanying responsibility, is handed off to community based groups. However, while the non-profit housing society is technically the owner or landlord, they are accountable to BCHMC and CMHC, which have the power to set the operating grant and, ultimately, to take back the property if they deem this necessary.

Non-profit housing societies are made up of members who elect a Board of Directors which is responsible for society business. Members of the non-profit housing boards are legally liable for the housing. Decisions made at the Board level are of two main types, those that deal with the housing society and those that deal with the communities they run. Included in society business are aspects of development, financial control, membership development and staffing. Societies also have the power to set their own goals, objectives and philosophy. Community issues involve creating policy on how the housing will be run, and can include everything from whether or not pets are permitted, to whether residents are hired to do work around the building. In some cases community decisions are made together with the residents and the property manager.

Non-profit housing societies, like all non-profit societies operating in BC, must be incorporated under the Societies Act which requires them to remain in good standing with and report annually to the Registrar of Companies (BCHMC 1992a: 8-2). As with market rental housing the relationship between the society and residents is a balance between rights and responsibilities governed by The Residential Tenancy Act (ibid.: 5-3), which includes an arbitration process, administered by the Residential Tenancy Branch, in the case of disputes. However, non-profit housing societies must also adhere to the terms outlined in the Operating Agreement they sign with either BCHMC or CMHC. Operating agreements provide guidelines
for issues such as rental, tenant selection, budgets, tenancy agreements, subsidy, default and management. The BCHMC Operating Agreement states:

The Society shall furnish efficient management of the Project (sic), maintain the Project (sic) in a satisfactory state of repair and fit for habitation and will comply with health and safety standards including any standards required by law, and shall permit representatives of the Commission (BCHMC) to inspect the Project (sic) at any reasonable time. If in the opinion of the Commission, the Society is not providing efficient management or maintaining the Project (sic) in a satisfactory state of repair, the Society, under direction of the Commission, will rectify the deficiencies (1991: 5).

The Agreement goes on to define "good management" as including, but not being limited to:

1) Maintaining adequate maintenance files and records and implementing sound procedures of preventive and corrective maintenance.

2) Maintaining files on all tenants, which will include copies of tenancy agreement, copies of any correspondence, and proof of income.

3) Maintaining adequate financial records, expenditure controls, and cash receipt controls.

4) Developing and maintaining sound maintenance, leasing, tenant relations and general operational procedures and practices appropriate to the size of the building and the overall operation.

5) Maintaining good operational files containing copies of such things as legal agreements, pertinent Acts (e.g. Residential Tenancy Act, Society Act), minutes of society meetings, constitution and by-laws, and any other items appropriate to management continuity.

6) Ensuring sound fire and safety procedures are set-up with directions given to tenants. (ibid.: 5)

It is important to acknowledge non-profit housing is very much dependent on the volunteerism of Board and society members. This reliance on volunteer labour has profound implications in terms of management because all to often society members have neither the time not the energy to develop "extra" aspects of management such as community development.

**Property Management Staff**

In non-profit housing it is usually the property management staff who are responsible for ensuring "good management" on a day to day basis. As referred to above, this involves aspects
of maintenance and repair, and financial management such as rent collection, dealing with arrears, knowing the operating agreement, and banking. It also involves tenant relations such as filling vacant units by recruiting new tenants, informing tenants of their rights and obligations, as well as the community rules, representing the board and enforcing its decisions. As organizations grow, paid staff, who have more time and resources than volunteer board members, inevitably become more instrumental in determining future directions. This gives them substantial decision making power or at least influence over decisions. Further, the job of property manager may include helping tenants set up meetings or establish systems of communications. One staff person who was interviewed referred to the property manager as a "resource person", someone who can direct tenants to where they can get help without necessarily solving their problems for them. This element of support can be very draining for the staff, and requires the establishment of good relations and trust with the residents (see Power 1991 and Peterman 1988 for more information on the specific role of a property manager). As Isier et al. described the role of a property manager is very complex:

To some degree, the problems he (sic) faces every day call for the combined skills of an accountant, bookkeeper, purchasing agent, building maintenance expert and diplomat. And if managers happen to be amateur psychologists, too, so much the better (1974: 1).

As with the role of the Board, the property manager's job can involve residents, but again this depends on the society and to a large extent the property manager themselves.

Residents

The people who actually live in the housing are affected by the decisions made all of the above stakeholder groups. As with all rental housing, residents have responsibilities as set out in the Residential Tenancy Act and the tenancy agreement. In non-profit housing rules which are specific to the community may also exist. Whether residents are involved in the management of their housing depends on the attitude of the society, staff and BCHMC. It also depends on the residents themselves, whether or not they want to or are able to get involved. Therefore the methods and levels of participation, if permitted and encouraged, will vary from community to
community. Residents can set up committees or Resident Councils, take part in maintenance and repair either as volunteers or paid employees, be part of the process of tenant selection, make decisions on issues affecting the community and decide on the specific uses of common space or rooms. In addition, there is nothing stopping residents from being on the board of the society which runs their housing. However, generally residents of non-profit housing in BC are not involved in the management of their communities, and if they are, they, like society members, usually do so as volunteers.

**The Power Relationship Among the Stakeholder Groups**

As discussed in Chapter One, the organizational and civic cultures in which the various groups function create a power dynamic. While each group has a certain amount of power to define its own organizational culture, the civic culture demands a more or less hierarchical relationship among and within them. If conceived of in terms of power, the relationship would be very top down. The ability to set policy and direct the delivery of programs gives government ultimate control. Government ideology will also affect the organizational culture of the other three groups, and even its own agencies. CMHC and BCHMC oversee the implementation of government programs and the activities of the housing societies, which gives them influence in how the societies will operate. The non-profit housing societies have the power to set their own policy and philosophy which affects the nature of the communities in the buildings they develop and run. Property managers have power which comes to them from laws established by government and rules established by the housing society. Residents have the power to develop the identity of their community, but whether or not they are involved in decision making depends largely on the other three groups.
As shown in the above Figure, a momentum in terms of power is created by the hierarchical nature of the conventional management system in non-profit housing. While the absolute power may flow downward, it is overly simplistic to believe any stakeholder group lacks the power to affect those above it. Even the residents, shown here at the bottom of the power spectrum, have the ability to affect change within their communities and the other three groups, especially if they unite. Tenants have the power, and have used it in the past, to complain to BCHMC, elected representatives and even the media about their conditions. Housing societies and funding agencies may not like it when residents take their concerns to the media or to local politicians, but it is a way residents can take some control, and if this power is not misused, it can be a very effective tool.

### 3.3 Purposes and Outcomes of Resident Participation in Non-Profit Housing

As already mentioned tenant participation means different things to different people.

Its scope is so broad and so open to individual interpretation that, like justice and freedom, it is easy for virtually everybody to be in favour of it. A useful working definition, which could encompass most of the accepted usages of the term, is ‘the involvement of tenants in decisions which affect their housing’ (Edwards 1986: 2).
Similarly, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) broadly defines resident participation in non-profit housing as residents acting "together to improve the quality of life in their non-profit (housing community)" (1993: 6). In the literature the term "tenant management" is often used. However, rather than referring to one style of management, this term generally describes "a wide range of initiatives which see tenants of subsidized housing taking over some aspects of the management of the project " (Community Resource Services 1988: 1).

Along the same lines as Arnstein's eight rung ladder of citizen participation (see Figure 5, page 32), the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) in Great Britain has categorized the main types of activities commonly referred to under the rubric of tenant participation. There are ten categories:

- the first category consists solely of providing information to tenants without involving them in the decision making, although some landlords may receive information from tenants, but ignore it when received.
- tenant consultation goes one step further and typically involves a specific proposal with an opportunity for tenants to make comments or suggest alterations before the plan is completed.
- a dialogue, usually between a representative of the landlord and the tenant, means consultation and discussion over a period of time.
- negotiation occurs when tenants and landlords acknowledge that they both have a degree of power, and attempt to achieve a solution which is satisfactory to both parties.
- accountability assumes housing officials (and perhaps elected officials) are answerable to tenants for their performance; it requires the establishment of monitoring and reporting procedures.
- delegation refers to delegating the responsibility for non-statutory housing management tasks to tenants and tenant organizations.
• landlords can decide to offer tenants individually or collectively a choice of two or more options, although this choice is not usually able to be expanded, nor the underlying policy decisions questioned.

• shared responsibility is where landlords, tenants and others play a direct part in determining policy and overseeing its implementation.

• tenants and landlords can both be involved in an arbitration process designed to settle disputes or consider claims for special treatment or compensation.

• finally, control means the delegation of statutory housing management functions to tenants, or in other words, housing management co-operatives (Edwards 1986: 2; see Power 1991 for a similar analysis).

These categories have varying implications with regard to power and control, and one model of resident participation may, in different ways, meet the criteria of more than one category. However, like Arnstein’s ladder they provide an indication of the broad range of participation. Resident participation as represented by these categories, begins to recognize Turner’s belief that:

Good housing is that in which both the housing procedures and the dwelling environments produced act as vehicles for personal fulfillment and stimulate real social and economic development (Turner and Fichter 1972: 255).

The aims of resident participation will vary according to the situation, but generally they also recognize Turner’s belief. As outlined by the Institute of Housing Tenant Participation Advisory Service the aims are to:

• encourage community development

• facilitate better housing management

• give more power and choice to tenants

• increase resident satisfaction with their housing

• help members make decisions which respect the needs of the community (1989: xii).
In participatory models of housing management there is a potential to replace the principle of "tenant as client" with "resident as active partner" in the decision making and smooth functioning of not only the building but also the community. The opportunity exists for people to use their own skills to improve their quality of life. As Power has written:

Only residents experience directly and fully the problems of a particular estate. They have a strong vested interest in making things work. Without them it is impossible to sort out many social as well as physical and management problems that affect estates...Residents on their own cannot solve the complex, interacting problems of management and economic viability, unless they themselves become the landlord. Therefore, a partnership between tenants and the landlord is usually the best way forward. Within the partnership, tenants are active partners, not passive supporters or recipients (1991: 5).

However, increased control and involvement on the part of residents does not mean the rights and responsibilities of conventional management are eliminated:

The landlord-tenant relationship places fundamental responsibilities on the landlord. For example, communal maintenance, repair and a tenant's right to peaceful enjoyment of the home. The tenant must also act by law in a responsible way towards the property, towards neighbours and towards the landlord (ibid.: 239).

Indeed, as Turner observed, the opportunity for residents to take some control over their housing in fact comes with added responsibilities:

Autonomy entails the ability to enter into reciprocal relationships, to exercise both control over essential life needs and discretion in trade-offs which establish priorities...but autonomy does not imply unqualified license...(it) represents a measure of obligation and responsibility as well as the power to satisfy one's wants (Turner and Fichter 1972: 247).

In whatever form resident participation takes, be it resident groups working in partnership with the landlord or residents sitting on Boards, benefits are derived for residents and housing societies. These benefits relate to both property management concerns such as maintenance, as well as broader social aspects such as resident self-determination and self-respect (Community Resource Services 1988: 4). For example resident groups are seen to provide the following:

For the tenants, they can improve the quality of life, increase leadership abilities and skills, and perhaps improve opportunities for employment. For local housing authorities, resident groups provide important input for managing the housing well. They also provide a sense of "ownership" to
tenants, which contributes to better maintenance and lower operating costs (Prairie Research Associates 1991: ii).

Specific benefits cited include long-term cost savings, increased occupancy rates, reductions in delinquent rents, higher unit rental incomes, increased maintenance productivity, job creation for tenants, reduced vandalism and other crime, reassertion of social control, increased resident self-determination and self-respect and general community development (ibid.: 2).

Perhaps the greatest benefit of resident participation is responsive management (Community Resource Services 1988: 2). Therefore flexibility is crucial. However, resident participation is not a panacea for every problem confronting a housing community. One model of participation will not fit every community or situation. Every community is unique and therefore will have to develop its own process, "it is important to view tenant management as an approach, rather than a method" (ibid.: 2). Participatory processes are time consuming and frustrating, but they also result in benefits for everyone involved. Thus as Peterman has written, "we need to be quite sure why it is we are seeking resident management, what to expect from it, and what are the negative aspects we must try to avoid" (1987: 2).

Finally, it also important to consider the views of some American housing advocates who warn that proponents of resident management may be "falling into a trap carefully laid by those who wish to see the federal government out of the public housing business and that the net result of implementing these alternatives is likely to be less rather than more public housing" (Peterman 1988: 2). These critics focus their attention primarily on the resident management and privatization of public housing in the United States, "the sale of public housing is useful to conservative interests both politically and economically. It is also in line with their ideology" (Silver et al., 1985: 228). However, they also have valid concerns about resident management schemes:

It is probably not an overstatement to say that many conservatives would like the federal government to be totally removed from the direct provision of public housing. Resident management is an appealing concept to such
people. It embodies the principles of hard work, self determination, self sufficiency, independence and entrepreneurship. In addition, successful resident management can lead to property ownership, which is believed to be an essential element in building and maintaining responsible citizenship (Peterman 1987: 4).

It is not so far fetched to link resident management with the sale of public housing. Ownership is an obvious end result of such a scheme. As White described:

What I really mean by tenant participation...is participation in management itself and the whole realm of the decision-making process, including decisions about budgets, how much will be spent, what it will be spent on, and filling vacant positions on the authority. In fact, the logical conclusion is to carry it through to the actual ownership of public housing projects (Canadian Council on Social Development 1970: 39).

While these warnings should not deter the investigation or promotion of resident involvement in non-profit housing management, it is important to carefully consider them, especially in light of the current review of social programs taking place in Canada. The intention of this thesis, and of most of the literature on this topic, is to promote the creation of healthy communities where residents are able to take some control over their living environments, whether or not they have ownership. It is not to condone or in any way support the reduction of operating budgets in favour of residents doing maintenance and upkeep work themselves. The belief exists that people living in social housing should be grateful for what they have, and therefore should be more than happy to help around the community. While individual residents no doubt have some responsibility to their living environments, the responsibility of providing safe, secure and affordable housing, and the funds to run it properly, is that of government. Decent housing is not a privilege. It is a fundamental human need and a basic human right, and one of the most valuable assets of our society.

3.4 Models of Resident Participation

Examples of how residents participate in decision making about their living environments are found all over the world. Many of these come from less technologically developed countries where 'self help' strategies are increasingly seen as important ways people with low income
provide themselves with shelter. Sites and services and community upgrading, two of the 
most enduring strategies adopted by international development organizations such as the World
Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), recognize the reality that 
the formal sector does not, and government low cost housing programs can not, compete with 
the informal sector, and the people themselves, in providing housing for the urban poor 
(Turner 1976: 135). In many of these projects it has been found that the success of housing 
and environmental improvements is directly related to the degree of resident participation in 
planning and implementation (Skinner et al. 1987: 235).

For example, the Kampung Improvement Program (KIP), a long running community 
upgrading effort in Indonesia's "urban villages" or squatter settlements, has involved residents 
in the drafting, discussion and implementation of improvement plans (Silas and Indrayana 
1988: 69). In kampungs where the residents have been involved from the beginning, the 
resulting sense of pride has resulted in respect and care for the improvements. In other 
kampungs where no participation occurred, the deterioration has often been rapid due to lack of 
maintenance (ibid.: 74 and Silas 1987: 156). In addition, community participation in KIP has 
been a fundamental part of ensuring scarce funds go as far as possible (United Nations no date: 
100).

By studying models of resident participation from developing countries it is possible to gain 
important new information, as well as a different perspective on our own situation. However, 
models of resident participation in the management of social housing which are applicable to 
Canadian non-profit housing come primarily from other developed countries. The models 
presented here do not, by any means, represent all methods of resident participation in publicly 
funded housing, nor will they be directly applicable to every situation. Rather they serve as a 
indication of the diverse strategies that have been adopted as ways to involve residents in their 
housing.
In the early 1970's resident management schemes were first introduced in public housing in the United States and council housing in Great Britain primarily as attempt to regenerate "problem" housing developments (Community Resource Services 1988: 1). These schemes were initiated as last resorts in crisis situations where conventional management had failed, and it was not until after these experiences that the broader potential benefits of resident participation were recognized.

3.4.1 American Models
In early resident participation schemes in the United States, tenants acted primarily in advisory roles or in organizing social and recreational activities which tended to complement rather than compete with the services provided by management (Canadian Council on Social Development 1970: 39). However, it was around the issue of maintenance that residents began to make more demands in terms of involvement. By the 1970s much of American public housing was already 20 or 30 years old, and in a state of disrepair, which in some circumstances was simply being ignored. Residents organized and demanded representation on the local boards and commissions which ran public housing, leading to employment opportunities for residents, participation in policy development including rental policies and the development of social programs which were responsive to the tenants' needs (ibid.: 39 and 40). After receiving a negative assessment by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, resident management was largely abandoned (Peterman 1987: 1). However, more recently, the idea has once again become popular. High profile residents of public housing have become convincing spokespersons that, if not the only solution, "resident management is the best solution to all of the problems associated with public housing" (ibid.: 1).

Peterman, who has written extensively on resident participation in public housing in the United States, has outlined five alternative options to conventional management:

• conventional management with increased tenant participation- tenant councils;
• resident management- resident management corporations;
• community development corporation ownership and management;
• cooperative housing;
• mutual housing association (Peterman 1988: 3).

Cooperative housing and mutual housing associations will not be considered here. Instead they will be discussed under the Canadian and British sections.

**Conventional Management with Increased Tenant Participation-Tenant Councils**

In the United States, resident participation in management was the result of a long and bitter rent strike by tenants of the St. Louis Housing Authority in 1969 (ibid.: 4). As part of the strike settlement tenant advisory councils were established as a way of "promoting and maintaining community spirit" (Simon 1977: 1). Today tenant advisory councils are common in most public housing.

Under this model residents are responsible for tasks such as budget reviews and preparation, and in some cases for screening and orienting new residents and dealing with grievances by and about other residents (Peterman 1988: 5). While this option gives residents considerable responsibilities, it essentially maintains the status quo in terms of power because the authority to go along with the responsibility stays with the housing authority (ibid.: 5). However, Peterman argues, the existence of tenant advisory councils "provides a mechanism which could be used by residents to increase their participation in management decisions" (ibid.: 5).

The main advantage of tenant councils is that they are relatively easy to establish. They do not require any structural or organizational changes, although the commitment on behalf of the housing authority must be present (ibid.: 5). If strengthened, Peterman believes, tenant associations could result in management that is "more responsive to resident needs and desires since residents would have a real say in how their units were operated" (Peterman 1987: 9).
Resident Management- Resident Management Corporations

Resident management in the form of residents forming a corporation to take over all the management tasks of their community started in Boston at Bromley-Heath in 1971 after several years of resident organizing (Peterman 1988: 6). In 1973, as a result of the rent strike in 1969, and after a lengthy period of negotiation and on-the-job training, two tenant management corporations (TMCs) were established in St. Louis to take on the full management responsibility for two housing communities totaling 1,256 units (Kolodny 1981: 136). Based on these experiences, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Ford Foundation initiated the National Tenant Management Demonstration Program in 1976 which involved seven sites in six cities across the United States (Peterman 1988: 6).

All residents over the age of 17 automatically become members of tenant management corporations, and each TMC elects its own Board of Directors (Kolodny 1981: 138). It is argued that not only are residents able, with some training and support, to take over the management of their housing, but that resident managers do a better job since they are closer to the problems and more accountable to other residents (Peterman 1987: 9). In addition, resident management schemes can lead to indirect benefits such as resident pride and a strong sense of community (Peterman 1988: 6). As Kolodny reports,

The problems of housing a population overwhelmingly made up of welfare dependent, female-headed households confronted the TMCs with the need to rethink their roles as managers. To a far greater extent than most other public housing in the country, the St. Louis projects (sic) have developed programs in education, recreation, health, and other social services; special care for children and the elderly; job training; and direct employment (1981: 137).

When evaluated, the National Tenant Management Demonstration was shown to have some positive benefits, but it was also found to be expensive and difficult to implement, and therefore, further expansion of the project was not recommended (Peterman 1988: 7). Other critics of resident management schemes see them as a way government can justify abrogating
its responsibility to provide safe, secure and decent housing (Silver et al., 1985: 213). This model has not worked in all cases where it has been tried, therefore while it may be viable under the right circumstances, it is not a universal remedy (Peterman 1988: 7).

**Community Development Corporation Ownership and Management**

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are probably closest in nature to Canadian non-profit housing than any of the other models. They grew out of the dismantling of American housing programs in the 1980s when non-profit groups such as tenant and neighbourhood organizations, churches and labour unions attempted to fill the vacuum of providing affordable housing for low income people (Dreier 1993: 9). CDCs are usually based in a specific area, with community residents on the Board, and are therefore well grounded within the fabric of the neighbourhood (ibid.: 9).

The style of management adopted by CDCs varies. Many are conventional market rental, while others promote tenant participation. However, tenants always have some involvement through positions on the CDC Board (Peterman 1988: 9). Today there are over 2,000 CDCs in the United States which have built over 300,000 units in the last 12 or so years (Dreier November 1993: speech to the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA). CDCs have traditionally taken over abandoned buildings or developed their own housing, but Peterman suggests they could also take over the production and management of public housing (Peterman 1988: 9).

The advantages of CDCs come from being community based and controlled, which can also lead to economic benefits. As Peterman has reported, in terms of public housing, "their emphasis on community based development would provide jobs, thus increasing the economic well-being of public housing communities and building technical capacity among residents" (ibid.: 8). The disadvantages, in terms of managing public housing, are that many CDCs are either too small or lack the experience to deal with managing large public housing
developments, and that the sale or transfer of public housing to a non public corporation could lead to the eventual loss of units available to low income households (Peterman 1987: 11).

3.4.2 British Models

As in the United States, the impetus for participatory management schemes in Great Britain came from the need to rejuvenate a badly deteriorated public housing stock, and as in the United States it was tenants who pushed for the changes. Publicly funded housing in Britain takes the form of public estates which are run by elected local authorities or councils (Power 1991: 239). In recent years legislation has been passed all over Britain encouraging these councils to involve residents in management. While these measures are often minimal in terms of their legal requirements and powers, they do provide tenants with some rights to information and consultation (Institute of Housing 1989: xii).

These laws and the social conditions on the estates and in council housing have also lead to a large number of initiatives in terms of resident participation. Here three models are examined: (1) Mutual Housing Associations; (2) The Tenant Participation Advisory Service; and, (3) Consumer Advisory Panels. They were chosen on the basis of providing the most relevant information for the Canadian non-profit housing sector. In addition, Britain has seen the publication of many guides or handbooks on resident participation. Two of these are examined in the following section.

Mutual Housing Associations

Mutual housing associations (MHA) have long been popular in Europe and Great Britain, and recently have began to be established in the United States. MHAs are similar to co-operatives, but are unique in that corporations, housing specialists and residents work together to develop and manage housing (Peterman 1988: 11). The type of housing built can be a mix of co-operatives, conventional rental and resident managed units (Peterman 1987: 11). Usually
MHAs are created by groups of people or organizations such as churches, labour unions or community based groups. To join, a household must pay a membership fee, which puts them on a waiting list. Once a unit is obtained, the household receives life tenure with the option of moving to a larger or smaller unit as required. MHAs are structured to support resident involvement, and other membership rights include participation in making policy decisions, setting fee structures and selecting other residents (Peterman 1988: 12).

The blend of 'professionalism' and resident involvement is the main advantage of this option, in that it should work to "ensure the provision of sound management principles guided by resident control" (ibid.: 12). However, in cases where MHAs have become large bureaucracies, are become indistinguishable from a conventional housing authority, with many of the same problems (ibid.: 13 and Peterman 1987: 11).

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) was established in 1980 in Scotland as the "first publicly-funded independent organization to try to work with both landlords and tenants with the aim of encouraging tenant participation in housing decisions" (Edwards 1986: 2). More than half of all Scotland's housing stock is public sector housing, and TPAS grew out of the desire by these tenants to have more say in decisions about their living conditions. In 1980 the Tenants Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act was introduced, providing tenants with security of tenure, the right to a written tenancy agreement and new rights in connection with council housing allocation policies (ibid.: 3). However, unlike the equivalent English and Welsh statutes, the Scottish Act failed to require local authorities to consult tenants on housing management proposals other than rent increases.
Therefore in an attempt to promote community housing initiatives as a way of creating a "more receptive climate of opinion in Scotland", TPAS was established (ibid.: 4). The purpose of TPAS was to:

act as an intermediary body or to fulfill the function of an honest broker...(and)...provide an information and advisory service to landlords and tenants in the publicly-financed housing sector to develop tenant participation in housing management and to assist the formation of housing co-operatives (ibid.: 4).

It is hard to measure the tangible benefits of TPAS. When it started in 1980 none of the Scottish districts had policies on resident participation, and there were only 300 tenants' groups. By its completion in 1986, twenty-two local authorities had policies, nine had hired community development workers, and there were over 1000 tenant groups (ibid.: 18).

While TPAS did manage to put tenant participation on the agenda, it has been criticized for failing to challenge the fundamental issue of power between tenants and landlords (ibid.: 19). Rather than providing a model of resident participation, TPAS is more useful as a guide on how to change attitudes, and promote resident involvement.

**Consumer Advisory Panels**

The concept of a consumer advisory panel comes from the Leicester housing association, which found most current models of resident participation were outmoded for the "present consumer age" (Seviour 1993: 34). The Leicester advisory panel was formulated within a broad strategy of informing, consulting and involving residents in the management of their housing. The strategy included a customer orientation; a commitment to local management; the production of a tenant's guide, in both audio tape and minority languages; written policies and reports; satisfaction surveys; and regular newsletters. It also included association offices on an area basis providing access to members of the housing association; open access to association membership; support for tenant associations, if and when they emerged; and, a resource unit working exclusively on tenant involvement (ibid.: 34).
In Leicester the consumer advisory panel comprised of 13 tenant representatives, equal to the number of representatives on the association's management committee, with which it met on a regular basis. In order to ensure success, the association provided training sessions for the tenants elected to the advisory panel. The advantage of the consumer advisory panel is that it provides residents with a chance to influence policy and practice of the housing association which runs their housing in sustainable and realistic ways (ibid.: 35). However, like resident advisory councils, consumer advisory panels do not provide residents with control over the decision making, and so their ability to create real change may be limited. In addition, the emphasis on residents as "consumers" in some ways reinforces the idea of housing as a commodity.

In addition to these specific models of resident participation, useful guides or handbooks for resident participation have recently been published in Britain. *Housing Management: A Guide to Quality and Creativity* by Anne Power describes the local approach to housing management on housing estates. The Guide is based on the lessons learned from the Priority Estates Project (PEP) which sought to reverse the decline of housing estates by establishing services in local areas through small scale, locally controlled housing projects and by discovering and supporting local leaders. PEP is described by Prince of Wales as having "pioneered a new approach to housing management and resident involvement" (Power 1991: preface). The Guide suggests that a key element of local management is to give residents a say in areas where traditionally they have had none (ibid.: 4). It emphasizes the need to tailor resident participation schemes to the needs of the particular estate or community. Options outlined include tenant associations; estate forums or liaison meetings between tenant representatives and local estate staff; estate sub-committees; estate management boards; and tenant management co-operatives (ibid.: 17).
*Tenant Participation In Housing Management* is a guide put out by the Institute of Housing in conjunction with TPAS. It aims "to help housing practitioners to develop good practice in relation to tenant participation and to monitor its effectiveness and quality" (Institute of Housing 1989: back cover). It attempts to define participation and outline the broad range of ways participation can occur from providing tenants with information to establishing tenant control over certain aspects of their housing. It also sets out the legal requirements and powers as related to participation, the roles different participants play and performance standards (*ibid.*: xiv).

### 3.4.3 Canadian Models

Housing management has not been a primary focus of housing policy debate in Canada. As CMHC reported in 1981:

> Housing management problems have not received much attention in the housing policy formation process in Canada. A great deal more emphasis has been placed on policies designed to increase of new house building (CMHC 1981: i).

However, this does not mean that the topic of resident participation in housing management is new. As in the United States and Great Britain, quite a bit of interest in this topic was shown in the 1970s. In 1970 the Canadian Welfare Council Housing Committee endorsed "tenant participation in housing management as a desirable objective which should be fostered by public programs" (Canadian Council on Social Development 1970: 1). In the same year, the Minister of Housing said in a speech in the House of Commons:

> Another factor that has been under consideration is the whole question of tenant organization and involvement in the management of public housing. We are quite prepared to encourage this sort of thing as a matter of social justice, and we think in turn it will encourage a much healthier outlook and climate all round and remove a major cause of some of the difficulties. Along that line, CMHC has funded a series of seminars on tenant participation through the Canadian Welfare Council which will identify the principles and problems involved (*ibid.*: 2).
One of these seminars, entitled "Who should manage public housing" was held to consider "how and to what degree public housing projects could be made self-governing", and was attended by government officials, managers and residents of public housing (ibid: 1).

However, the interest of the seventies largely disappeared, and by 1982, CMHC reported that "usually tenant participation is restricted to some form of recreation or entertainment committee" (CMHC 1982: 3). An exception to this is co-operative housing which has facilitated and fostered strong communities run by residents. However, in public and non-profit housing, resident participation has been largely in keeping with CMHC's observation. It has not been until recently that a renewed interest in involving residents in their communities has been shown. Some observers, like Dreier, believe that because non-profit housing in Canada is community based, it naturally lends itself to participatory management styles (Dreier November 1993: speech to BCNPHA).

**Co-operative Housing**

Housing co-operatives are incorporated, non-profit businesses organized by people who have joined together to provide their own housing through joint ownership (Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada 1990: 2). Co-ops in Canada are termed 'non-profit' because members do not individually own their own housing, are not entitled to sell their membership for profit, and so, do not have the chance for capital gain (CMHC 1990:4).

Co-operative housing, by its very nature, addresses the larger social needs of a community, while at the same time providing affordable housing. As Klodawsky and Spector have written, the co-op program used "public resources for the effective development of Canada's social capital" (1988: 154). Selby and Wilson see these aspects emerging from two characteristics common to all types of consumer co-operatives. First, co-operatives are intended to serve the social goals as well as the economic needs of their members, and second, co-operatives are a
community-based response to problems (Selby and Wilson 1988: 1). At the same time, co-operative housing addresses Turner's thesis of housing, namely that people need control over and responsibility for major decisions concerning the housing process (Turner 1976: 5).

Members of a co-operative are their own managers:

The co-operative as a whole owns its housing. The resident members collectively assume full responsibility for its management through democratic control and volunteer effort (Co-operative Alliance of BC 1992: 13).

Members are expected to participate in the management and operation of the co-op, from vacuuming the hallways to recruiting and selecting new residents, and through this system of self-management operating costs are reduced (ibid.: 13). However, in some co-ops the day to day maintenance of the building may be done by paid staff or management companies hired and directed by the membership. While this form of housing requires residents to take on responsibility, it also provides them with control:

Co-ownership of the property gives many people, who would otherwise be renters, the opportunity to have a say in the conditions of their housing environment. Self-management requires teamwork and builds a sense of community among the members (ibid.: 13).

As CMHC reported in its evaluation of the Section 56.1 Co-operative Program, "high levels of occupant participation in management and decision-making were found especially in co-operatives" (CMHC 1983: 6).

However, control and reduced costs are not the only benefits residents can gain from co-operatives, there are also opportunities for personal growth and development which come from the:

fundamental premise that members work together to help themselves and solve mutual problems. Through participation in their co-operative, members are able to exercise power and to tailor the co-operative to their own needs and circumstances (Selby and Wilson 1988: 24).

Education is crucial to ensure that participation is effective and informed, "in co-operatives, training is not viewed as a frill, a necessary evil, or even a mere business expense: it is a
matter of principle (Co-operative Housing Alliance 1992: 13). Co-ops receive continuing education and support from co-op federations, resource groups and co-operative management companies (ibid.: 13).

Canadian co-operatives have endeavored to build a strong mixed-income communities by using government funding to subsidize low income members so that they do not pay more than 30 per cent of their income on housing (Selby and Wilson 1988: 14). Approximately 15 per cent of co-op units house rent supplement recipients (CMHC 1990: 6). Therefore, co-op housing works to provide homes to those on social assistance, the working poor and those of moderate and middle income who can not afford to buy their own home.

Women in Canada also benefited greatly from the Co-operative Housing Program. According to Wekerle, who has written extensively on women and co-ops, "Canada has a larger number of women's housing projects than any other industrialized country" (Rooftops Canada 1988: 4). In fact, female headed households occupy about 25 per cent of all non-profit co-operative housing units in Canada (Wekerle and MacKenzie c.1980s: 71). Research has found that despite some design restrictions, female residents are generally satisfied with co-operative living, especially in creating a strong sense of community.

While the benefits of the co-operative model and self-management are clear, there are also drawbacks. Co-operatives rely on the volunteerism of members which can be burdensome, especially to lone parent families. In a paper on co-operative housing, Selby and Wilson noted the challenges co-ops face include keeping members involved after the their initial enthusiasm has waned due the monotony of management and maintenance tasks, as well as resentment and burnout on the part of the more active members (1988: 29). They concluded, "while most people can spare some time to participate in the management of their co-operative, it is unrealistic to expect everyone to make attending co-operative meetings a major hobby" (ibid.:
Selby and Wilson also observed that co-operatives are "highly dependent on the skills of their members and extremely vulnerable, therefore, to loss of management expertise as their membership turns over" (ibid.: 29).

The federal government first started funding co-operative housing in 1973 under its non-profit program, and in 1979 introduced a program specifically designed for co-ops. Between 1979 and 1985, this program funded the creation of more than 35,000 co-operative units, and from 1973 to 1985 housed over 125,000 individuals (CMHC 1986: 1). The Conservative government eliminated the Co-operative Housing Program in the 1992 budget.

Co-operative housing provides an effective form of resident control. In order to facilitate this model in non-profit housing the structure of ownership would have to change. However, co-operative housing does offer lessons which are useful when examining the principle of participatory management in non-profit housing. The following models of resident participation are primarily from non-profit housing in Ontario and were documented in the *ONPHA Tenant Participation Handbook*. Some of these examples have been expanded by references to public housing.

**Tenants as members**

Tenants who are members of the non-profit housing society which manages their housing have the same rights and responsibilities of any other member, and sit on the Board and committees (ONPHA 1993: 23). This approach is not very common within non-profit housing. (As will be discussed later, one of the societies in the case studies attempted this method and had some problems related to *The Residential Tenancy Act*). However, the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC) has been refining this approach since 1974.

At CCOC membership is open to anyone who wants to participate, including staff, tenants, and community members. Described as an "open management system", residents are not
distinguished from any other member. Tenants who sit on the Board or committees do not formally represent other tenants, but like any other Board or committee member, vote and make decisions based on their own judgment and experience. There are no special "tenants" committees. Rather, committees are set up in accordance to management tasks such as finance, membership or property management. Residents may be active in any committee or may bring their concerns to the appropriate committee. The CCOC has never required a fixed number of residents to be on the Board, and on average has found that about half of the Board members are residents. However, recently the CCOC began to consider a by-law change that would require five of the fourteen Board members to be residents. As the non-profit has grown, it has become easier to recruit 'community members', and CCOC wants to formalize its commitment to residents. Finally, tenant involvement is optional. Residents are expected and encouraged to become involved, but they are not required to as in co-ops.

In order to make this form of resident participation effective there must be a membership base which is interested in being involved, and a staff committed to supporting member involvement (ibid.: 27). The CCOC ensures that every committee is served by a staff person so members have the information they need to make decisions. They also have a full-time Membership and Communication Co-ordinator, and a part-time Membership and Communication Officer. These staffing requirements may be difficult for smaller non-profits which have a smaller operating budget.

This approach is attractive because it gives tenants a vote, not just a voice (ibid.: 24). Rather than playing solely an advisory role, residents are equal partners in the decision making, and therefore have real responsibility for their decisions. It also creates links between residents and the larger community, and broadens the perspective of Board and committee, as well as the residents. Finally, it allows people to contribute at the level where they feel most comfortable, and will gain skills, experience and confidence.
However, the approach of residents as members also presents challenges. It does not necessarily create community among tenants. As the ONPHA reported, "community feeling is secondary. The primary issue is tenant control over the entire Corporation" (ibid.: 26). In addition, the complexity of decisions can be overwhelming to both tenant and non-tenant participants.

**Tenants' Associations**

Tenant associations are one of the most common ways residents participate, both in non-profit and public housing. Tenant associations, like tenant councils, are independent, tenant run organizations (ibid.: 29). They are advisory groups, which can make recommendations to the Board, but are not part of the actual decision making. The advantage of this approach is that it is well known, understood and is flexible. Tenants can influence Board decisions and provide services that are beyond the mandate or budget of the society. It also facilitates a sense of belonging to the broader community, as well as building ties within the housing community (ibid.: 29 and Prairie Research Associates 1991: 14).

In order to be successful, tenant associations need to set up links with the Board and staff through regular meetings, a regular item on the agenda and/or by inviting Board and staff members to tenant association meetings (ibid.: 32). Methods of communication between the association and all tenants must be established if the association is to be truly representative. Finally it is important for the Board and staff to be supportive, while not setting up false expectations (ibid.: 35). Societies must be very clear about the extent of power and support, be it financial, staff or attitudinal, they are willing to give to the tenant associations.

**Tenant/Management Committees**

Tenant/management committees are another common way non-profits involve residents. In this model a group of tenant, Board and staff representatives form an advisory group which
makes recommendations to the Board, but does not have powers of its own (ibid.: 38). The strength of this approach is that it ensures the staff and Board hear the perspectives and opinions of residents. It also builds links between all the partners involved in the housing. However, its major weakness, is that tenants have no real control. Therefore the possibility exists that the committee can be misused to give residents only token involvement (ibid.: 39). In order to provide residents with more control, the majority of committee members must be residents. It is equally important to provide ample opportunity for involvement.

Facilitative Management

Facilitative management is not a structure, so much as an approach to management that enables tenants to share responsibility for their housing (ibid.: 41). Advocates of this approach believe resident participation is crucial, but must be facilitated. Structures to enable residents to participate need to be created. The goals of facilitative management are to give a voice to those most affected by decisions about the housing, to build community, and to encourage individual responsibility (ibid.: 42).

While no one form or structure exists to implement facilitative management, the success of this approach requires the non-profit to have a way of gathering tenant input, community development staff, a tenant involvement process and outside support services (ibid.: 42). Both the Board and staff must be committed to the idea, and funding is necessary to meet the staffing requirements. Further challenges include confusion over staff roles, unrealistic expectations and heavy demands on residents (ibid.: 46).

Tenants on the Board

Tenant representatives on the Board of Directors of the non-profit housing society is the most direct way residents can be involved in management decisions, and can be combined with any other approach outlined above (ibid.: 51). Board membership allows at least a few tenants to
have a vote on decisions which affect them, it encourages tenants and non-tenants to work together as partners, broadens the Board's perspective, and give the Board a new group of committed volunteers to draw on (ibid.: 52). Concerns over issues such as conflict of interest tend to arise with this option. However, as the ONPHA points out, tenants on the Board is no different than homeowners being on City Council, and experience has proven that residents do not act in their own narrow self-interest (ibid.: 52).

In order for this approach to be successful, the role of tenant directors must be clear to everyone. The society must think about the obstacles residents may face joining the Board, and structures must be created which allow residents to participate in diverse ways (ibid. 55). In addition, training is crucial so people will have the necessary information to make decisions.

The above models provide an idea of the range of ways residents can be involved in their housing. The models vary in terms of the ease in which they can be implemented, the amount of control they give residents and the amount of resources required to make them successful. The following chapter presents case studies of two Vancouver non-profit housing societies, both of which have attempted to involve residents in management. The two societies have attempted to pursue some of the models outlined above, and their experiences provide useful information on the successes and challenges of participatory management.
4.0 RESIDENT PARTICIPATION IN NON-PROFIT HOUSING: TWO VANCOUVER CASE STUDIES

4.1 Methodology for the Case Studies

4.1.1 Research Approach

A multiple case study was adopted as the primary research method. The intention of the case studies was to discover lessons from the experiences of Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society (ENF) and Red Door Housing Society (Red Door) in involving residents in management. The case studies were qualitative, attempting to learn in depth from the residents, staff and board of these two societies. In addition, the views of people working in both non-profit and market housing as well as government were sought in order to broaden the findings. While the total number of people interviewed was only 37, the interviews provided rich and diverse perspectives on resident participation.

It is important to acknowledge that the interpretations of the total interview results were mine. The people interviewed were allowed to speak for themselves, reflecting their own experiences and beliefs. The sum total of those individual interviews, however, suggested certain patterns which I interpreted. As discussed in Section 1.4, I was careful in recognizing my own biases as the researcher. Instead of pretending to be completely objective, I was up front about those biases and tried to be as explicit about them as I possibly could.

4.1.2 Which Housing Societies and Why

As previously discussed, the case studies for this thesis involved two Vancouver non-profit housing societies: Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society and Red Door Housing Society. These groups were chosen for a number of reasons:

a) both societies are based in Vancouver.
b) the societies are comparable: they were formed at about the same time, and have roughly the same number of communities, which were covered under the same Programs.

c) both groups have attempted to involve residents in the management of their communities (although Red Door is not actively pursuing this at present).

d) both view housing from a women's perspective, and focus on housing single parent families, though, not to the exclusion of other family types.

Because of previous work, I am more familiar with ENF than Red Door as I researched and wrote a history report for ENF in 1992. This allowed me to become familiar with the background of the group, its work and the people who work for the society and live in its housing communities. Since 1992 I have remained involved with ENF, and I am now a member.

Initially the study was to be a comparison between three housing societies: one with a "low" level of resident participation; one with a "medium" level; and, one with a "high" level. ENF was intended to serve as the "high" and Red Door as the "medium", and a third housing society as the "low". However, as I became more familiar with the organizations I decided that a distinction on the basis of levels of participation was wrong, as there were different criteria for deciding what was "high", "medium" or "low" participation. In the end, I decided to simply document Red Door and ENF's experiences involving resident participation, and prepare case studies.
4.1.3 Data Gathering Techniques

Prior to gathering the data, the research received a Certificate of Approval by the Ethical Review Committee at U.B.C. The ethical review process looked at all aspects of my research project from the purpose and objectives, to the methodology, to how 'subjects' were being recruited. Through this review process letters of consent and interview guides were developed (see Appendix 1 for the Certificate of Approval).

The principal research findings of this study come from 37 open-ended interviews and one focus group discussion. The research method for the case study consisted of five steps:

1. contacting Red Door Housing Society and Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society to find out whether they would be interested in participating in the case studies (see Appendix 2 for the "Request To Conduct Research" sent to the societies).

2. contacting board members, staff members, residents and people working in the non-profit housing sector and government to ask if they would be willing to take part in the research by participating in an interview and focus group discussion (see Appendix 3 for the "Letters of Consent" sent to the respondents).

3. conducting interviews and a focus group discussion (see Appendix 4 for the "Interview Guides").

4. analyzing the findings from the interviews and focus group and using them to discover lessons and implications, and to develop policy recommendations.

5. sending copies of the completed research to Red Door Housing Society and Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society. Copies of the thesis abstract were sent
to all participants, and the research was made available to anyone who wanted
to make a copy of it.

The research took place between June and November 1993. I worked with ENF and Red
Door to determine which four communities would act as the focus for the case studies. The
communities were chosen on the advice of both societies and with concern for
comparability. Two of the buildings were built under the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing
Program, and two under the Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program; two are located in
Vancouver and the other two in Surrey; three of the communities are large with more than
40 units, while one is smaller with approximately 20 units. At each building I attempted to
talk with the property or site manager and five residents who had varying degrees of
involvement. I also attempted to interview three board members and the senior staff from
ENF and Red Door. These people were contacted by phone or through direct
conversation. They were all aware of the research project prior to my contact through a
written description of the project that was sent ahead to the housing societies.

I contacted residents in two ways: (1) by asking the property or site manager to give a
"Letter of Consent" to selected residents; and (2) by sending letters via other residents.
One property manager preferred not to play this role due to concern it might compel some
residents to talk to me when they did not want to. I shared this concern, but generally did
not want to make initial contact by telephone or by slipping letters under people's doors as I
thought this would be too intrusive. However, in one case I did make contact by phone.

As is common in a study like this, I felt that in some cases, I was not able to interview as
many people as I wanted. This was especially true with residents. In only one community
was I able to interview five residents, in the other communities I spoke with two to four
people. The lack of response seemed to be due to lack of time or interest. In a Red Door
community that was not part of my sample, but in which resident participation had been facilitated by a community development worker, I interviewed one resident to find out whether or not this had been considered a positive experience by the residents. In terms of the non-profit housing sector, government and market rental housing, people interviewed were chosen on the basis of recommendations and my own concern for a balanced cross section. They were contacted by phone or through direct conversation as I was acquainted with most of them. The following Table shows some characteristics of the people who were interviewed.

Table II: Characteristics of the Respondents

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<th>Staff</th>
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(Sector=respondents working in the non-profit housing sector and related areas).

Of the residents, ten of the fourteen interviewed were single mothers. Three of the people interviewed at ENF were both a Director of the Board and a resident. While both ENF and Red Door focus on the needs of single parent families, the preponderance of women interviewed is attributable to the fact that the majority of people living in non-profit family housing are single mothers and their children, and the majority of board and staff members of both ENF and Red Door are women.

In addition to the interviews, a focus group discussion was held with staff and board members of ENF and Red Door. The group discussion allowed for an exchange of experiences, and was an effective means of gathering and sharing information for both me as the researcher, as well as the participants. A second focus group with residents from ENF and Red Door was planned, but due to conflicting schedules and transportation
problems it did not occur. The absence of this second focus group was unfortunate because the enthusiasm was present. I am sure the chance to share experiences and stories with a larger group would have been both interesting and valuable as a way of forming linkages. To facilitate participation in the research, especially by single parents, reimbursement for any monies spent by participants on childcare or transportation was made available.

In order to maintain confidentiality and the anonymity of participants codes were utilized. The responses of those interviewed were coded according to groups of people: Resident, Board, Staff, Sector, BCHMC or Market, rather than being broken down along ENF or Red Door lines. Individuals within these groups were coded with letters, for example Resident A or Board D. In contrast, the findings were organized according to issues arising from the interviews and focus group, not by categories of people. It was hoped that this would allow the structure of the chapter to flow from the findings, rather than been imposed by my analysis. The findings are not presented in quantifiable terms, instead they take the form of people's ideas and words, which will hopefully provide insights and guidance for those interested in participatory management.

In addition to the interviews and focus group, some of my observations come from my involvement with ENF and Lower Mainland Non-Profit Housing Network, attending the inaugural meeting of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, and a public housing residents' workshop sponsored by BCHMC.

4.2 Introduction to Case Studies

4.2.1 Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society

Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society (ENF) was established in 1984 by a group of women, all single parents, to develop housing geared to the needs of single parent families.
These women realized that "safe, secure and affordable housing was a necessary first step to stability and forward movement in life" (Geary 1992: 1). In the words of the three founding members:

"It came out of a group of single mother's need to effect change" (April English in *ibid.*: 3).

"People were acting out of their own experience, having gone through tough times and recognizing a way out" (Leslie Stern in *ibid.*: 3).

"We came to it with the idea we could do it, we came from a positive place, moving to make life better for us and others like us" (Mia Stewart in *ibid.*: 3).

The purposes of the society, as outlined in its *Constitution*, are:

(i) to acquire and operate one or more non-profit housing accommodations;
(ii) to improve and maintain the quality of life for single parents and their children;
(iii) to meet the crucial need of single parents for appropriate and affordable housing by:
   a) promoting, developing and maintaining housing,
   b) collating and providing housing information;
(iv) to facilitate networking and resource sharing among single parent families in the community at large;
(v) to encourage greater participation by single parent families in the community at large; and
(vi) to do all such things as are necessary for attaining the purposes of the society.

These purposes while they take housing as their base, also refer to activities which could be considered community development. This is further seen in *ENF's Mission Statement* which reads:

Our primary intent is to provide and manage safe and affordable housing communities for female lead single parent families. In recognizing the realities and experiences of female single parents, ENF endeavors to promote its philosophy of creating an environment of opportunity and
empowerment. In meeting these goals, the Society acknowledges that a healthy community is one that is comprised of a cross section of family styles.

ENF developed its first building in 1986 under the Federal 56.1 program, and since then ENF has completed an additional seven communities through the BCHMC program with a total of 255 units throughout the Lower Mainland. Approximately 60 to 70 per cent of the units are occupied by single parents (with 5 per cent single fathers), the balance by two parent families, singles, couples and seniors (ENF Information Booklet).

ENF’s Board of Directors is fairly unique within the non-profit housing sector. The Board includes people from the community-at-large elected by the members of the Society, as well as one Tenant Director from every building elected by the residents. The Tenant Directors are supposed to "act as a liaison to management and representatives to the ENF Board" (ibid.). While the Board functions in fairly non-hierarchical ways, the members elect the standard hierarchical executive of a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, which is required by the Societies Act. The Board also carries out functions through committees and modules which have board, tenant and staff representatives.

In addition to the Tenant Director, each community elects a Tenant Representative who acts as a liaison between the community and the Property Manager and coordinates resident involvement. Each community determines its own internal structure and sets up its own committees on issues such as membership, maintenance, social activities, gardening and mediation. The Tenant Director and Tenant Representatives are resident volunteers. Within each community there is also a Property Manager who is hired by the Society in

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11 At the Annual ENF Retreat in January 1993, the role of the Tenant Director was discussed. There was consensus that this person should sit on the Board like any other Board member and not be directly accountable to only the one community. ENF is currently assessing the way residents are involved, and changes may be made. Residents are part of this process.
consultation with the tenant representatives and other management staff (ibid.). All ENF positions are advertised within the communities to encourage residents to apply. In the Spring of 1994, one of the Property Managers is also a resident. In addition to the Property Manager the Society has a Society Coordinator, an Office Administrator and a part-time Accountant on staff. The staff works within a non-hierarchical model, with the coordinator acting in a facilitative role. The structure is described by one board member as "a shallow pyramid...with a base ten miles long and a lofty peak approximately one inch in height" (Harvey Goodman in Geary 1992: 81).

Resident participation in ENF and the communities is strictly voluntary. This recognizes the need, especially by single parents, for people to step back at times and focus on their own lives:

It is ENF philosophy to include Housing Community Residents in the evolution of the Community in which they reside. It is recognized that participation of residents, while necessary for a sense of true community, may at periods of time be impossible for certain individuals. Undue pressure to participate must not be expected of individuals (ENF Information Booklet).

ENF has evolved over the years, there have been times when crisis management has taken over due to fast growth, and at the 1993 Retreat the Board decided to take a hiatus from development to focus on the Society's own organizational structure. While ENF has a high level of resident involvement, especially when compared to most housing societies, there are communities where some residents do not feel really part of the decision making process. Recently ENF embarked on a reassessment of resident involvement. The intention is to be clear and honest about what resident involvement means. Despite challenges, ENF remains an organization committed to participatory management.
4.2.2 Red Door Housing Society

Red Door Housing Society (Red Door) was founded in 1984 by members of the Red Door Rental Aid Society (RDRAS). RDRAS provided assistance to people in search of affordable rental housing, similar to the YWCA Housing Registry which presently operates in Vancouver. As a rental aid service, RDRAS realized the extreme need for housing that many renters face, and the difficulties and stigmas they encounter in the private rental market. Therefore, when funding for RDRAS ran out, they pursued the idea of building and managing non-profit housing themselves.

With the assistance of Terra Housing Consultants, a non-profit housing resource group which guides sponsor organizations through the allocation and development phases of the Non-Profit Housing Program, Red Door completed its first housing community in 1986, the same year as ENF. As with ENF, this housing was built under the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program. Since then, Red Door has completed an additional seven communities through the Provincial Non-Profit Housing program and has a total of 330 housing units throughout the Lower Mainland.

Red Door Housing Society was incorporated in July 1985. The purposes of the Society, as outlined in the Constitution, are:

(a) To acquire lands or buildings by purchase, gift, transfer, lease or otherwise and to maintain and operate such lands or buildings on a non-profit basis for the purpose of providing low cost housing to persons in need in British Columbia.

(b) To educate its members and the public with respect to the housing needs of low income persons and families.

(c) To educate members and tenants regarding self-management and tenant control.

(d) To participate in other housing related issues (Red Door Housing Society Constitution).
Red Door also has a list of 18 principles, established in 1988, which they call their "Basis of Unity":

1. Housing is a right for everyone.
2. All housing should be non-profit.
3. Everyone should have a place to live that is:
   - affordable
   - safe
   - clean
   - free of pests
   - accessible
   - healthy
   - spacious
   - close to shopping and public transportation.
4. Everyone should have a place to live in the community of their choice.
5. Everyone should have a say over their housing conditions.
6. People's community should be supportive of their needs, i.e. daycare, recreation, meeting areas, support groups.
7. People need spaces to foster community.
8. Children need indoor and outdoor play areas on site.
9. Older people need places to sit, garden, have hobbies.
10. All housing units should be wheelchair accessible.
11. Housing design should foster neighbourliness.
12. Housing should be designed to accommodate all disabilities.
13. Social housing will foster a positive community image.
14. We will promote housing to fill existing gaps, i.e. women 40-55, low income singles under 40.
15. Housing will blend with existing environment or improve upon it.
16. Pets can be an important asset to homelife.
17. Educating tenants is important to developing a safe, friendly supportive community.
18. The existing community has a responsibility to help foster social housing as a great place to live (Red Door Housing Society Basis of Unity, April 11, 1988).

Like ENF's Mission Statement, Red Door's Basis of Unity has a definite community development tone to it, recognizing that housing is more than simply four walls or a roof over people's heads (Board A).

Red Door Housing Society's organizational structure is fairly conventional. The members of the Society elect a Board which can have no fewer than five Directors. The Bylaws of Red Door state that "the management and administration of the affairs of the Society shall be undertaken by a Board of Directors" (Red Door Housing Society Bylaws). Although there is no clause in the Bylaws excluding tenants from being members or sitting on the
Board, these positions have always been held by people from the larger community, and, indeed some board members have reservations about tenants serving on the board.

Staff at Red Door include the Executive Director, an Accountant, two part-time maintenance staff and six part-time Site Managers. The title and job description of the Site Manager has changed over the years. Originally the position was called "Housing Community Manager" whose source of authority came from being hired by the Board. The job description of a Housing Community Manager included tasks such as rent collection, rent arrears follow-up, processing move-ins and move-outs, maintaining tenant files, handling tenant complaints, promoting good relations, overseeing on-going maintenance, income verifications, office/clerical duties and reporting to the Executive Director of Red Door. In addition, the job description stated:

Red Door Housing Society would like to think of our managers more as community organizers. A great part of your duties will involve organizing the tenants and assisting them with tenant councils, parent participation daycare, ad hoc committees and small fundraising ventures (Red Door Housing Society Housing Community Manager Job Description).

Tenant Councils organized community events, developed community rules and published newsletters. Tenants were also expected to contribute to the community by doing some maintenance.

Red Door has undergone a restructuring over the last few years, mostly in response to a crisis in the maintenance and repair of their buildings. Red Door grew very fast receiving three project allocations within two years, and as one board member commented, "we weren't ready" (Board D). These problems, compounded by the lack of money for maintenance and support for running the buildings, resulted in BCHMC demanding changes in the property management style. The organizational changes lead to a different job description and title of the community managers. Now called 'Site Managers', they do
not have responsibility for community organizing, and focus more on the financial, administrative and maintenance tasks of their job.

In addition, the decision making structures have changed. Red Door no longer organizes Tenant Councils. It is now up to tenants if they want to organize them, and in only one community, where community development took place, is a Tenant Council functioning. Therefore, for the most part, residents are not presently involved in the management and decision making in their communities. It is recognized that Red Door needed to focus on its organizational structure and management style, and although resident participation suffered, most of the residents, staff and board members interviewed felt things were improving. Despite the problems and changes Red Door has faced, the philosophy of the Society is still pro-resident involvement.

4.3 Principal Research Findings

4.3.1 Management Issues

Non-Profit Housing Management

From the interviews it became clear that management style varies from housing society to housing society, depending on their priorities, goals and organizational structure. However, the management styles of ENF and Red Door are quite similar, differentiated most by structures of resident participation.

When asked what the tasks are that make up management, the board members and staff of Red Door and ENF identified aspects referred to in the literature. These included finance and administration such as rent collection, inspections, reporting to CMHC or BCHMC; maintenance such as janitorial work and day to day upkeep; and tenant relations such as filling vacant units and maintaining a good relationship with the residents. It is interesting to note that tenant relations was almost always listed last by the respondents.
Residents, when asked what they considered important aspects of management, also talked of maintenance, administration and finances. However, the emphasis focused more on issues of tenant relations such as responding quickly to resident's requests, maintaining ongoing contact and good relations with residents, helping to create and maintain a positive relationship between residents, being available and accessible, and enforcing rules. One issue referred to continuously was the importance of management taking resident concerns seriously:

The system has been to fill out a work order to get maintenance done, some things still haven't been done...it sometimes seems things are not treated seriously, or when they are promised they don't happen...it can be very demoralizing (Resident L).

The property manager has to make decisions and prioritize...to her a complaint is something on paper, but we have to live with it all the time (Resident I).

The biggest difference between ENF and Red Door's management style, is ENF's philosophy on resident participation. It is not always easy for property managers to enact ENF's philosophy. As one staff person said, "the priority with BCHMC, as funders, is to look after the buildings, and with ENF it is to care about the people who live there" (Staff E). These priorities are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can be in conflict and when this happens, staff members tend to find themselves in the middle of that conflict. While the philosophy encourages resident participation, this is not always what happens in reality. In some of ENF's communities there are no tenant directors, tenant representatives nor committees, because no one wants to spend the time on these activities. In other communities, participation peaks and wanes, and yet these communities do not necessarily function any better or worse than those with high levels of participation. Therefore, the staff sometimes ask "is participation the residents' agenda or are we imposing it on them?" (Staff A and Staff E).
While Red Door's staff used to facilitate some community development, it has not done so since BCHMC told the housing society to focus on the maintenance, financial and administrative aspects of management, in other words, to be a landlord in the conventional sense (Board A). From the interviews with tenants of the Red Door communities it became clear this aspect of management and the opportunity to participate in decision making was missed. As one resident observed, "management is not just about collecting rent, it is about facilitating workshops and helping people build skills" (Resident L).

Table III, on the following page, lists the specific tasks of housing management and provides an idea of who is responsible for what within ENF and Red Door. The issue is not necessarily who carries out the task, but more who decides. From this Table it is apparent the financial and administrative aspects of management are dealt with exclusively by staff members and the board. The difference between the two housing societies is that residents sit on the board of directors of ENF so they are involved in financial and administrative decision making.

Resident involvement seems more likely to occur under the Maintenance or Tenant Relations categories of management. Some of this may be paid employment, such as cleaning a unit after a move-out or being hired on contract to do the grounds keeping. In some of ENF's communities tenant committees may be involved in tenant selection and the development of community rules such as courtyard curfews. In Red Door communities residents also have the power to set community rules. In the past these decisions were made through Tenant Councils, but currently only one community has a functioning Council, although community meetings still occur. Residents are not involved in tenant selection at Red Door, although recently there was resident involvement in a staff hiring. Issues of resident involvement will be explored further in Section 4.3.2.
### Table III: Non-Profit Housing Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Task</th>
<th>ENF</th>
<th>Red Door</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rent collection/arrears</td>
<td>PM*</td>
<td>SM**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Occupancy Agreement</td>
<td>PM/Board (tenants)</td>
<td>SM/Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NHA/Societies Act/Operating Agreement</td>
<td>PM/Board (tenants)</td>
<td>SM/Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• income verification/subsidy</td>
<td>PM/BCHMC/CMHC</td>
<td>SM (same)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• files/records</td>
<td>PM/Accountant</td>
<td>SM/Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• banking/bookkeeping/payments</td>
<td>PM/Accountant</td>
<td>SM/Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• managing budget/replacement reserve</td>
<td>PM/Accountant</td>
<td>SM/Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAINTENANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• day to day upkeep/cleaning</td>
<td>PM/tenants (pd.&amp;volunteer)</td>
<td>SM/tenants(pd&amp;vol)/maintenance staff (repairs only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• grounds keeping</td>
<td>PM/tenants (pd&amp;volunteer in their private areas)/contracts</td>
<td>SM/tenants(pd&amp;vol)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• general maintenance</td>
<td>PM/tenants (pd)/trades</td>
<td>SM/tenants (pd)/maintenance staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• major repairs</td>
<td>contractors</td>
<td>contractors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TENANT RELATIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tenant recruitment</td>
<td>PM (waitlist &amp; advertising for market renters in 56.1)/BCHMC (waitlist)</td>
<td>SM/BCHMC (same as ENF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tenant selection</td>
<td>PM &amp; tenant committee</td>
<td>SM (some tenant involvement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• communication (PM/BD-tenant)</td>
<td>PM/tenants (tenant director/tenant representative)</td>
<td>SM (tenant council if present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tenant requests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• maintenance</td>
<td>PM</td>
<td>SM (tenant council if present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• community</td>
<td>PM/TD/TR/committees</td>
<td>SM (tenant council if present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• community rules</td>
<td>tenants/Bd./PM</td>
<td>SM/Bd (tenant council if pres.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tenants' rights</td>
<td>PM/tenants/Advocacy groups</td>
<td>SM/tenants (tenant councils if present, community meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• resource</td>
<td>PM/TD/TR/Rental Tenancy Branch/Advocacy groups</td>
<td>SM/RTB/Advocacy groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Property Manager  **Site Manager
The skills needed to be a property manager reflect the complex nature of the job. When asked what these skills were, one staff person listed good communication and listening skills, acceptance of diverse family types and lifestyles, the ability to disengage while still being compassionate, and finally, office and organizational skills (Staff E). Residents listed skills such as having empathy and not being judgmental, listening and being a good communicator.

Of the six ENF and Red Door staff interviewed, only one had previous experience in housing management. More often they had experience working in collectives and cooperatives, in community development or social work. Part of the reason for this is the belief that management skills can be learned, while the necessary "people" skills come more with experience (Board C, Staff C and Staff E). As one board member commented, "ENF doesn't always hire property managers with management experience because this is easy to learn" (Board C). This Board member, who also lives in an ENF community, believes tenants prefer property managers with a solid community background and who will empathize with the realities of residents.

As a tenant there is a big difference between property managers who have no kids and business background, and those who have lived in non-profit housing and have kids (ibid.).

Of the six staff interviewed, two have lived in non-profit housing.

The more technical aspects of housing management may be easier to learn, but some of the property or site managers interviewed thought it would be helpful for them to have some training around property management and maintenance (Staff F). While CMHC apparently allows money to be allocated from the budget for staff training, BCHMC does not provide this kind of support (Staff E and Staff F). One property manager who wanted to take a course on property management with the Co-operative Housing Federation had to pay for it herself because BCHMC refused to provide the necessary funding (Staff D). It is
interesting to note that BCHMC does provide funding for training its' own property management personnel in public housing.

Availability of funding also determines the amount of time property or site managers spend at the housing communities. Of the four property managers from ENF and Red Door interviewed, two were close to being on site full time. One worked 32 hours a week at a site with 41 units, the second 28 hours with 46 units. The other two worked part-time, 15 hours a week with 22 units and 17.5 hours a week with 46 units. A lack of funding means staff must focus on the property management and maintenance aspects of their jobs, and rarely have time to do more community development activities, especially as there is no line item in the budget to pay for this type of activity (Board A, Board C and Board E).

From the interviews there sometimes emerged a discrepancy between what the property managers saw as their job and residents' expectations. This usually revolved around rule enforcement. The interviews revealed that different residents have different ideas about rules, some want very clear, black and white rules, while others want more flexibility. Some residents are seen to rely on the property manager as the problem solver, rather than solving their own problems (Resident L and Staff E). They believe the society and property manager have the responsibility to enforce what they see as basic rules. Other residents do not want the housing society or property manager to be involved in their lives or inter-personal relations with their neighbours. As one resident stated:

> If Red Door comes in and solves all of my problems, they are stunting my growth. I need to grow and learn, not to be told I'm the victim and will continue to be one (Resident C).

This puts the property manager in a difficult position, and it can be extremely exhausting. Therefore staff members felt it was very important to have policies and procedures written down to help guide them in these situations.
There are other challenges related to managing non-profit housing. While attempting not to stereotype the communities and the people who live in them, some people described the Provincial Non-Profit Program as creating "ghettos of low income people" (Board D). The lack of diversity in incomes in some of these communities can lead to related social problems. The intention of the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program was to mix income groups in the hope of creating healthy communities. Therefore they have the market rental units\textsuperscript{12}. However, this too can create problems. In some Federal 56.1 buildings there is a lack of "market" renters which has lead to the perception among some residents that these units get maintained better in order to attract tenants willing to pay "market" rent, and that these people can move in, without having to go through the regular screening process (Resident H).

Non-Profit Housing Management versus Market Rental Housing Management

The people interviewed generally believed there are differences between non-profit and private market rental housing. The biggest difference identified was the not for profit aspect, "hopefully our decisions are made without money and profit as the bottom line" (Board E). The not for profit aspect was also referred to in more social terms. One staff person described non-profit housing as being:

organized along a different paradigm, with more principles of give and take and working with tenants...the market sector is more a "fear of" model--fear of eviction, rent hikes...it is based on property ownership (Staff B).

The flexibility of this paradigm comes, in part, from the realities of the communities themselves. As one board member explained, "in non-profit housing there are extenuating social issues which can not be ignored" (Board B). Another described non-profit housing as being "willing to consider all sorts of needs" generated by different ethnicities, family types and socio-economic situations (Staff C). For example, for those residents on social

\textsuperscript{12} Although referred to as "market rental units" these units still rent for less than they would on the private market because their rent is set at the "Lower End of Market" (LEM).
assistance and who tend to be at home a lot, the housing community can become their world (Staff D). They may have very different needs and perceptions of the community than a resident who is rarely at home. Effective management must recognize and be flexible enough to deal with these needs.

It is actually this personal element which many of the staff interviewed felt was the most important part of their job, "it is important to interact as human beings, not just the management" (Staff E).

Non-profit housing societies are more aware of the problems that single parent and low income tenants face, whereas in the private market they couldn't care less if people are taking money from food to pay their rent...I would like to think non-profit housing societies direct tenants to resources to help themselves (Board E).

"Red Door is interested in the people, not just the money...they are concerned with the human factor, whereas privately owned apartment managers seem more concerned with money" (Resident F). This concern for the people who live in the housing, can also be more intrusive for residents than living in private rental housing, but it is generally "intrusive in a positive way" (Resident I).

For the residents, one of the most important differences between non-profit and market rental housing was the opportunity to participate in management. Generally, residents do not have a say in private rental housing (Board C and Market A). However, in non-profit housing, if the opportunity to be involved exists, it can have a substantial impact on the attitude residents have about their living environment. One Red Door resident felt the management of her community was very different when there were chances to participate in the decision making and the property management staff organized activities for the children. However, once the Tenant Council stopped functioning, she believes her community became much like any in the private market (Resident A). Resident participation can also contribute to a greater feeling of community. "In privately owned places you are by yourself...the relationship with
the manager is primarily business and there is no interaction between tenants" (Resident G). However, in non-profit housing "people pitch in more, and there is more community feeling" (Resident E).

While resident participation was seen as an important aspect in differentiating non-profit from market rental housing, there were some reservations. Rather than feeling like they could participate if they wanted to, some residents expressed the opinion that they, and other residents "should" participate in activities and tasks around the community (Resident J and Resident K). Another resident commented that helping out around the community was often due to a lack of funding for maintenance (Resident E). Thus, for some, participation may become an unwelcome burden. Further, not all residents considered resident participation structures the best option. After experiencing both a resident committee structure and a structure which is more reliant on the property management, one resident believed the latter was a better model (Resident H).

Finally, while there are clearly differences between non-profit and market rental housing, some respondents warned that the management may not differ very much (Staff A, Staff E and Resident D). Whether or not it does depends largely on the organizational culture which has developed within individual housing societies. Therefore, it is important to assess each non-profit housing society and community individually, and not make any broad based generalizations regarding non-profit housing management.

4.3.2 Resident Participation Issues

Definitions of Resident Participation in Management

As in the literature, the interviews revealed many different ideas about what resident participation means. The spectrum of definitions or understandings ranged from residents
participating in the maintenance of the building to having complete control over decisions affecting their communities.

Resident participation could be anything...if all you want to be involved in is the maintenance of your unit, that's fine...but it can also mean social, organizational and maintenance involvement (Sector A).

"Resident participation can mean a whole range of possibilities" (Sector C). This person who works in the non-profit sector, observed that it most commonly means residents organizing social events for the community, organizing programs and services for themselves independently of the non-profit society, and being involved in maintenance from keeping their unit neat and tidy, to keeping the entire development clean, to being involved in maintenance decision making and being hired to do maintenance (ibid.). Less commonly she has seen residents involved in all aspects of the day to day management and running of their communities through management committees, sitting as members of the Board of Directors of the non-profit housing society, and making up the majority of Board members (ibid.).

Another person described resident involvement in terms of levels of participation. Level one is a general awareness of the community and knowing what goes on in that community. Level two is participating neighbour to neighbour, in informal ways. Level three is a more formal way of participating by attending meetings and being part of an organization, but it can also be ad hoc and geared to specific events (Board F).

Others gave responses which represented two main forms of participation. The first sees residents involved in the community in a hands on, physical way. Maintenance is an obvious part of this, "residents helping out around their communities in maintenance, being responsible for their units, looking out for the place, taking pride" (Staff B). Another staff person commented that "resident participation should mean tenants being responsible for
their space, kids and themselves and respect others... (to) make it a cleaner community" (Staff D). While it may be beneficial for both the community and individuals to have residents involved in maintenance, it can not be stipulated as a term of tenancy under the *Residential Tenancy Act*. In addition to maintenance, this form of participation includes aspects of community relations, "maintenance is an obvious part of it (resident participation) ...but it is also organizing activities for the community" (Staff C). Examples would include community potlucks, gardening and the sharing of childcare (Resident J, Resident E, Resident C and Resident K).

The second form of participation has residents playing more of a decision making role in their communities, and includes aspects of "choice and control" (Board E). Residents can be involved in developing community rules, or sitting on the Board or forming committees (Resident E, Staff A and Staff F). It means "decision making, having power and responsibility" (Sector F).

Resident participation means actual input into the decision making of management policies... it means if you are participating in the decision making, and you are participating in the actual upkeep of the building (Board C).

Residents can participate in design policy, management policy, in all aspects... it is fundamental to a sense of ownership... this permeates into the way the projects are lived in which affects the management... where there is a sense of ownership there are less problems (Board B).

Resident participation means everyone putting in the time and involvement... doing for ourselves without calling in authorities, not needing to relay on others to solve our problems (Resident M).

However, while this form of participation gives residents a degree of power, there are limits which were identified. Resident participation means "allowing people a say in the running of the property for the benefit of the community and the housing society, but we can't be under allusion that you have complete say in management... the Property Manager
has the ultimate authority" (Resident G). In addition, it is important to acknowledge the difference between non-profit and co-operative housing, "residents should have some influence over property management and community decision making...(but) not control, that's a co-operative, maybe we need a hybrid between conventional ownership structures and co-op management" (Sector B). While one person who works within the non-profit housing sector believed resident participation should mean "management control", she explained:

this doesn't mean co-ops...in co-ops the assumption is there that everyone has the responsibility to participate. In a resident controlled non-profit housing, residents have the ability to participate (Sector C).

Neither of the above forms of participation is mutually exclusive, residents could be involved in aspects of one or both, "joining committees, caring for units, policy making, interpersonal relations, membership, social activities and fundraising" (Staff F). However, both of the above forms of resident participation imply organization and facilitation by non-profit housing societies. As hinted at under the aspect of community relations, some of the most important forms of participation in terms of building community and providing mutual support are those activities which neighbours simply do for each other (Resident H and Resident C). They are the "supportive things that happen in a community" (Board F). These activities include sharing childcare, trading children's clothes and having a community party:

Resident participation does not necessarily mean showing up at meetings or raising money...it can be the little voluntary things we do like maintaining security and looking out for each other...the things people do without recognition. The little neighbourhood things we do are really important, they are the greatest things which enhance my life here. They happen and have nothing to do with the Board (Resident I).

There are things people do that are not quantifiable or measurable, but they are ways of participating...it is all looked at from the property management level, which is not a realistic point of view (Board D).
While these activities may help build community they do not really give residents any control over that community. This in part explains why the activities included in the first form of resident participation are probably easier to envision and implement than those of the second form, especially if they are considered within the framework and parameters of the current non-profit program (Staff B).

All of our housing programs and forms of resident participation are limited by the basic assumptions of our society. Therefore what it (resident participation) can mean has never been allowed to happen nor has it been envisioned (Sector C).

ENF and Red Door, at least before the changes, may be two exceptions to the general lack of visioning around resident participation within the non-profit sector. From conversations and observations it is clear that ENF is perceived within the sector as a society which has really tried to involve residents. It is also apparent that resident participation is considered by many as a radical concept. This has meant that ENF and Red Door have had to struggle to implement their visions and philosophies. As one ENF Board member put it "we are trying to be a circle in a triangle world and it is very hard" (Board C).

**The Importance of Resident Participation**

Everyone interviewed agreed resident participation in non-profit housing management is very important, not only for the residents and the community, but also for the housing society and staff. For the housing society it provides valuable input, and ensures movement and growth (Board E). For the residents it gives them some perception of control over their environment, and provides the opportunity to learn skills which are transferable to other areas of their lives (*ibid.*). One person who works within the non-profit housing sector stated that resident participation had proven benefits she had read about, and experienced first hand. They included decreased maintenance, workloads and costs; greater satisfaction for the management staff; continual learning opportunities for the housing society; increased safety and security; personal satisfaction for directors and
tenants; housing developments which are not "social housing" but are an integrated part of the community; children functioning better together; spaces and amenities being used to a greater degree; personal growth and advancement by all people involved; and if not a greater level of health, a greater ability to deal with "dishealth" (Sector C). However, the benefits mentioned most by those interviewed fall into three main categories, all of which had resulting positive affects. The categories were: (1) better decision making, (2) increased control for residents, and (3) heightened quality of life.

The most frequently cited benefit of resident participation was the opportunity for management to learn from the perspectives of residents:

The people involved in management have to understand and hear the problems of the tenants...we don't live there, we can't possibly understand what it is like to live there (Board B).

I strongly believe in resident participation...tenants can bring their experiences and perspectives, only they know that and only they can bring it...management can learn from it, if you want to know what the needs of the tenants are, ask them (Board C).

Management needs to listen to the tenant voice (Resident C).

It was acknowledged that residents, through their experience of living in the housing, possess information and knowledge which are not only valid, but also extremely valuable. By involving residents in decision making, the decision makers understand better the needs of residents, and the decisions which are made better meet the needs of the community (Resident E).

If you want to build communities that work you have to listen to the grassroots voice and involve them (Board C).

The "tenant voice" is important because "otherwise you end up with a bunch of people talking about something they don't know about" (Staff E). As one person, who works for a non-profit society which builds and runs housing for people with mental illness observed, the ability to participate "allows consumers to feel they have a voice" (Sector E).
It is a reality check for me, I get a different perspective as an administrator...it reminds why I am doing this job...it probably benefits me in the long run more than the tenants (*ibid.*).

The second benefit of resident participation frequently cited was the increased control residents gain over their living environment. An important part of creating a healthy community comes from involving those most affected by the decisions, "if you are affected, you have to be involved" (Board F). Participatory management provides the opportunity for residents to affect their environment, contributing to a sense of control and ownership, which are fundamental to any community. In this sense, resident participation is not only valuable, but necessary as "it allows people to take pride and ownership, some power in the relationship or process" (Board G). "Tenants having the ability to participate is how it should be, you should have control over your environment" (Sector D).

In non-profit housing this control may be even more important than in private market rental housing (Board F). As one person who works in the area of tenant's rights said, "it is not just a question of resident participation, people (living in non-profit housing) are forced to live in the community, therefore involvement is fundamental" (Sector B). However, it was emphasized that resident involvement must be supported. "It is irresponsible to allow families to live in the community, but not have structures for people who live there to be involved" (Resident L). In non-profit housing, the densities are often high, there are often lots of children, at least in family housing, and amenities and space must be shared. Therefore, it is necessary to develop community rules, and beneficial to encourage ways so residents can live together in a supportive community. Resident participation in management is an important element of both:

It is necessary for this type of place, we share space, therefore it is necessary to come to consensus on rules, how we are going to share these spaces. It is desirable to develop a sense of community and organize social events (Resident I).
The third benefit identified relates to an increased quality of life which can result from resident participation, both for the community in general and for individual residents in particular. Resident participation is "critical to making it a neat place to live and keeping it a good place...it shouldn't just fall to management to be the eyes and ears, therefore the participation of residents is needed" (Staff C). The approach which has the Property Manager as the "eyes and ears" of the community is a very "top down, hierarchical and patriarchal view" (Staff C). By allowing residents to take some control and responsibility, they are better able to solve their own problems.

If residents are involved in management people can solve problems together rather than individuals just screaming at each other and moving out (Resident A).

Good communication is crucial to the functioning of any community. Resident participation helps the flow of communication between tenants and property management staff, as well as amongst themselves, leading to better relations all round (Resident J).

For residents, the opportunity to participate can have far reaching and inter-connected results. "Resident participation, if looked at in terms of concentric circles, is a way to learn skills and move into new spheres...it increases choices and options for movement" (Sector C). These concentric circles also extend to a heightened feeling of commitment to the community which comes from a sense of control and responsibility.

Resident participation is valuable because tenants feel more committed to the community if they are involved...people who chose to become involved feel better about themselves—they learn, use their time constructively and grow personally (Staff A).

When people are made to feel they are a part of and are able to contribute to something, they are more likely to care about it (Resident F). Participatory management facilitates this, "it gets people involved and lets them take pride in their community, it helps raise people's self esteem and makes them feel needed" (Resident M). For some residents participating in their community is a way of contributing to society. While there are many different and
valid ways of contributing, it is interesting to note that for some the opportunity to participate in their housing communities had positive effects in terms of self-esteem:

It felt good because I was trying to do something for the community and the children. It felt good to see positive results (Resident K).

It is a privilege to live here, participating is a way to give back...it is very rewarding (Resident L).

Finally, the benefits of resident participation ultimately come down to attempting to create better living environments. The benefits cited above are probably best summarized in the following comment:

Being involved makes it feel more like this is my home, not their home which they just lent to me (Resident E).

**Issues of power and control**

What is apparent from the interviews is the view that no one can really 'give' power to another person. This type of scenario sets up a power dynamic of 'us' and 'them' and is condescending to those who are being 'given' the power. What is possible, and more empowering, is the creation of opportunities where people can take some degree of control over the decisions which affect their lives. As already indicated, issues of power and control were frequently discussed in the literature on resident participation. These issues also arose in the interviews. While it is relatively easy to agree that residents should have power and control over their living environments, the key is "how much and about what issues?". Related to this are issues of training and community development, issues of clarity in terms of decision making and the realities imposed by the Program and other pieces of legislation such as the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

There was broad consensus that residents should be involved in management and development tasks. Specific areas of involvement mentioned in the interviews included:

• tenant selection
• the hiring of staff  
• design and development of the housing complex and units  
• community decisions and guidelines  
• maintenance and gardening  
• organizing social gatherings and maintaining community security  
• conflict resolution within the community  
• tenants' rights  
• organizing training programs

Tenant selection was one of the most frequently cited areas where residents should be involved, "tenants should have a say about who lives in their community" (Staff D). However, most people felt there should also be Board and staff representation on the selection committee. Tenant selection does not occur within a policy vacuum subject only to the opinions of those on the selection committee. Regulations and pieces of legislation such as the Human Rights Act set out clear criteria for selection and prohibit discrimination. Further, 25 per cent of all Provincial built non-profit housing units are housed directly by BCHMC, and while the housing society can make suggestions as to community needs, neither they, nor the tenants have control over these selections (Staff A). Concern was raised about the lack of screening of these applicants.

For residents it was very important to have a say in the rules and guidelines of the community. Some felt there is an over abundance of rules in their communities, while others felt the rules were not enforced consistently enough "there are lots of rules and they seem to change arbitrarily, with whoever is in charge" (Resident E). In the communities where residents did not feel they had a great deal of say in the 'rule-making' there appeared to be more resentment and mistrust than in those communities where residents feel they are involved. However, while there was a desire to be involved, most of the residents
interviewed stressed participation in their community was not the only, nor the most important facet of their lives. They also spoke of the need for privacy, "I don't want to get to the point where I see my neighbours everyday" (Resident B). Therefore in developing resident participation schemes, different needs, for example privacy and control, must be balanced.

The question of how much control residents should have is very complex. Different levels and degrees of power exist, and these have direct bearing on the types of relationships established within the society and the housing community. In addition, there are external forces which will have an effect, not only on the degree of power residents can take on, but also the form of relationships established. As examples, respondents were asked if residents should have input, be consulted, be part of a partnership or have control. When asked "how much control should residents have", the majority said residents should have as much control as is possible, but they were also careful to place their answers within the context of the existing housing programs and societal norms.

The issue of control, rather than being considered in the sense of 'should' or 'should not', seemed to be more a matter of what people felt comfortable with or thought was realistic. Some of those interviewed believed residents should have control over their living environments, "who else should have control if not the residents?" (Sector D).

There shouldn't be a limit to areas where tenants have input, participation and control...there are situations, for example accounting where the Accountant has expertise, but tenants should have input and make decisions (Resident N).

Resident control was discussed primarily in terms of residents taking part in the decision making process. While it was pointed out that ENF is essentially tenant managed because the majority of board members are tenants (Sector C), the board is not made up of residents alone, therefore the residents do not have total control. Some people did not have any
problems with the idea of residents having complete control, "why not have a complete tenant board?" (Sector C).

   Personally I would feel fine if the Board of ENF was solely tenants, and all the managers were tenants. If ENF was completely tenant run, it would be a form of self government (Board C).

   However, for most the idea of residents having total control was not necessarily desirable nor realistic. The reasons for this varied. For some it was based on the need to keep the perspective of the board broad and diverse, "Communities can become very insular, outside members bring a bigger picture, but it should not be the charity model of working "for" someone" (Sector A). For others, it was based on the concern that residents may not have the necessary skills or interest to manage their own housing.

   Not control because if some tenants were in control, the place would go down hill...partnership is a must and input is important (Resident M).

   Residents need to identify their own issues and take control over the community, but it comes down to whether they have the skills...I would love to see tenants call only once a month for guidance (Board D).

   Part of this was also the acknowledgment that people are at different levels of personal development when they move into non-profit housing, "Red Door complexes were supposed to be self-managed but many people are in crisis when they move in, so they can't take over the management...people are at different stages and have different expectations and interests" (Resident D).

   However, rather than turning these concerns into reasons for not involving residents in any of the decision making, most people thought commitment by the society and training for all of those involved was important. "It would be interesting to have a commitment to move toward control and provide skill development opportunities" (Resident L). "A forum for input is needed...control, partnership and consultation are possible, but other work is necessary first so the group grows and moves together" (Board G). In order to make good decisions, people need information, and it was considered unfair to ask people to make
decisions without the necessary information. "Resident participation should go as far as legally possible, but we should be prepared to set up processes in a way that people making the decisions are informed" (Staff E).

Input from tenants would be a start, partnership would be ideal...but it means more than just inviting them to be on the Board...need community development workshops, otherwise it is token involvement because they are participating without a full understanding of the problems and issues at hand (Board B).

In addition, it was emphasized that with power comes responsibility, both on the side of the housing society and staff, and the residents. If the housing society is going to ask residents for their opinions, they must listen and take those opinions into account when making decisions, "input is good, but people on the other side must listen and act" (Staff B). On the other hand residents must be made aware of the responsibilities which are part of making decisions, "if the community gives power over to tenants, then tenants must accept certain responsibilities and obligations, otherwise they are making decisions in a vacuum" (Staff A). There was some agreement that the degree of responsibility residents should be expected to take on be at par with the amount of control they have (Staff A and Resident G). The residents interviewed were aware of these responsibilities and willing to take on some, within certain limits.

I am willing to take on responsibilities from maintenance to office stuff to coordinating tenant stuff, but it is limited because I have three small kids and want some private time (Resident B).

In family housing, the reality of single parenthood must be considered in any resident participation schemes (Resident D).

While not undermining the importance and benefits of resident participation, some people interviewed pointed out that any participatory management scheme has to function within the present reality. "The landlord-tenant relationship exists, but there is room for more" (Board G). Participatory management may provide a sense of ownership and an
accompanying sense of responsibility to the residents; however, the real ownership still lies with the society. "It is a feudal landlord situation...it is not their place and ultimately they do not have a say, and therefore setting up unrealistic expectations is unfair...it is a very hierarchical situation" (Staff B). This 'reality' places certain restrictions on the amount of control residents can have:

It can't be a partnership because of the economic reality of Property Management...control yes, but not control in the real sense. It is influence and participation in the decision making. If you are going to do something you must consult first, and if you aren't going to listen to tenants then you must explain why, whether it is City Bylaws, money matters etc. (Resident G).

The real question behind all of this is "who owns this building?". The answer, especially if residents take control in ways the housing society does not agree with, is often "we (the housing society) own this building and you can't mess it up with your pets" (Board E).

The bottom line is that Red Door Housing Society is the management, tenants can be involved in changing the rules, but the rules have to be there (Board D).

I can influence the decisions and put up front grievances, but residents can't make the decisions. We can go as far as paying the rent allows. You must be realistic and know your limit...the property is not ours, but we live here and pay rent (Resident G).

Consultation and input are important, control should be shared...partnership is not attainable at present. It is not possible to share certain things because of the Operating Agreement which sets up expectations and clear cut lines of authority and responsibility (Staff C).

Therefore, the amount of control residents can have is limited by the fact they do not own the building, "the bottom line is they do not make the final decision" (Sector E). Not only are there legal and program restrictions, but financial and liability issues also exist, "what non-profit housing is going to be responsible for a building, but hand over control to the tenants?" (Sector B). However while these 'bottom lines' exist, there is room for a sharing of control, "there is a financial bottom line, the Board has to take some responsibility, but
these decisions and processes should be open to the community, flexibility is essential (Sector A).

Some board members expressed concerns about tenants being members of the board. "Personally in my heart I say yes to control and tenants on the Board, but in reality there are problems involved" (Board A). These concerns focused on issues of impartiality, privacy, and conflict of interest.

I would support tenants on the Board, but there are issues that should be dealt with on another level (Board D).

It is asking a lot to have all tenants privy to all information, maybe it would be better to have a couple of representatives (Board G).

However, there were also concerns which related directly to power. For instance, the possibility of tenants taking over the society was raised, and it was suggested that two Boards, one for the society and the other for the tenants, might circumvent this situation. Another possibility voiced was that of tenants wielding their power to evict someone they did not like, "sometimes the wrong people end up involved in the decision making...it can be used to get rid of the 'undesirable' tenant" (Sector B).

Others, while they understood concerns regarding conflict of interest or self service exist, did not feel these concerns were necessarily valid. One person asked why it was assumed non-resident board members did not have the same bias problems as residents and why people should be expected to be unbiased about issues relating to their housing (Sector C). However, this person also emphasized the importance for every board member, resident or non-resident, "to know that they are making decisions for the whole community not just themselves" (Sector C). As a board member pointed out, "all directors carry the same responsibilities and duties, whether they are tenants or outside community people" (Board C). At ENF, one board member stated that "Tenant Directors are asked to leave their tenancy at the door" and this has positive effects, "tenants gain greater understanding of
issues the Board and staff deal with, rather than seeing Board as 'them', only out to get 'us'' (Board E). While residents gain a broader understanding by being involved with the Board, rather than asking them to leave their tenancy at the door, which may or not be actually possible, it may be better for the housing society to realize and accept that resident participation could mean they lose some of their power (Sector E).

It is important not to ignore the power dynamics which exist between the property or site manager and the residents. The property management staff has very intimate knowledge of residents' lives and has the ability to evict people. This gives them power, which exceeds that of any one resident (Resident N).

There is a place where I want to be equal with them, but it is schizophrenic because at another level I have immense power and they know this (Staff E).

Most tenants see the manager as the one who calls the shots and makes the final decisions over tenant's lives (Resident B).

This power can result in imbalances and "us"-"them" tendencies, even if the property or site manager tries not to use it in this way (Resident J). Therefore, the power that the property management staff has must be kept in constant focus.

Concerns were also expressed about the potential for small groups of active residents to take control and make decisions for and affecting the whole housing community. There are two separate issues at the heart of these concerns. The first is "how do we know the tenants involved are representative?" (Sector A). One staff person commented that often the people who rise to the occasion are people who fit into the present system, but are not necessarily the most progressive (Staff C). In addition, it was acknowledged that many tenants may only be seeking affordable and secure housing, not participation in management. In these cases it can be easy to end up with a small group running the community (Staff A). The second issue is almost the converse of the first, burn-out of the
few people who do all the work. This problem had been experienced first hand by many of
the residents interviewed:

  When lots of people didn't show up at meetings, it made a small group feel
  like they were doing everything...meetings became "complaint" sessions,
  and felt like a waste of time (Resident A)

While small group control and burn-out are very real problems, they are common to
volunteer organizations. Therefore rather than letting them become barriers to resident
participation, models of participation need to be based on real democratic structures and
processes must be established to ensure these structures are accessible to all residents of the
community (Board E and Staff A). Participatory processes are not necessarily easy. They
take a lot of time, energy and commitment, "if we are to allow the process to function,
things could move very slowly...we have to get beyond personal agendas and have
commitment to community" (Resident L).

**Barriers to Resident Participation**

The greatest barrier to resident participation is the lack of opportunity to be involved. This
is the case with most housing societies in British Columbia. However, in the case studies
of ENF and Red Door issues of accessibility, questions of responsibility and accountability
and the existence of certain attitudes were identified as additional barriers.

1) **Lack of Access to Processes/Structures of Participation**

The first barrier identified was the lack of access to the processes and structures of
participation. As one person warned, "you have to be careful not to disenfranchise people
who can't get involved" (Sector B). One reason residents may not be able to get involved
is a lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and information (Staff A, Staff E and Board
D). Residents may not be aware of the possibilities within the housing society's
philosophy and expectations (Resident H, Resident J and Resident L). In fact, many
residents from both ENF and Red Door described an absence of direct contact and communication with the Board. Residents may also lack information on what is happening in the community, and therefore not feel a part of the decision making (Resident K). Not having the necessary skills and training can also result in a lack of confidence, and feelings, on the residents part, that they can not perform functions like chairing a meeting (Resident M). Related to this is the acknowledgment that many residents of non-profit housing are coming through a crisis in their life, and may not have high levels of self-esteem and confidence (Resident D and Resident E).

While a lack of information does not foster participatory management, misinformation and misunderstandings can result in feelings of discouragement and resentment among residents. For example, one resident, described how, on moving in, she was under the impression that participation was a required part of the tenancy. Therefore when she saw others not volunteering to do anything she began to feel the resentment of "broken promises" (Resident K). Discouragement has also occurred when someone has volunteered to do something, and that offer has been ignored, leading to a feeling of 'why bother' (ibid.).

Another issue related to accessibility is a lack of time on the residents' part (Staff E, Board E, Board F, Resident C and Resident D). Part of this is attributable to the reality of single parenthood (Resident C). As referred to in the section above, resentment and burnout of a small number of involved residents is also a problem. Further, the refusal by some tenants to recognize their own responsibility, can lead to disharmony in the community and make it difficult for the property or site managers who are not hired nor trained as social workers (Staff E). The issues of lack of time and burnout also affect the board and what it is able to take on (Board A). This is heightened if the society is in a state of crisis management. If the society is busy trying to keep the basics together, it is hard to do any 'extras' such as
facilitating resident involvement (Board B). In order to help get over these barriers, systems of support and motivation, as well as skill development are necessary (Resident M and Sector A). However, the time and resources are simply not available in most cases.

1B) Processes Which Disenfranchise

In addition to a lack of skills and information, organizational structures meant to facilitate participation may actually disenfranchise people. For example, one person questioned whether shoving a letter, written in English, under a resident's door was an effective form of communication (Resident L). Another example is meetings—board meetings, committee meetings and tenant meetings. Many of the respondents questioned whether meetings were accessible to all residents (Sector B, Resident N and Resident H). Meetings can be intimidating and boring, especially if there is a reliance on Robert's Rules of Order, which some people may not be familiar nor comfortable with. The way decisions are made, be it in a hierarchical or consensual manner, whether people can bring issues forward in an easy way, and the language used can all affect whether or not residents feel welcome and able to take part in the decision making (Sector D). The provision of childcare at meetings was considered essential to facilitating participation, especially in family housing where the majority of residents are single parent families (Board D and Resident D). As one person pointed out, the issue of accessibility is linked to the need for the 'professionals' to rethink how they do things, from childcare and more community oriented meetings, to developing a different set of expectations in terms of what results should come from those meetings (Sector E).

2) Issues of Liability, Responsibility and Legality

The second set of identified barriers related to issues of liability, responsibility and legality. As already discussed above, questions of liability, in terms of finances and confidentiality, arose (Staff A). In addition, some staff members brought up the issue of insurance
coverage if a resident is hurt while helping out around the community (Staff D and Staff F). The issues of responsibility, as related to ownership, were discussed in the previous section. Similarly, it was pointed out that ultimately the Property Manager is responsible for the building (Staff E). The obvious, and understandable, response to this is for the property manager to take total control over decisions affecting not only the building, but also the community, thereby deterring resident participation. In addition, there are the expectations of the funding bodies which want to ensure that the housing society, not the tenants, are in charge (Staff A).

These issues are related to social attitudes. While it is important to ensure residents are well informed, it is equally crucial to have an informed board, staff and funding body. In terms of participatory management, part of the information necessary deals with what participation is and how it involves power (Staff C). It is necessary to have funding the bodies on side (Board G), and therefore the attitudes of BCHMC and CMHC toward resident participation are important. However, many people interviewed did not feel that either, but especially BCHMC, were very supportive of the idea. While both funding bodies have power over housing societies, BCHMC is more directly involved in the housing because the subsidy is based on a suite to suite formula, whereas CMHC provides a subsidy covering the entire community, and so is less directly involved (Board C). The perception of some is that resident participation on a formalized level is not supposed to happen according to BCHMC (Staff B and Board A). ENF has been successful in achieving one position for every community on its' board. However, if they had not set this precedent with their first building which was built under a CMHC run Program, some question if they would have been able to continue the practice in BCHMC buildings (Board C). While it was acknowledged the attitude at BCHMC is changing in terms of resident participation, one board member believed they are primarily interested in promoting Tenant Associations which are separate from decision making (Board C). This person also
questioned what the reaction from BCHMC would be if the Tenant Associations started "making waves" (Board C).

The *Societies Act*, *Operating Agreement* and *Residential Tenancy Act* (RTA) do not place any actual restrictions on resident involvement (Staff A, Staff E and Board C). However, they are written in a language based on power and submission which is difficult to decipher (Sector A), they prescribe fairly hierarchical and conventional methods of organization (Board C), and can act as barriers depending on the way they are read and interpreted. The greatest confusion seems to be around the application of the RTA. The RTA states that it does not apply to:

> residential premises in the respect of which a non-profit cooperative or society, as defined in the regulations, is the landlord and a member of the cooperative or society is the tenant *(Residential Tenancy Act: 4).*

The concern here focuses around tenants as members of the society and whether, if they are members, they are still covered and protected by the RTA. If they are not, housing societies lose their ability to deal with residents in the terms set out in the RTA, and residents lose the protection of the RTA. "Tenant rights should not waived as a result of being involved" (Board B). One potential way of getting around this dilemma is for the society and tenant member to sign an agreement stating the tenant is in good standing and the society will treat them as any other tenant under the RTA (Sector A). However, in the long run the RTA probably needs to be amended.

3) **Disempowerment Within the Communities**

In addition to the institutional barriers, there are levels of disempowerment within the communities which hinder participation. This is partly due to stereotypes relating to gender, low income, and the landlord-tenant relationship (Board F). Another is the perception of social housing, "when I moved in here I realized I had an attitude about socialised housing, I pictured ghettos of New York" (Resident L). Related to these
stereotypes is fear at the community level. From the interviews it became clear that some residents are afraid of making requests or voicing complaints for fear they will be evicted, while others are afraid of doing something wrong and having their children apprehended (Board A, Resident C and Resident L). This fear stems, in part, from a lack of information and support regarding tenant rights (Resident D and Resident N). As one resident stated, "residents won't express their voice unless they have power and unless they feel their housing won't be affected by what they say" (Resident N).

The style of management can also shape whether or not residents are able or want to participate. If the management is restrictive, if there are lots of rules about what residents can and can not do, and if the rules are not reasonable, residents begin to feel they can not do anything (Resident D and Resident E). The Property Manager can also have an affect, depending on whether they are consultative or controlling (Resident I). People do not want to participate if they feel they are being controlled, "committees formed and then controlled by the Property Manger do not lead to empowerment and do not encourage people to participate" (Resident N). In contrast, many tenants are used to having management do things for them (Resident E), and so they may be reluctant to become involved and begin doing things for themselves and their neighbours. Some of the residents are younger single mothers who have come from very dominated backgrounds, and are not used to making decisions for themselves (Staff D). One person interviewed who works in the co-operative sector observed that this response is also true in new co-operatives where people try to make the chair into the landlord (Sector F).
4.3.3 Effective Participatory Management

Making Resident Participation Effective

While barriers to resident participation in non-profit housing exist, the interviews also identified many ways of making resident participation effective. Perhaps the most important message to emerge from the interviews was the need to create a diversity of ways of participating. This allows residents to choose how they will participate, and to become involved in things in which they are interested, feel comfortable and from which they can learn (Board E). What works for one community is not necessarily going to work for others, and constant review of participatory processes to ensure they are functioning in the way they were intended is necessary (Board F). However, the main areas of response, in answer to the question "what would make resident participation effective and feasible?" related to: education and training; resources for community development; the need to question assumptions and develop structures of accountability; institutional changes; design; benefits for residents; and, ensuring resident participation is part of the residents' agenda and gives them real decision making power.

1) Education and skill development

Education and skill development were identified by almost all of those interviewed as being a crucial part of making resident participation effective. It was suggested that ideally resident involvement would occur on its own, but in reality there needed to be encouragement through skill development and education (Sector A, Sector E, Staff D, Staff E, Board B, Board D and Resident M). Educational workshops and guidelines around decision making, such as how to run a meeting or use consensus, were considered important in terms of creating an informed decision making process which involves residents (Staff E, Resident J and Resident L). The formation of Tenant Associations was seen by one board member as a vehicle through which residents could develop skills (Board D). However, one resident who had been involved in a Tenant Council, believed
training was necessary first so personal issues would not dominate the agenda (Resident D).

The desire for training has to come from the community. While training opportunities should be available, residents should not be pushed into them (Board F). It is also crucial to acknowledge and respect the skill and expertise which already exists within the communities and the housing societies (Resident D and Board E). It should not be assumed that residents of non-profit housing do not have the skills to organize their community.

Low income people, especially women, develop a lot of organizational skills and these are transferable to housing, but too often these women do not recognize the skills they have (Board E).

Therefore it is also important to allow people to use those skills. As one staff person commented, "it is an oxymoron for the Property Manager to run tenant meetings, let the Tenant Representative or Director organize them, let people develop their own skills" (Staff C). Support groups for residents to share experiences and stories of what they can achieve may also be a way of encouraging residents who do get involved (Staff C and Resident E). While it is important that residents acknowledge their own skills, it is equally important for the housing society to believe in and trust those skills (Resident D).

While the need for providing education and training for residents was raised, there was agreement this training was also needed for board and staff members (Sector C and Staff A). As one person commented, "why do we expect these people to make decisions without the necessary skills?" (Staff A). Board members not only make decisions which affect people's lives, they are also liable for their decisions, and so must be informed as to their rights and responsibilities. Both Red Door and ENF have held orientation workshops in the past for new board members, but neither society has done so on a consistent basis. The idea of a 'buddy system', where an experienced board member acts as a mentor for a new
board member was suggested as another way of providing board members with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions (Staff A). Support and training are also needed for Property Managers. Clear guidelines and regulations, as well as training sessions are helpful, but organizational structures such as regular staff meetings are also important, both for the opportunity they offer to share information and to provide mutual support (Staff E).

2) Access to information and clear lines of decision making

A related issue which arose from the interviews was access to information. In order for resident participation to be effective, the society and staff must provide information to tenants on resident participation, what is and is not possible, as well as the philosophy and expectations of the housing society (Staff C, Board D, Board F and Resident H). Freely available information not only helps avoid misunderstandings between residents and the staff and society (Resident F and Resident G), but also leads to an informed tenant voice, realistic decisions and a sense of ownership (Sector B, Board C, Staff E, Staff F and Resident G). While residents need to know where to go if they have a problem, this flow of information should be two-way, and their concerns should not be filtered before getting to the board (Resident G).

Further, there is a necessity for providing information on "power imbalances", such as class, poverty and race, which exist in communities, thereby addressing the invisible tensions which arise as a result of societal bias (Sector D and Board G). This information and the need to recognize power and influence are also important at the staff and board level. Education around democratic decision making processes (Board E) and the need for information on tenant’s rights so people are not afraid to speak out (Resident D) were also suggested. Both ENF and Red Door have attempted to provide information to tenants through newsletters, posting the minutes of board meetings and any other information
which is pertinent to the communities. In addition, the property or site managers have regular office hours. However, from the interviews with residents, there appears to be the need to provide more information about major changes, what is happening and why, in order to avoid misinformation from getting around.

The interviews also revealed that clear lines and boundaries of decision making help to make resident participation effective. It is absolutely crucial to be honest about what is and is not possible around resident participation, otherwise false expectations are created (Staff E, Board C and Board E). Philosophically housing societies such as Red Door and ENF want to say to their tenants "this is your home, make it your home". However, as referred to the section of Power and Control, there is a larger context at work which may sometimes require that ideals be set aside in order to ask "what is possible?" (Staff C). In addition, there is the element of power. Housing societies, including ENF and Red Door, may tell residents they can take control, but when residents do so in ways with which the societies do not agree it is easy to take back that control.

Tenants are getting really frustrated with us (ENF) because we send the message that tenants can have choice and control, whereas in everyday life we are saying "no" you can not do that (Board E).

As one staff person commented, problems occur when residents are told they can have the power to do everything and anything, and then they have the rug pulled out from under them (Staff F). The following statement sums up the experiences and feelings of many of the residents who were interviewed:

When we moved in they gave us the impression that this was a safe, secure environment and they would take care of all the problems. They did not say they didn't have the time. They should have said "this is what you make of it"...don't make false promises, or if a situation changes, explain it to the residents and find a common solution (Resident C).

Therefore it is important to be clear about the process of decision making and everyone's role within that process, "resident participation is desirable as long as the lines of decision making are clearly defined for everybody, and a realistic approach is taken" (Staff A).
An important part of making the boundaries clear is for the housing society to establish policies and procedures which can be translated into guidelines regarding resident participation (Staff D and Staff E). These guidelines must be reasonable if they are to be respected by the residents, "management shouldn't tell us how we should live our lives" (Resident C). Rules which appear to usurp parental responsibility, such as banning children's wading pools, have lead to feelings of resentment in some communities (Resident D). If there are reasons for such rules, i.e. insurance concerns, then these should be explained. The guidelines should not be so strict as to discourage innovation, and they must also be flexible enough to respond to changes in the communities and the housing society (Board F). One resident suggested that BCHMC should have clear guidelines regarding the housing society's management responsibilities and obligations to the residents (Resident L).

3) Community Development

Education, training and even access to information can be seen as part of a larger community development goal within non-profit housing. The interviews revealed that community development and the resources needed to support it were considered vital to creating healthy communities and encouraging resident participation in non-profit housing. By community development, most of the respondents seemed to be referring to activities which in Peter Dreier's words create communities where people have choices and feel they have a stake-- places where people want to live (Dreier, November 1993: speech to the BCNPHA).

While providing the opportunity is obviously fundamental to resident participation, it is not enough (Sector C). Tenant involvement should be tenant controlled (Resident N), but it may need to be facilitated. Therefore, a recognition of the need for community development is required (Board D, Sector B and Sector C). Collective resident
organization through community development may lead to the discovery of a strong tenant voice within non-profit housing communities (Resident B and Sector B). Community development should originate from the community and be meaningful to the community; it is not about laying out a map for the community to follow (Board B).

Many of the people interviewed felt that within non-profit housing communities funding was needed to hire staff to focus on community development. As a consultative process, community development requires facilitators. However, there was concern about a perceived shift from seeing residents and non-profit housing societies as able to solve their own problems, and as having skills which they share in order to do that, to a point where outside "experts" were needed as problem solvers (Board E). It was also emphasized that community development workers should not be social workers, as many low income people are "social worked to death and do not need housing societies doing it too" (Board D). As ENF members and staff often state, "we are not a social service agency" (Staff C).

Instead, the role of a community development staff person would be to work as a facilitator within the housing community, bringing the residents and other "stakeholders" together to help them vision about they want, and to provide support until it functions on its own (Sector C). However, success depends on how this is done, as one resident commented, we want to create interest, but avoid social engineering...we need to ask people what they want, but there will be differences of opinion, so we have to find common ground as a basis (Resident G).

The community development staff person who worked at one of Red Door's communities, helped tenants run committees and meetings, develop their skills, discover skills they never realized they had, and provided motivation (Resident M). Rather than working for the community, community development people work with the community, encouraging residents to become involved, acknowledging the skills which are present and providing, but also cultivating, leadership (Board E, Resident K and Sector B).
The community development worker must also be answerable to the residents. Tenant support is fundamental if community development is to work (Sector B). Whether or not this person is a tenant, they need to have the proper skills, take time to get to know the community, establish a sense of trust, come from the tenant perspective, work with and represent tenants, and ultimately empower people to represent themselves (Resident N). There was some concern that community development could be perceived as patronizing by the residents. One resident felt it was not necessary because residents already facilitated this kind of process themselves by making and enforcing rules (Resident I). However, it was pointed out that every community needs community development (Sector B), and if a sense of community was not present then it was incumbent on management to look at what could be done to build it (Resident L). As one resident stated, "we need to learn to be a community, and we need help doing this" (Resident H). However, while community development was seen as a way of encouraging resident participation, it was pointed out that people will still not become involved if they do not want to (Resident J).

Broad consensus emerged from the interviews that the roles of the property or site manager and community development worker need to be separated. At ENF, the property manager is expected to play some kind of community development role. However, often the staff do not have time to facilitate resident involvement, and there is some questioning about whether or not this is a role they should be expected to play (Staff A and Staff B). The roles of the property or site manager can be hard to reconcile with community development, (Board D and Resident L), especially as many of the issues relate to power and control (Board G). It was felt that someone doing community development could not also be in the position of evictor, as this person needs to establish trust (Staff A, Staff C, Sector C and Board E). As already indicated the role that the property manager plays in terms of eviction is powerful and difficult to reconcile with community development. The community development worker would work closely with the residents, housing society and property
manager to create a consultative processes within the community, "we almost need two people around, one to deal with tenants and another for the technical stuff" (Resident H). One resident suggested a "tenant coordinator" was needed (Resident N).

Recently, at a grassroots women's conference in the United States, some ENF members heard about the National Congress of Neighbourhood Women which has separated management into two positions: rent collector and community development worker. The two positions operate as a team, but fill different roles. The community development worker helps the community achieve whatever goals they set, as well as acting as liaison between the community and "officials", while the rent collector does more of the "technical stuff" (Board C). The key to separating the two jobs is having them operate as a team. Otherwise it could become a "good cop, bad cop scenario", where everyone would go to the person who was more accessible (Resident J), exacerbating the "us" and "them" feelings which already exist in many communities (Resident I).

Community development activities, whether in the form of workshops or workers, require money. Currently, operating budgets do not provide a line item for community development (Staff A). It was agreed by the respondents in order to make resident participation effective, funding and support is needed for community development, and it should be considered an investment in our society and the future (Staff A, Staff D, Staff E, Board B, Board F, Board G and Resident L). Community development activities should be valued and paid for, and not be dependent on volunteers, especially single mothers and those least able to volunteer (Board D and Sector E). Further, it was suggested that community development should start before the community is built in order to allow the people who will be living there time to discuss how they will live together (Board G). ENF was actually able to do this with their first project because the Federal 56.1 Program provided start up funds, something the Provincial Program fails to provide. Funding is
also required to support resident activities and community needs such as conflict resolution, mediation, childcare and translation for meetings (Board B, Board D, Board G, Sector C, Resident A and Resident L). Presently, there is a small amount in the BCHMC budget to support such activities (BCHMC C). It was also felt by some that this money should be controlled by the community.

In terms of funding specifically for the position of a community development worker, one idea was to have BCHMC or Social Services provide money for a certain number of workers for housing communities throughout the Lower Mainland. The program would be run by a committee of housing societies and regulated by government (Staff A). At the staff and board discussion group there was debate about whether this funding should come from the Ministry of Housing, Social Services or Health.

4) Question the assumptions about non-profit housing

Funding for some of the above activities is an important part of making resident participation feasible and effective. However, equally fundamental to its success is the need for a change in attitudes and the creation of structures which will provide ongoing support. Resident participation schemes demand that we question the assumptions about non-profit housing and how it is run. Assumptions such as efficiency need to be examined because participatory processes take both a lot of time and energy (Sector C and Board B). An important part of this is related to the need "to go out and find out what residents want rather than giving them what we think they want" (Board D). In order to do that, expectations need to change. Housing societies and funding bodies must allow the residents of non-profit housing communities "to create their own visions rather than insisting they live our visions" (Board E). The conventional idea of housing as service provision, as "us" knowing what is best for "them" needs to be challenged (Sector C).
Even the language, "we" helping "them" is condescending and implies a power dynamic which must change if residents are to participate on an equal footing (Staff F and Sector A).

5) Design

Design was also identified as an important element in terms of encouraging resident participation, and the assumptions made in this field must also be questioned. Design impacts on the morale and pride of a community, which in turn effects whether or not people want to be involved in that community. The most often mentioned concern regarding design was that it reflect the realities of the people who live there, "something geared to more than just putting a roof over one's head would make the morale better" (Staff D). Lack of private space and outdoor areas, a disregard for the needs of children and safety issues, and the lack of acknowledgment that a large number of people, including small children and teenagers, will be living in a small space are common design issues which impact on how residents feel about their housing (Sector B, Resident B, Resident C and Resident D). Consulting residents on what does and does not work in the design of their communities was seen as a way of improving future housing (Resident C), and is something both Red Door and ENF have done in the past.

6) Institutional changes to government funding bodies

Institutional changes to government funding bodies, and in particular BCHMC, are also required in order to make resident participation effective. The attitude of government, at least in B.C., has recently become much more conducive to resident participation and empowerment. However, there is still a feeling a change in direction is needed from BCHMC in terms of supporting and valuing initiatives such as community development (Staff B, Staff C, Staff E and Board A). A supportive and open-minded bureaucracy is critical to the success of any program or policy (Sector C). Therefore, a real belief and commitment to the principle that "housing is a right" is required not only by politicians, but
also bureaucrats (Board F). This belief, or lack of it, will impact on programs and whether or not they encourage or facilitate measures such as resident involvement. For example, one person asked why residents would bother getting involved if the housing is presented as short term and they are expected to move (Sector C). If it is not your home, it limits your commitment to the community. Another person questioned the reliance on volunteer labour as a way of developing non-profit housing (Board F). However, while it is easy to criticize government and its bureaucracies, it is also important to acknowledge BCHMC is not a monolithic structure, it is actually a process facilitated by individuals with their own values and biases (Staff C). It is also important to recognize the changes taking place at BCHMC in terms of organizational structure. Recently, a store front community relations office was opened at the Burnaby main office, and from the interviews there appears to be an interest in and commitment to the idea of resident participation (BCHMC A, BCHMC B and BCHMC C).

7) Grassroots commitment by residents

Many of the respondents, particularly those with ENF, stressed the need to ensure the desire for participation comes from the residents and is part of the residents' agenda, not solely the philosophical belief of the housing society (Sector A, Staff A, Staff B and Staff C). Expectations and visions related to resident involvement may not be those of the residents, and should not be imposed (Staff A and Staff C). Ways of assessing whether or not residents want to be involved, such as door to door surveys, may be useful to ensure there is grassroots commitment to participatory management (Staff A).

We have to remember where the tenants come from, not the ones who have been on the Board for three years...what are their perspectives, ideas, problems? (Staff E).
8) **Real benefits to residents for their participation**

Further, resident involvement must be worth while, or residents will not participate. Resident participation has to be a pleasant and positive experience and must result in benefits (Staff B, Sector F and Board E). As one board member suggested, means of participation need to be created where residents are involved because they want to be, not because they are forced to be (Board G). Opportunities for skill development, increased self-esteem and a better living environment are potential benefits of involvement (Staff F). However, benefits such as paid employment, access to community amenities and perhaps to equity housing are also important (Board C, Sector A and Sector F).

9) **Structures of accountability**

As talked about in the Barriers section above, with power comes responsibility (Staff C and Board C), and therefore structures of accountability are required if resident participation is to be effective. In order to create structures of accountability, there needs to be a recognition that no one is completely powerless, and everyone uses their power in ways that benefit them (Staff C). One long term resident commented that she was tired of ideas about which people suddenly become impassioned, but did not want to take responsibility for (Resident H). The staff were also clear that if residents take on responsibility for defining policy in their communities, they must also take on responsibility of following through with those policies.

There are always ramifications of policy decisions, but it always seems to end up being the property manager who has to deal with those ramifications. This is not a very empowering situation. Empowerment is about taking on all responsibility, not part of it (Staff A).

However, there is also the need to remember that the residents live in the communities and would have a hard time doing the "dirty work" such as evictions and conflict resolution (Staff A, Staff C and Staff F). Resident participation in decision making requires residents to make a commitment, and take the time and energy necessary to make informed decisions (Staff A). There was also the feeling that if someone did not attend a meeting on a certain
issue, they should not complain about the decision made at that meeting (Resident G and Board C).

As already stated, the residents interviewed were aware of the responsibility that goes along with decision making and were willing to accept it. However, structures need to be set up which recognize their realities. One idea was to set up committees so that more than one person is responsible (Resident C and Sector C). In some co-operatives an ethic of behaviour which is preferably explicit, and exhibits tolerance and respect, is drafted by the community, so people can be called on their behaviour (Sector F). As one person who works in the co-operative housing sector stated:

> Resident participation is all about decision making and having power and responsibility. There can be other ways residents participate where management gives up part of its responsibility, for example permission to have a garden or use a common room, but this is not really participation, it is more permission to use resources of the community. If residents were allowed to control some of these things they could lead to participation, and with that comes responsibility and accountability (ibid.).

10) **Real, not token, decision making power**

Finally, in order for participatory management policies to be effective, residents must have real, not token, decision making power (Board C). If given the chance, people who live in non-profit housing can be part of proactive solutions to community problems and be the driving force behind community building (Resident C). However, in order to want do so, residents must feel sincere commitment from management, and know their input is really wanted and respected (Resident L). They also need to know the staff is supportive and open to input (Resident H). People need to feel useful and listened to (Sector B). They become disappointed and upset if given the chance to become involved, but not to make a difference (Sector F, Resident D, Resident J and Resident K). Therefore, if the housing society encourages the creation of a Tenant Council they must listen to it, even if it is saying things they do not agree with, otherwise the result is bitterness and distrust among
the residents (Resident C and Resident D). The need to listen and follow through is not only true for housing societies, but also for resident leaders who represent their communities.

What this all comes down to is creating a sense of ownership which comes from having some control over one's living environment. As one staff person commented,

People need to feel a sense of ownership of their community, whether it be in neighbourhoods or in non-profit housing...people feel so disempowered, they need to feel power at the community level (Staff A).

Building up a sense of ownership comes in part through the ability to participate in community decisions. However, if residents are able to see the differences they make to their community, then it can also encourage participation (Staff F). Developing a sense of ownership in any community does not occur over night, it takes time for people to feel they are a part of something and to build up feelings of trust that are needed on all sides (Board B). However, as the above sections demonstrate, it is worth all the time and effort if a healthier community is the end result.

**Involving Residents**

Resident participation is only effective if residents are willing and able to participate. However, one of the issues which arose frequently during the interviews was the problem of getting people involved, even when the opportunity existed.

Fundamental to encouraging participation is making the commitment to include everyone (Staff E). This means questioning assumptions about participation. "Non-participation does not equal lack of interest" (Staff A). "It is not a failure if everyone does not participate" (Board C). Participatory success does not correspond to whether or not the garbage is being picked up. This may understandably be an issue for the staff, but it should not be a measuring stick (ibid.). In a democracy, people must have the opportunity
to express their views; however, if they chose not to participate, it is their decision (Resident G).

Related to this is the need to ask residents who are not involved why they are not and what would help get them involved (Sector C and Board D) As already stated, it is not enough to provide the opportunity, ways of participating must recognize the needs of the residents. It is too easy to blame apathy in the communities as a reason for not involving residents, "when tenants don't take it up or they do it badly, it becomes a reason not to do it" (Sector C). Participatory management must also be accessible. People need to be informed ahead of time of meetings, and need other ways of providing input, like a suggestion box (Resident K). People's interest must also be peaked, and often, unless they are directly effected, it is difficult to get people involved (Resident F and Resident I). Most importantly, participation has to be fun and trust needs be built, and everyone must recognize this takes time (Resident C).

**Keeping Participation Voluntary**

Both ENF and Red Door work on systems of voluntary involvement, unlike co-operatives where participation is mandatory, and the majority of respondents thought this was the way it should be. In this model, it is the responsibility of the society to provide the opportunity, not to force people to participate (Board C, Resident D and Resident L). As one Red Door board member put it, "we wanted to make participation a possibility in order to provide a more secure environment and allow people to get to know each other, not make it mandatory like a co-op" (Board A). Voluntary involvement recognizes people's need to have some control, as well as personal space (Staff F). "It feels good to have some control in your living environment, but there is also the need to just live there sometimes" *(ibid.)*.
Concern was expressed that because the rent is subsidized, people might feel they have to participate more in maintenance, which could lead to exploitation (Staff B and Staff C). "We shouldn't start mandating or requiring clean up as part of tenancy agreements, in the private sector, people do not pick trash...people in non-profit housing should not have fewer rights than private" (Sector B). While both Societies ask prospective residents whether or not they would be willing to participate in the community, there is no way of enforcing this once people move in. Some residents resented this, and believed the housing society should make participation mandatory if they asked for it in the tenant selection interview (Resident K).

However, the consensus was that residents will not always be willing or able to participate, and different communities will have different histories and ideas about how they should develop. Some people genuinely want privacy, they do not want to get involved, they just want a place to live. As one resident said:

I was attracted to the ability but not the obligation to participate...when I first moved in I needed time on my own...I want to feel as if I am participating because I choose to participate, not because I am forced into it (Resident N).

### 4.3.4 Women and Participatory Housing Management

As with co-operative housing, non-profit housing offers women, especially single parents in family housing, advantages not available in the private market. Safety, security of tenure, affordability and decent standards are a few examples. "The majority of single mothers and their children live in poverty, therefore non-profit housing is a huge issue" (Sector D). Equally important is the opportunity to be part of a supportive community and to take some control over your living environment. Resident participation is a vital component of this, and while the findings from the interviews clearly indicate that
participatory housing management is valid for everyone, it has particular benefits for women.

One benefit of resident participation is the strengthening of the community and the decreased isolation which can result.

Participation could be a very positive experience for women, especially women who are at home with their kids. It is a way of achieving a sense of empowerment, a sense of contribution, and a chance to spend time away from the kids. It could lead to greater community involvement (Resident L).

For some women the opportunity to participate is important to growth, "it allows them to come out of themselves...women are the ones who come to tenant meetings—often for social reasons" (Board C). However, even if they do not attend tenant meetings or participate in tenant groups,

it is still important for the opportunity to exist...society's norm of the nuclear family is psychopathic, if it breaks down it is a "broken family"...these groups offer alternative groupings, new forms of relationship (Staff C).

While formal methods of participating are important in building community, equally or perhaps more important are the informal (see above) ways people, often women, support each other.

Another benefit women gain from participating in their housing communities is skill development which results in increased confidence, and can be beneficial in the workplace (Resident N).

Women usually end up with the kids, many have come from abusive situations, therefore they need to build up confidence and skills, because they have had men rule their lives (Resident D).

It does allow skill development and networking opportunities. Women encourage and facilitate each other's aspirations better (Resident I).
Finally there is the issue of control. Women's inequality is a "societal issue which becomes a microcosm in these communities...women do not speak up, and many of them are powerful, they are survivors, but too often men take control" (Board G). However, resident participation opportunities can begin to break this cycle. When women participate in the decision making of their communities, they do so as a member of a group, allowing them to see other "strong and beautiful women" who act as role models (Sector D).

Participating in housing gives women a voice they didn't have before with a traditional landlord relationship...a collective voice (Staff E).

Women have a lot less power in society, 62 per cent of single parent women live in poverty. Participation gives them power, it allows them to make decisions (Resident N).

It is important to acknowledge that both Red Door and ENF are fairly unique in their focus on women, they are both essentially "organizations run by, for and with women". When asked whether there was a feminist basis to Red Door, one staff member said "Red Door is unique, it is a woman run organization" (Staff B).

Until recently all the staff were female and there was only one man on the Board...the perspective of women was sought, especially that of single mothers...we tried to reflect this perspective because the majority of low income families are women led (Board A).

ENF is very similar in this respect. One of the Board members of ENF described working with single parents at a Family Place in the mid-1980s:

the living conditions were appalling, it was a health issue as far as the children were concerned...the original women founders and tenants (of ENF) felt they were taking control of their lives...creating a more comfortable base from which to go out into the community (Board E).

One woman who is a tenant in one of ENF's communities and who has been on staff, on the Board as a Tenant Director, and President says her involvement with ENF has changed her life:

it has affected my housing, my employment, it has provided me a place for my son to grow up with friends...it has changed my whole personality...I am much more assertive, much more willing to stand up for my rights, and
I am much more willing to vocalize how I feel about something. I have found it very empowering (Geary 1992: 90).

The realities of housing for women forces them to unite and assume a proactive position in non-profit housing. An example of the particular problems women face is tenure. Once a woman's children leave home she is no longer eligible to live in her house, and if she is under the age of 55, then she is also not eligible for senior's housing. Many women fall between the cracks of the established Programs. Therefore projects such as the Brambles Co-operative and Women In Search of Housing (WISHES) which provide housing for mature women are very important. More women need to be involved in policy and program development (Board B). In addition, when policy makers consider methods to encourage resident participation in non-profit housing, it is crucial they recognize the reality faced by the primarily female residents, "then at least they'd know where to start" (Board D).
5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTICIPATORY HOUSING MANAGEMENT

5.1 Research Summary

This thesis has explored participatory management in non-profit housing. A historical survey of Canadian social housing policy showed that management issues have not been the subject of much attention. Rather the focus has been on the supply and production of housing units, with the belief that the private market can and should provide most housing. Formulation of housing policy has rarely existed as a goal in and of itself, but has more often been linked to macro-economic stimulus. Further, the process of policy and program development has, for the most part, not included the residents of non-profit housing, non-profit housing societies or staff. Women's needs have often been overlooked. Recently, the emphasis on housing provision only for those the government deems most needy and the continuous cutbacks in social housing spending by the federal government have become entrenched aspects of housing policy. These cutbacks contribute to the deteriorating quality of life in social housing (La Haye 1992: 31).

The theory on housing and resident participation offered a number of insights into publicly funded housing. The idea that housing is more than shelter was strongly advocated. It was recognized that housing serves as a base for people and provides stability in their lives. Resident participation in management was seen as a positive way of improving the quality of life in social housing communities, and creating benefits for individuals, housing communities and non-profit housing societies.

When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to the design, construction or management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over, nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the one hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfillment and a burden on the economy (Turner 1976: 6).
Finally, as shown in the models of participation from the U.S.A., Great Britain and Canada, it was recognized that there are a number of diverse ways residents can participate in the management of their housing, and that no one way is universally applicable.

The findings from the case studies of ENF and Red Door generally agreed with the literature and theory on participatory management, but they also provided additional insights into resident participation in non-profit housing management. Non-profit housing was considered to be very different from market rental housing. It has unique goals and aims, and therefore it was not seen as appropriate to rely exclusively on private market management techniques. Perhaps the most important factor in involving residents in management is the existence of an organizational culture which emphasizes inclusion and empowerment. Both ENF and Red Door have such philosophies. However, philosophy alone is not sufficient, especially if there is a discrepancy between the reality and the philosophy. In every community visited for this study there were residents who did not really feel listened to or involved in decision making. They felt they lacked the power to change anything. Interestingly, there were no big discrepancies in these findings between the communities built under the Federal 56.1 Non-Profit Housing Program and those built under the Provincial Program, nor between the locations of Vancouver and Surrey.

The challenges of getting people involved and low levels of participation were also highlighted, leading to the question, "are we measuring participation correctly?". The first step in any participatory management scheme is to ask residents if they want to be involved, and in what issues and how. Resident participation will mean different things to different people, communities and non-profit housing societies. Therefore, it is necessary to create a variety of ways residents can participate, be it Resident Councils or Associations, residents on the Board, or as members. Some communities may just want a property manager. "Each group will determine how they want to participate" (Sector A).
Issues of accessibility and voluntary involvement, acknowledging the realities of the communities and residents, and balancing diverse needs such as privacy and control, must also be addressed if resident participation is to be effective.

Participatory management recognizes the inherent tension between "being realistic" and "pushing at the edge". There is always the danger of creating false expectations. Therefore it is important to establish clear lines of communication between staff, board and residents, and government. Housing society boards may need to do things like rotate meetings from community to community in order to have more direct contact with residents. This may be difficult, especially in areas outside Vancouver, but it is the Board's responsibility as they decided to build in these locations. Government needs to create structures and processes through which they receive input from the other stakeholder groups. Recent initiatives are encouraging, such as the Public Housing Tenant Advisory Committee and Provincial Housing Advisory Committee which advise BCHMC and the Minister of Housing.

The case studies also demonstrated that participatory processes take time and energy, and are not necessarily easy. Therefore fundamental to the success of resident participation are education and training, community development and identifiable benefits for those involved. Housing communities and societies are not stagnant entities, therefore methods of assessing participatory structures, to ensure they are doing what they were intended to do, are necessary.

Finally, the case studies highlighted the need for women to be part of all aspects of housing from the creation of policy and programs, to development, to management. In the past there were no women on the Board of Directors at BCHMC, now there are six women (one of whom is an aboriginal woman), and five men. In addition, the top policy making positions in the provincial Ministry of Housing are held by women: the Minister, Deputy
Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Policy are all women. These changes will hopefully result in housing which better reflects the realities of residents, the majority of whom are women.

This research began with an assumption of "individual growth" (meaning growth by the residents) resulted from resident participation. However, as the research progressed it became clear that the idea of "individual growth" meant different things to different people. As it was pointed out to me, by assuming that participatory management leads to people moving forward, the belief that the residents are "down and out" is reinforced. Perhaps the residents were just fine where they were (Sector C). In some ways this assumption is part of the "service provision" mentality which permeates Canadian social programs. "Housing is seen as a service and the residents are the recipients" (Sector C). Instead, social policy should "enable individuals and communities to attain their own ends in their own ways" (Cayley 1994: 16). Housing should allow people to help themselves.

Participatory management recognizes that the most valuable assets of non-profit housing are not the buildings, but the people who live in those buildings, the residents. By recognizing and valuing the knowledge of residents, and providing them with the opportunity to be involved in decision making, participatory management attempts to reach the full potential of non-profit housing. It replaces the top-down, hierarchical model of non-profit housing management seen in Chapter 3, with one that is based on partnership. In a participatory management model, there is a place where all the stakeholder groups of non-profit housing management, the residents, non-profit housing societies, non-profit housing staff and government, are involved in shared decision making. However, it also recognizes that there are other areas where only some of the groups interact, and still others where each group will have its own area of responsibility. Generally, it acknowledges the complexity of the formal and casual relationships.
Participatory management also has potential impacts on how non-profit housing is perceived by the larger community. From the interviews a pattern emerged where the individual resident receives training and support through involvement in their housing community. This leads to increased skills and self-esteem, which results in participation in the greater community, and leads to a positive image about the housing community and social housing in general.

![Figure 7: Resident Participation and the Greater Community](image)

Participatory management is not a panacea which will solve every problem associated with social housing. However, it is a way to allow residents to take some control over their living environments, thereby addressing issues of equity, social justice, quality of life, and the physical and social health and well-being of both non-profit housing communities and the neighbourhoods in they which they exist.

5.2 Challenges With Methodology

The intention of this research project was to follow a participatory methodology. This method was chosen in order to allow the research to be done "with" people rather than "on" them, and to facilitate mutual learning opportunities. I believe this research philosophy was successful in that it permitted a certain amount of flexibility, allowing the research to evolve
as I gained a better understanding of the issues. The specific methods of one-on-one open-ended interviews and focus group discussions were also successful. The interviews, most of which took place in people's homes or offices, created a safe environment, encouraging people to share their experiences and not hold back information for fear of ramifications. On the other hand, the focus group discussion encouraged sharing of information.

However, I also discovered challenges and demands associated with participatory research, which contributed to the fact that this research project was not entirely participatory. I formulated the original research question, and the decided on the specific methods. I also interpreted the results and will largely decide how those results are used. However, the demands of participatory research, especially in terms of lack of time and resources, for both me as the researcher, and the participants made it difficult. It was unfortunate that I was unable to organize the focus group discussion with residents of Red Door and ENF, but conflicting schedules and my tight time table made this virtually impossible. Despite these challenges I believe participatory research is an extremely valid research method which results in rich findings and paves the way for informed action.

5.3 Implications

In addition to highlighting the successes and challenges Red Door and ENF have faced with resident participation, the research suggested a number of implications for policy and program development.

Implication 1: Recognize and Encourage Resident Participation

The first and most obvious implication coming from this thesis is the need to recognize the value of participatory housing management, especially in non-profit housing. Resident participation can result in benefits such as better decision making, increased quality of life, opportunities for skill acquisition, and more responsive management. It also allows
residents to take some control over their communities and living environment.

Opportunities for resident participation should be made available, but at each community residents, together with the housing society, should define how they will participate. Flexibility is needed to respond to the changing needs and realities of residents and non-profit housing societies.

**Implication 2: Government Support**

One of the requirements of Implication 1, is government support. Governments and their agencies, CMHC and BCHMC, need to actively encourage resident participation in social housing. This entails a change in the civic and organizational cultures of these institutions, and the building of trust with the non-profit sector and residents. I think it is fair to say this happening in B.C. The three BCHMC officials I talked were open to resident participation, and with recommendations from the *Provincial Commission on Housing Options*, the Provincial government appears to moving in the direction of encouraging participatory management.

While legislation forcing non-profit housing societies to include residents in management was not widely supported, I would recommend stipulating resident participation as a requirement in the Operating Agreement, something BCHMC is considering (BCHMC C). Guidelines should be drawn up around expectations. However, the form and level resident participation takes should not be mandated by government. In addition, the Operating Agreement should ensure that information on the *Residential Tenancy Act* be distributed by the non-profit housing society when the tenancy agreement is signed.

**Implication 3: Legislative Changes**

The *Residential Tenancy Act* should be amended to remove the ambiguity surrounding residents as members of non-profit housing societies. The *RTA* and any related
information booklets should also be rewritten in gender neutral and plain language, and, if not already done, be translated into minority languages. The Societies Act should be examined to see if it creates any barriers to resident participation.

**Implication 4: Recognize Need for Community Development**

Directly related to the necessity for government support is the need for community development. Funding for community development is necessary, both before and after the housing is built. Community development is a housing issue, and while it was not unanimously agreed, funding for community development should come from the Ministry of Housing. Residents, non-profit housing societies and staff should be consulted about what community development means and how it could be implemented. There also needs to be tangible support in the form of access to training, educational workshops and information. Money, which is resident controlled, is also required for resident activities. This has been possible in the past. ENF has had a budget line item for newsletters and childcare, but it could not be used for other activities. Red Door was not even aware of these funds. Therefore sources of funding need to be advertised. Finally the interviews and focus group discussion clearly stated that community development workers should not be social workers, and property management staff should not be responsible for community development.

**Implication 5: Participatory Housing Research and Education**

Resident participation is seen by some in the non-profit housing sector as radical. In order to demystify the idea and facilitate its acceptance, research on the successes, challenges and benefits of participatory management needs to be done. This should take the form of a guide book, similar to The ONPHA Tenant Participation Handbook. An educational process could also come out of this information. While Red Door and ENF are two examples of non-profit housing societies which have tried to incorporate residents into
decision making, there are other housing societies in B.C. which have tried different approaches.

**Implication 6: Social Housing Reform**

Attitudes surrounding social housing, and social programs in general need to change. This does not mean eliminating programs nor reforming the basic principles behind these programs. However, attitudes that view social housing as service provision to the needy, must be changed to one where residents are viewed as social housing’s most valuable asset. In advocating this view, there needs to be an awareness of issues regarding exploitation, such as demanding participation in maintenance as a term of residency.

Related to this is language. Language is a powerful part of the civic culture in which we live, and forms the basis of the attitudes, images and meanings we communicate. Terminology such as housing "project" conveys negative images reminiscent of large scale American public housing. In contrast the word "community" implies common interest and mutual support. The same is true for "tenant" as opposed to "resident". According to the *Collins Dictionary* a "tenant" is a person who has the use of a house or piece of land etc., subject to the payment of rent. A "resident" is a person who resides or lives in a place. The use of the term resident over tenant reflects the belief that both tenants and owners reside in place, the only difference being the form of tenure.

**Implication 7: Reinstate Funding for Social Housing**

The research clearly demonstrated the value of social housing, especially for women and their children. Safe, secure and affordable housing is a basic human right. Rather than retreating from their responsibility, governments should view housing as a priority in terms of funding. Not only will this lead to cost savings in the future, but also will result in healthier communities now. The value of co-operative housing was also highlighted, and a
co-operative housing program should be restored to provide people with low and moderate incomes a viable way of taking complete control of their living environment. Innovative forms of housing, such as equity co-operatives and co-housing should also be supported.

**Implication 8: Gender Sensitive Policy Development**

This research showed that the needs of women have not been addressed in social housing policy and program development. *The Provincial Commission on Housing Options* recommended that housing programs should be designed on the basis that 80 per cent of future residents will be women. Women need to be involved in this process, not just experts, but women who live in publicly funded housing.

**Implication 9: Participatory Policy Development**

If we are to develop effective and equitable social housing policies, the processes by which these policies are made must also be effective, equitable and importantly participatory, involving the people whose lives they affect most. Residents, housing society board members and staff, as well as people within the non-profit housing sector possess valuable information and knowledge which should be utilized. In this way the needs of the people who live and work in social housing will be better reflected and met.

**Implication 10: Participatory Planning**

In terms of planning this thesis proved to me the importance of asking people questions and assuming they have valuable knowledge to share. Planning is largely about guiding or determining future action. Participatory planning finds rich sources of knowledge and insight to the problems at hand. Participatory planning seeks to include people in the decisions which impact on their lives, as well as informing them of the diverse interests and issues at stake. However, as planners we can not always expect people to come to us and participate in ways we decide, for example through public meetings. Planners must go to
people where they live, work and play in order to broaden involvement. Finally, people must know that their opinions are respected, listened to and acted upon. As the case studies showed there is no better way to discourage participation than by asking people to contribute and then ignoring their advice.

We should not assume experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society (Albert Einstein as quoted in Waring 1988: xv).
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APPENDIX I

UBC ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL
**Certificate of Approval**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laquian, A.A.</td>
<td>Human Settlements</td>
<td>B93-0590</td>
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**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT**

UBC Campus

**CO-INVESTIGATORS:**

Geary, V., Comm & Regional Planning

**SPONSORING AGENCIES**

**TITLE:**

Building committees: The importance of participatory management in non-profit housing

**APPROVAL DATE**

AUG 27 1993

**TERM (YEARS)**

3

**AMENDED:**

A1J627

**CERTIFICATION:**

The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Dr. R. Corteon or Dr. I. Franks, Associate Chairs

Dr. K. D. Spratley

This Certificate of Approval is valid for three years provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
APPENDIX 2
REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
WITH ENF AND RED DOOR
BUILDING COMMUNITIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT IN NON-PROFIT HOUSING

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

The purpose of this research is to examine whether non-profit housing management styles which involve residents facilitate the building of community and individual growth. The primary objective is to evaluate management styles in non-profit housing, and expand the conventional view of housing management to one that involves resident participation. The experiences of 2 non-profit housing societies which have included residents in management will be compared and contrasted to discover successes, challenges and obstacles. In addition, the gender implications of non-profit housing management will be identified by documenting women's involvement at all levels of non-profit housing management.

The impetus for this thesis comes from past research on the housing needs of female led single parent families. This research, done by talking directly to women who live in non-profit housing, highlighted the importance of management. The women voiced the opinion that the ability to make choices about the community in which they live allowed them to take control over their environment. They also felt that by including tenants in the decision-making, the housing better meets the needs of the people who live there.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH:

The examination of different styles of resident involvement in social housing is not new. However, research on this topic as it specifically relates to Non-profit housing is scarce, it is hoped this study will add to the literature. In addition, the examination of participatory management in Non-profit housing in BC is particularly relevant at this time as budget dollars shrink. Recently the Provincial government's own Commission on affordable housing recommended that tenant participation be strengthened in non-profit housing. Although the Report only discussed tenants sitting on non-profit society boards, there may other ways of increasing tenant participation. This study will begin to highlight some of those ways.

The research is intended to benefit the groups and individuals involved by allowing them the opportunity to share their experiences, strategies and methods around resident participation. In addition, the research will provide them with a tool for on-going education and advocacy around non-profit housing management.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

This study will be an exploratory investigation of non-profit housing management, and will not attempt to prove any particular hypothesis. There will be opportunities for the non-profit housing societies involved in the study to participate in the development and implementation of the research questions and approach. The hope is to do research 'with' rather than 'on' people, and ensure that the research fits the societies and communities. This involvement will be dependent on the time constraints of the participants and researcher.
Specific methods include:

- an examination of relevant literature to discover models for housing management.
- interviews with 'professionals' working in the non-profit housing sector, government officials and staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, BCHMC and CMHC.
- interviews with staff and Board members of 2 non-profit housing societies. The interview informants will be asked to give their perceptions of non-profit housing management and resident participation and satisfaction.
- interviews with residents who live in housing run by 2 non-profit housing societies. The interview informants will be asked to give their feelings and opinions about current management practices, their ability and desire to participate in the management of their housing and their satisfaction with their living environments.
- a focus group with residents living in communities run by both non-profit housing societies. This will allow a group discussion of management, resident participation and strategies to improve non-profit housing management.
- a focus group with some staff and Board members from both non-profit housing societies. This will allow a sharing of experiences, successes and challenges, as well as a discussion on resident participation in management. It is anticipated that the focus groups will be important means of gathering and sharing knowledge for both me as the researcher and the participants.

Interview guides and letters of consent have been developed (please see attached), submitted to the UBC Office of Research Services Ethical Review, and received its' Certificate of Approval. The focus group involving staff and Board members was developed after this process but will follow the format approved for the resident focus group and the questions approved for the individual interviews of staff and Board members. Reimbursement for any monies spent by participants on childcare or transportation will be made available. The interviews will take place at participants homes or offices and the focus groups in the common room of one of the housing communities.

**SPECIFICS OF REQUEST TO ENF:**

- interviews with 8 to 10 residents from 2 communities. The residents interviewed will be recruited through recommendations from property managers and on the advice of residents themselves. The interviews will take no longer than 1 1/2 hours. Please see attached letter of consent and interview guide.
- interviews with 6 staff and Board members: 2 property managers from the selected communities; 1 Society Coordinator; 1 President and 2 active Board members. The interviews will take no longer than 1 1/2 hours. Please see attached letter of consent and interview guide.
- 2 focus groups:
  1) with 4 or 5 residents living in the selected ENF communities.
  2) with 4 staff and Board members from ENF.
Meeting space in the common room of one of the selected communities may be requested.

- permission to use some of the material related to management gathered through the history project, and other relevant material such as organizational charts.
- the selection of a person to act as a liaison between the researcher and ENF.
ETHICAL QUESTIONS:

As already mentioned, the research approach and methods have been approved by the Ethical Review Committee of UBC. A copy of this submission is available on request, and copies the letters of consent and interview guides for staff, Board members and residents have been attached. I understand that ENF has many requests for research projects, and foremost of importance is the understanding that ENF communities are homes, not research labs. Participants' privacy will be strictly respected, they will be in control of where and when we meet. In addition, confidentiality will be maintained by keeping the names of all participants anonymous and ensuring all interviews are locked in the researcher's office. Every participant will be informed that they can drop out of the study at any time, with no negative effect on them or their home.

RESULTS:

The result of this study will be a thesis to fulfill the requirements for a Master's Degree in Planning, but it is also hoped the thesis will be of use to people working in the non-profit housing sector and for people who live in non-profit housing. A copy of the thesis will be submitted to UBC Library where it will be available to the public. In addition, the thesis will be made available to the individuals who participated in the study, and anyone else who has an interest in the subject. Three free copies will be given to the non-profit housing societies involved in the study, and it is hoped that it will aid in their on-going education and advocacy around non-profit housing issues. If appropriate, the thesis will also be submitted to BCHMC, CMHC, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Housing Research Centre of the City of Vancouver.

TIMING:

The research will take place in September and October 1993, with the expected completion of the thesis by December 1993. ENF will receive regular updates about the progress of the research throughout this time.

Thank-you for considering this request. I have enjoyed working with Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society in the past, and believe I have an understanding of the processes, objectives and principles of the Society. I look forward to working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Geary
September 8, 1993

* The "Request for Research" submitted to Red Door Housing Society was similar.
1 August 1993

Dear __________:

Subject: Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing

My name is Vanessa Geary, I am a Masters Student in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, doing research on non-profit housing management in Vancouver as part of my required graduating thesis. The purpose of this research is to examine whether resident involvement in non-profit housing management helps build community and promote individual growth.

You have been identified as someone who would be interested in participating in this study, and I hope you can find the time to help me. I would like to interview you about the management of your housing and whether residents are involved. The interview will take no more than 1 1/2 hours, and if convenient with you will take place at your home. In addition, I may ask you to participate in a focus group with other residents of non-profit housing. The focus group will be 2 hours long, and I hope it will give us a chance to share ideas and experiences.

All information collected for this study will be kept strictly confidential. The names of all people interviewed will not be identified, and nothing you say will be attributed to you in the thesis.

If you have any questions about the interview or focus group, or about the research in general, please feel free to call me at 224-3523. You can also contact my research advisor, Dr. Aprodicio Laquian, at 822-5856.
If, for some reason you do not want to participate in this study, please be assured this will not have a negative effect on you or your work. Also, if at any time during the study you decide to withdraw or not participate further, I will respect this decision.

This letter will serve as a consent form, and if you decide to participate in the study, please sign below. Your signature indicates that you have agreed to participate in the study. You will receive a copy of this letter for your own records. If you decide to participate, please call me at 224-3523 to set up a meeting time.

Thank you very much for your attention to this letter, I hope to meet you soon.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Geary
Principal Investigator

I, __________________________, have read and understand the details of the study Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing conducted by Vanessa Geary, M.A. student, . I agree to participate in an interview for this study.

Signature of Participant

Date
(LETTER OF CONSENT TO NON-PROFIT HOUSING SOCIETIES)

1 August 1993

Dear ________:

Subject: Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing

My name is Vanessa Geary, I am a Masters Student in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, doing research on non-profit housing management in Vancouver as part of my required graduating thesis. The purpose of this research is to examine whether resident involvement in non-profit housing management helps build community and promote individual growth.

As a staff/board member of _________ Housing Society, you have been identified as someone who would be interested in participating in this study. I would like to interview you about the management of your housing communities and resident involvement in non-profit housing in general. The interview will take no more than 1 1/2 hours, and will take place at the Society's office.

All the information collected for this study will be kept strictly confidential. The names of all people interviewed will not be identified, and no personal attribution of views will be made in the report.

If you have any questions about the interview, or about the research in general, please feel free to call me at 224-3523. You can also contact my research advisor, Dr. Aprodicio Laquian, at 822-5856.
If, for some reason you do not want to participate in this study, please be assured this will not have a negative effect on the Society, staff or Board members. Also, if at any time during the study you decide to withdraw or not participate further, I will respect this decision.

This letter will serve as a consent form, and if you decide to participate in the study, please sign below. This signature indicates that you have agreed to participate in the study. You will receive a copy of this letter for your records. If you decide to participate, please call me at 224-3523 to set up a meeting time.

Thank-you very much for your attention to this letter, I hope to meet you soon.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Geary
Principal Investigator

---------------------------------------------
I, ______________________________________, have read and understand the details of the study Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing conducted by Vanessa Geary, M.A. student, UBC. I agree to participate in an interview for this study

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________
1 August 1993

Dear __________:

Subject: Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing

My name is Vanessa Geary, I am a Masters Student in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, doing research on non-profit housing management in Vancouver as part of my required graduating thesis. The purpose of this research is to examine whether resident involvement in non-profit housing management helps build community and promote individual growth.

You have been identified as someone who would be interested in participating in this study, and I hope you can find the time to help me. I would like to interview you about resident participation in the management of non-profit housing. The interview will take no more than 1 1/2 hours, and if convenient with you will take place at your office.

All information collected for this study will be kept strictly confidential. The names of all people interviewed will not be identified, and nothing you say will be attributed to you in the thesis.

If you have any questions about the interview or focus group, or about the research in general, please feel free to call me at 224-3523. You can also contact my research advisor, Dr. Aprodicio Laquian, at 822-5856.
If, for some reason you do not want to participate in this study, please be assured this will not have a negative effect on the Society, staff or Board members. Also, if at any time during the study you decide to withdraw or not participate further, I will respect this decision.

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Sincerely,

Vanessa Geary
Principal Investigator

I, __________________________, have read and understand the details of the study Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing conducted by Vanessa Geary, M.A. student, UBC. I agree to participate in an interview for this study.

_________________________________________  __________
Signature of Participant                      Date
Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing

INTERVIEW GUIDE
FOR RESIDENTS OF SELECTED NON-PROFIT HOUSING SOCIETIES

1) How long have you lived in this housing community?

2) How did you find out about this housing? Were you on a waitlist? If yes, for how long?

3) Why did you want to live in non-profit housing? Did you specifically want to live in a community run by X Housing Society? If yes, why?

4) Is living here any different in terms of management than other places you have lived? If yes, in what ways?

5) Do you feel that the lines of communication are open between you and the property manager? Board?

6) What are important aspects of management? What do you consider "good" management?

7) Is the management responsive to your requests and needs?

8) Is the building well maintained? Are maintenance and repair requests dealt with quickly?

9) Do you feel that you have a say in the management of your building?

10) Are you involved in the management of your building? If no, is it possible to be involved? If yes, in which ways are you involved?

11) Is resident participation in the management of non-profit housing desirable? Why/why not?

12) What would help you get involved in the management of your building?

13) Is this a community? Why/why not? If no, what changes could build community? Is management style an important part of the sense of community?

14) If you have been involved in the management of your housing, what has it meant to you?
Building Communities: The Importance of Participatory Management in Non-Profit Housing

INTERVIEW GUIDE
FOR PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE NON-PROFIT HOUSING SECTOR

1) How are you involved in the non-profit housing sector?

2) What is the goal of the Non-Profit Housing Program? What do you consider the goal of social housing?

3) Is resident participation in non-profit housing management desirable?

4) How much control should residents have?

5) Are residents of non-profit presently able to sit on the Boards of the Non-Profit Housing Societies? If no, why not?

6) What is needed to make resident participation feasible and effective?

7) Are the funds currently available for community development or training around resident participation in management?

8) Are women involved at every level of non-profit housing management?
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF/BOARD OF SELECTED NON-PROFIT HOUSING SOCIETIES

1) How long have you worked with this non-profit housing society?

2) What is your background or training in housing management? Do you have prior experience or training in managing non-profit housing?

3) What is the mandate or purpose of this non-profit housing society?

4) Please explain the organizational structure of the society.

5) What are the separate or specific tasks that make up housing management?

6) How does non-profit housing management differ from market housing management?

7) What are the management roles and responsibilities of:
   A) the staff of the non-profit housing society?
   B) the Board of the non-profit housing society?
   C) the BC Housing Management Commission?

8) What works about your management style? What does not work?

9) Are residents involved in the management of their housing? If yes, how? Do residents sit on the Board?

9a) What is resident participation?

10) What are the restrictions or hindrances to resident involvement? ie/legal, institutional, financial.

11) Is resident involvement in management desirable?

12) How far should resident participation go? ie/control, input, partnership?

13) What would make resident participation in non-profit housing management feasible and effective?

- how do you communicate with the tenants? ie/ written, face to face, through tenant rep?
- what issues do you communicate with the tenants about?
1) INTRODUCTIONS--everyone
2) WHY WE ARE HERE--Vanessa
3) BACKGROUND ON ENF/RED DOOR
   #1-3= 15-30 minutes
4) DISCUSSION re: resident participation in non-profit housing
   #4= 1.25-1.5 hours
5) RECAP--did I miss anything? Was I hearing what was said?
   #5= 15 minutes

THANKS TO YOU ALL!!!!!
The following is a rough script for a focus group with 9 residents of 2 selected non-profit housing societies. The focus group will serve as an open-ended data gathering technique.

The discussion will begin with participants introducing themselves and explaining a little bit about their housing communities. This will be followed by an explanation of the research by the researcher. The discussion will be allowed to free flow, with the main theme being 'what is the present situation regarding the management of your housing, and how would you improve it?'. The questions below will serve as probes for the issues that are at the heart of the research.

The focus group will last no longer than two hours and will take place in the common room of one of the housing communities.

• What is considered by the participants to be "good" management?

• Is living in non-profit housing any different in terms of management than other places participants have lived? If yes, in what ways?

• Do participants have a say in the management of their buildings? Is this important?

• Is it possible for residents to be involved in the management of their housing? If yes, how? If no, why not, would participants like to be and how?

• Is resident participation in the management of non-profit housing desirable? Why/why not?

• Do participants feel they live in a community? Why/why not? If no, what changes could build community? Is management style an important part of the sense of community?

• What would help in facilitating resident involvement in the management of their buildings?