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COMMUNITY STRUGGLES AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THE WELFARE STATE

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to identify the nature of the relationship between community-based collective action and the social context within which it is found. A marxist/realist framework for analysis is employed to develop a model illustrating the links between these phenomena, and between each and the causal mechanisms underlying capitalist society. Given the role of government agencies in structuring community life, the welfare state is seen to be the key connection between underlying structure and the elements of the level of experience. Empirical evidence is drawn from a study of community organizing by the single parent population of the Jane-Finch area of Metropolitan Toronto. Here, collective action is a response by a community- and service-dependent population to a social context affected greatly by the policies adopted by the institutions of the welfare state. In turn, collective initiatives launched by Jane-Finch's single parents have led to change, through ameliorating certain social conditions or creating an environment favourable for further community struggle. At the same time, however, social context influences the nature of community responses, and plays a role in determining their potential. In Jane-Finch, the welfare state plays a role here also; the capacity of the community's voluntary sector is severely limited by the fiscal restraint and bureaucratic organization characteristic of the relevant state agencies.

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**CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Problem Defined

Community-based collective action is an intrinsic feature of contemporary Canadian society. Everywhere, it is possible to identify movements launched by local residents for the purpose of defending their interests. These initiatives have been recognized in the academic literature: Roussopoulos (1982c), Kostach (1982), Fincher (1984), and Knowles (1985) represent recent treatments of community struggles by Canadian geographers and sociologists.

Grassroots organizing is more prevalent in some communities than others. One example of a community characterized by a high level of collective action is the Jane-Finch area of Metropolitan Toronto. As Heyworth (1981) notes, this community is characterized by an extensive voluntary sector, concerned with issues ranging from daycare provision to 'life skills' courses to tenants' rights. Marvyn Novack of the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto argues that Jane-Finch is characterized by a sense of

community much stronger than that found in surrounding neighbourhoods; this translates into a dedication on the part of an appreciable percentage of residents to the principles of self-help.

How can such concentrations of collective action be explained? If it is accepted that community struggles cannot be examined in isolation, but must be viewed as part of a larger social process, such an explanation cannot confine itself to an investigation of the internal dynamics characteristic of local groups. The purpose of this thesis, then, is to come to an understanding of the relationship between community organizing and the social context within which it occurs. In light of the theoretical and substantive parameters outlined below, the specific research question to be addressed herein is this: in what ways can we conceptualize community organizing in Jane-Finch as: (i) a response by a community- and service-dependent population to a social context influenced greatly by welfare state institutions that embody the contradictions inherent in capitalist social relations; and (ii) a force, mediated by those same institutions, capable of altering the initial social context. The literature on neighbourhood-based collective action is reviewed and assessed, a model capable of accounting for empirical phenomena is developed, and then used to explain

the relationship between community struggle and social context found in Jane-Finch.

1.2 Theoretical Considerations

Three assertions are central to the approach taken herein:

- (i) Community organizations are collective responses to conditions perceived by the people involved as constraints on their everyday lives. Joint action is the only way that most people, who have a negligible amount of economic or political influence individually, can effect change.
- (ii) The form taken, policies adopted and history of these community groups also outcomes of surrounding social conditions.
- (iii) Community organizations can alter the conditions that prompted their emergence and that influenced their evolution.

In themselves, these assertions are fairly uncontentious. In this thesis, however, an explanation of the relationship between grassroots organizing and its social context is made with particular theoretical/methodological concerns in mind. These include: (i) identifying the specific nature of the linkage between community organization and the context within which it is found; and (ii) determining the nature of the institutions of the welfare state that play a key role in constructing this milieu.

The first theoretical issue this thesis addresses is this: what is the relationship between community groups

and society in general? This thesis adopts a marxist/realist framework for analysis, meaning that observable social phenomena are not independent variables, but represent the mediated outcomes of underlying causal mechanisms associated with the prevailing mode of production (see Sayer 1979 and Chouinard et al 1985 for discussions of marxist work from a realist perspective). Given the nature of contemporary western society, we can assert that the mechanisms underlying contemporary western society are capitalist. However, the extent of the impact of these mechanisms upon the social conditions that act as catalysts for community-based collective action is a contentious one. In this thesis, we argue the following: (i) the social context for community organizing does embody the contradictions inherent in capitalist society; (ii) community-based collective action thus may be conceptualized as being an outcome of capitalist contradictions; and (iii) local initiatives do have the potential to facilitate the negation of underlying causal mechanisms. Thus it is possible to develop a theoretically-informed model capable of specifying the relationship between social context and community organizing.

The second theoretical issue addressed in this thesis involves the nature of the linkage between underlying mechanisms and community struggles: people are not affected

directly by underlying structure. Here, it is argued that the institutions of the welfare state represent such a linkage, for two reasons. First, these institutions play a key role in constructing the context within which people live their everyday lives, especially in low income communities such as Jane-Finch. Second, through the adoption of the concept of the materialist state presented in the work of Offe (1978), Offe and Ronge (1975) Holloway and Piclotto (1978) and Hirsch (1978; 1981), we can argue that the welfare state embodies the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

In this way, we can develop further our general model, through identifying the elements of the social context of greatest importance in a specific situation. Specifically, we argue the following: (i) the institutions of the welfare state embody the contradictions characteristic of capitalism; (ii) these institutions play a key role in determining the nature of the conditions that affect the residents of communities such as Jane-Finch, given their dependence upon state services and a state-constructed built environment; (iii) the institutions of the welfare state in turn constrain the capacity of community residents to overcome these conditions; (iv) local collective action, however, can have a 'feedback effect', in that problems can be ameliorated

and that community groups can create conditions beneficial to future community organizing.

It is acknowledged that this thesis adopts somewhat of a 'black box' approach to the question of community struggle. The internal workings of local organizations are only touched upon tangentially. We recognize, however, that an extensive body of sociological and social work literature focusses upon the nature of small group dynamics. It is hoped that the perspective adopted herein will supplement this literature.

1.3 Substantive Focus

The empirical emphasis of this thesis is an examination of the pattern of community organization in the Jane-Finch area. This community is located at the periphery of Metropolitan Toronto (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2 and Appendix 1), but it is not a stereotypical suburban environment. Jane-Finch does have its share of streets lined by single family and semidetached homes, but the area also is characterized by extensive townhouse development, and especially by a large number of high rise apartment blocks (Figure 3.1 details landuse in the community). With over 40,000 people concentrated in an area of just over eight square kilometers, Jane-Finch is one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods

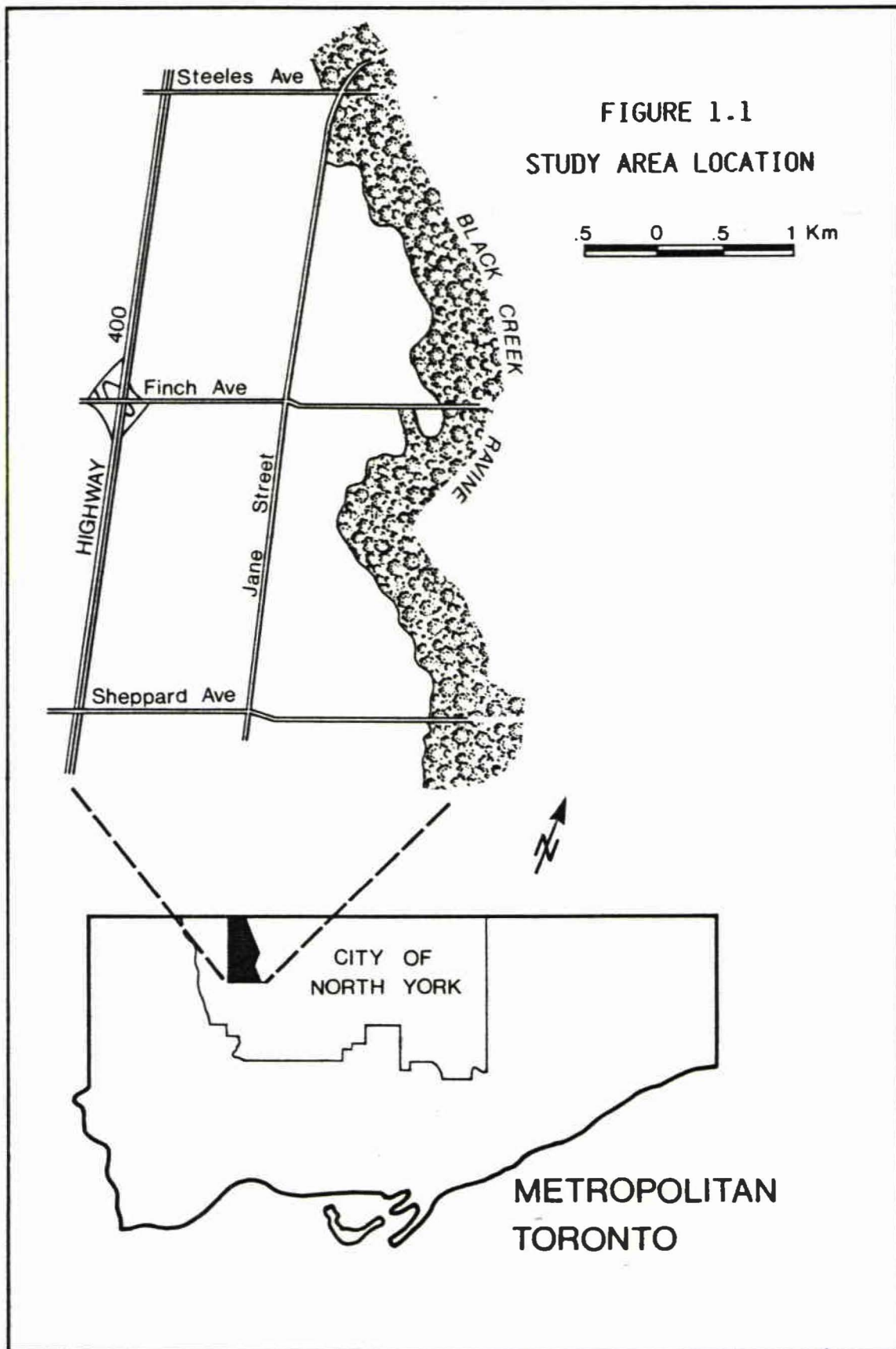
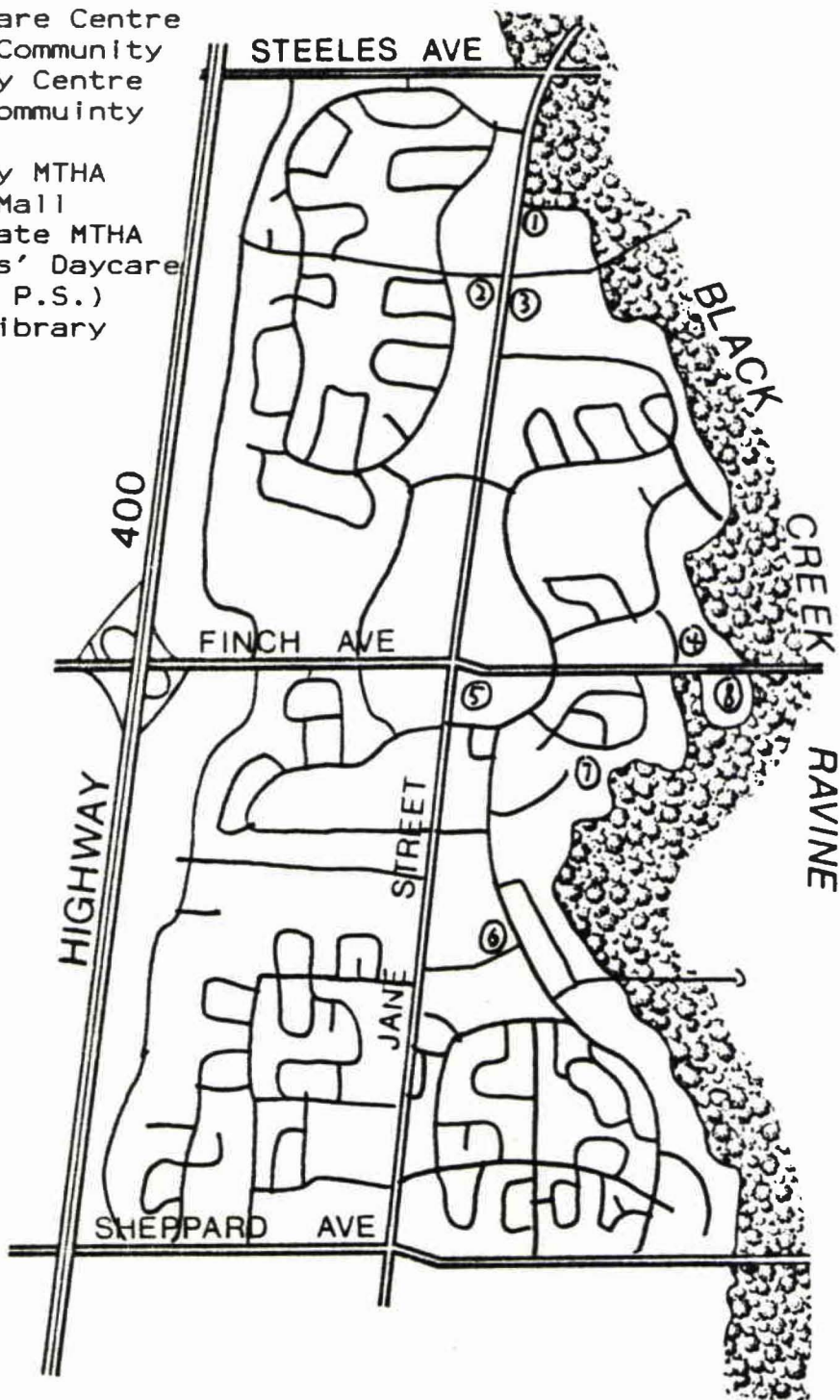


FIGURE 1.2

THE JANE-FINCH COMMUNITY

Legend .5 0 .5 1 Km

- 1. Edgely Daycare Centre
- 2. Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre
- 3. Driftwood Community Centre
- 4. 15 Tobermory MTHA
- 5. Jane-Finch Mall
- 6. Yorkwoods Gate MTHA
- 7. Shiftworkers' Daycare (Topcliff P.S.)
- 8. Yorkwoods Library



in Canada (see Appendix 2). Jane-Finch is distinctive in socio-economic terms also. The area's residents have a low mean income, a result of the overrepresentation of groups such as immigrants and single parents, who are attracted to Jane-Finch because of the availability of public housing and inexpensive private accommodation. This does not mean, however, that Jane-Finch is situated or equipped in the way best suited to the needs of these groups. As will be indicated in this thesis, serious constraints are imposed upon the low income population of Jane-Finch, and have acted as a catalyst for collective action.

The scope of enquiry in this thesis is narrowed by centering attention upon single parents. This group was selected because:

- (i) Owing to the low incomes that characterize many single parents, they are overrepresented in Jane-Finch, for the reasons mentioned above.
- (ii) Those single parents with low incomes are relatively more dependent on their immediate built environment for the goods and services they require. Because they lack financial resources, they are unable to travel as far as other people in their search for their means of subsistence. Furthermore, because low income leads to an inability to compete in the marketplace, many single parents depend on goods and services provided at below market cost, either by nonprofit agencies, or (more importantly) by government. For these reasons, local conditions have relatively more impact upon poor single parents.
- (iii) It is evident that women in general and single parents in particular are overrepresented among activists in Jane-Finch. It therefore is possible

not just to identify the constraints affecting the community's single parents, but to see how these constraints have led to action.

Four groups addressing the interests of single parents then are identified. These are: the Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre, Tobermory Community Activities, Shiftworker's Daycare, and the Yorkwoods Daycare Network. For each, we identify the specific problems they were formulated to solve, the success of the groups in ameliorating these problems, and the role of the group in creating an environment suitable for future community organizing. The positive or negative role of the welfare state is assessed throughout. It must be noted, of course, that each of the groups studied involves people other than single parents. For example, questions such as daycare are also of concern to others in the community, so this differentiation of single parents' issues is somewhat arbitrary. Furthermore, it is necessary to note that while the 'case study' approach adopted here has many advantages, it also has a number of limitations (see Chapter 3). Paramount among these is that we cannot generalize automatically from the experiences of these groups to the experiences of the Jane-Finch voluntary sector as a whole.

1.4 Chapter Outline

This thesis is structured in the following manner. Chapter 2 addresses the question of how we should conceptualize community-based collective action. The marxist literature on community struggles is reviewed, to show how the milieu within which collective action takes place may be depicted. A model capable of guiding empirical investigation then is developed. Finally, the literature surrounding the nature of the welfare state, the institutions of which play a key role in affecting local conditions in communities such as Jane-Finch, is discussed. Chapter 3 introduces the empirical focus of this thesis. The methodology employed is outlined. This is followed by the identification of the constraints placed upon the lives of the single parent population of Jane-Finch, which are seen to be affected greatly by policies adopted by the institutions of the welfare state. We conclude that the character of these policies is a partial outcome of the contradictory nature of capitalist social relations. Chapter 4 then looks at how the single parent population of Jane-Finch has organized itself to address these constraints. We then note the extent to which these groups have been successful in ameliorating the conditions they were established to confront, and in creating an environment helpful for further collective

action. Here again, the role of the welfare state as an enabling or constraining force is noted. In closing, Chapter 5 offers some conclusions about the relationship between the Canadian welfare state and collective action in Jane-Finch. The implications of this relationship for the future are discussed, and further areas of investigation are identified.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUALIZING COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the nature of the relationship between community-based collective initiative and the context within which it occurs. This involves examining the extent to which community movements are an outcome of, and in turn affect those conditions that influence the 'life paths' of the actors involved in the collective initiatives being discussed. Our understanding of this relationship then is used to develop a model, capable of accounting for the origins, life histories, and levels of success of the collective initiatives launched by the single parents of Jane-Finch.

Here, 'context' refers not just to the specific social conditions that prompt community organizing, but also to the causal mechanisms that underlie contemporary society. In this way, our model looks beyond empirical relationships, to assess the extent to which contemporary

community struggles can be linked to dynamics of capitalist social relations.

This chapter is structured in the following manner. Section 2 examines how the question of community struggle has been addressed in the marxist literature. Section 3 then develops a model that links community struggles and social context. Section 4 proceeds to focus upon the welfare state, one aspect of the social milieu of particular importance to the single parent population of Jane-Finch, given the service- and community-dependency of this group. It is illustrated how the institutions of the welfare state, which play a role in facilitating (or inhibiting) the formation and success of community organizations, constitute mediated outcomes of the contradictions underlying capitalist society. Section 5 concludes with a discussion of how the perspectives on community struggles presented in the chapter can be used to guide empirical investigation.

2.2 Conceptualizing Community Struggle

2.2.1 Community Struggle and Marxist Literature

The purpose of this section is to examine how the relationship between society and community action has been addressed in marxist literature. Here, it is important to note that a significant proportion of such work asserts

that this relationship represents an inappropriate focus for analysis. Therefore, we first must establish the legitimacy (in the context of the historical materialist framework) of emphasizing community struggles. Once this is accomplished, the debates that permeate the marxist work which does focus on conflict in the sphere of reproduction are outlined.

2.2.2 Collective Action and the Sphere of Reproduction

The most striking feature of the marxist approach to community struggle is not the nature or intensity of the debates over the relationship between capitalism and community initiatives, but the fact that most work in the field of marxist political economy does not regard collective action in the sphere of reproduction as an appropriate focus for analysis. This is partly because this area of study is a recent thrust in marxist work. Katznelson (1981, 200) notes that with the exception of Engel's study of housing conditions in Manchester, treatments of the community in Marxist work up until the 1960s were conspicuous by their absence. Even today, a focus upon collective action in the community still is questioned by a significant number of marxist theorists, who continue to see conflict in the sphere of production (or even just on the shop floor) as the only legitimate reflections at the level of appearances

of the contradictory nature of capitalist social relations (Roussopoulos 1982b). Therefore, before we proceed with a examination of the debates among those theorists who do examine collective action in the community, it is essential to establish the legitimacy of such an approach, within the logic of the historical materialist framework for analysis.

It is argued by marxist theorists such as Katznelson (1981), Mackenzie (1983), Prior and Purdy (1979) and Fincher (1984) that it is inappropriate to separate the sphere of production from the sphere of reproduction and consequently to argue that only conflicts in the former stem from the essential contradictions of capitalist society. Katznelson (1981, 203) asks:

By what justification are the social relations of work given a special or privileged status with respect to other sets of social relations, ... including the social relations of the community?

Fincher (1984) asserts that the traditional dismissal of the importance of community conflicts is based upon an unjustified conflation of the abstract and the concrete, that just because the essential contradictions of capitalist society are derived from the nature of the the capitalist mode of production, this does not mean that only those struggles involving economic actors are of relevance. At the 'level of appearances' complex relationships have evolved between the workplace and the community, with the

logic of capitalist production coming to permeate both. Thus as capitalist society has matured, social reproduction relationships have acquired a new importance, in comparison to production relationships in the strictest sense (Mingione 1981, 14). The outcome of this is that the arbitrary separation of production and reproduction 'divides the indivisible', and must be considered fallacious (Mackenzie 1983, 332).

Aglietta's work (especially 1979) is important here. He argues that while a society may be defined as 'capitalist', the thorough penetration of everyday life by capitalist social relations is an evolutionary process, and does not emerge fully developed. Thus there is a constant move, driven by competition between capitalists and by struggles between capital and labour, towards the domination of more and more areas of life by capitalist social relations, and towards the commodification of more and more aspects of human existence. Specifically, Aglietta partitions the capitalist era into two 'regimes of accumulation'.

This term is defined as "a form of social transformation that increases relative surplus value under the stable constraints of the more general norms that define absolute surplus value." (p. 68) Thus, the first of these, the 'extensive' regime of accumulation, largely centres upon efforts to increase relative surplus value by restructuring

the labour process within the sphere of production. As a result, the community is left largely unaffected. Its "traditional way of life may persist or be destroyed, but it is not radically recomposed by the logic of utilitarian functionalism" (p. 71). This approach to continued capital accumulation has its limitations, however, because: (i) restructuring the labour process can only go so far in increasing surplus value; and (ii) failure of capital to structure effectively the sphere of consumption means that the combined development of the two departments of production (capital goods and consumer goods) encounters recurrent obstacles (p. 71). As a result, the extensive regime of accumulation has been superseded in many capitalist nations by the intensive regime of accumulation. Here, relative surplus value is increased mainly through "creating a new mode of life for the wage-earning class" (p. 71). In essence, consumption is commodified, permitting the integration of the the two departments of production and making possible "a far more regular pace of accumulation and a far more rapid increase in the rate of surplus value" (p. 72).

In this way, capitalist social relations penetrate the community. Activities previously carried out on a 'production for use' basis are subjected to commodification, to a transformation to 'production for profit' (Mackenzie

1983). Individuals who had been in interaction with capitalist social relations only to the extent that they participated in the wage labour market now become important as consumers of commodified goods and services. At the same time, other people with no direct ties to the sphere of production (the chronically unemployed, recipients of family benefits, housewives/househusbands, the aged, and the disabled) find themselves integrated into the capitalist world system. Thus the life paths of more and more people in the sphere of reproduction are affected by the demands of capitalist production, either directly or through a state apparatus that reflects the logic of commodification (Castells 1977). Thus the struggles of such people must be seen to be struggles determined in part by the dynamics of capitalist social relations.

2.2.3 Debates over the Relationship between Society and Community Struggles

Even among those who accept that community struggles must not be viewed in isolation, but must be conceptualized in terms of the dynamics of capitalist society, there is considerable disagreement regarding the exact nature of the relationship between collective action in the community and society as a whole. Two key points of contention exist: (i) the extent to which community struggles are direct

concrete manifestations of the internal contradictions characteristic of the prevailing mode of production; and (ii) the potential for local initiatives not only to achieve their objectives, but to contribute to the transformation of the conditions that prompted collective action initially. It must be noted that these two issues are intrinsically related: the separation of collective action as a response to a set of conditions considered to be constraints on everyday life and collective action as a contributor to the formulation of a new set of conditions is an arbitrary one. The community groups in Jane-Finch exist in a milieu partially constituted by the actions of previous voluntary organizations, and, in a dialectical manner, in turn will help or hinder future local initiatives.

(i) Assessing the correspondence between underlying structure and collective action

Attention now is turned to the contentious issue of the link between the conditions that influence the formation and evolution of community-based collective action and the causal mechanisms associated with capitalist society. Below, we outline and assess the various perspectives on the relative roles of 'determination' and untheorizable 'contextual features' in giving rise to community groups and in guiding their 'life paths'.

Of course, many studies avoid this controversy surrounding the nature of the relationship between underlying causality and human practice. Some studies avoid becoming embroiled in this controversy by remaining essentially descriptive. Garner (1977) and Roussopoulos (1982c), for example, examine urban struggles in capitalist societies without formally identifying the link between the two. Other work, such as Draaisman and Hoogstraten (1983) focus upon the importance of community organizing, without identifying its relationships to causal mechanisms. Certainly, such studies may provide valuable evidence as to the capacity of people to engage in struggle and may illustrate the "do's" and "don't's" of community organizing. But they are unable to contribute to the development of a theory of community struggles under capitalism. It is to other work which does address itself to the question of the extent of the correspondence between the dynamics of capitalist society and local action that we turn our attention.

The first perspective on urban struggles employing marxist analysis is found in the work of the French structuralists. In an effort to explain the urban unrest sweeping Europe in the 1960s, members of this school of thought came to the conclusion that the evolution of capitalist society had lead to the manifestation of the contradictions

of that mode of production outside of the workplace. Such a conclusion could be reached because of the essential characteristics of structuralist thought, which transcended the narrow economism of 'doctrinaire' marxism by giving equal weight to the political and ideological spheres. For the sake of clarity, attention is focused below on the work of Manuel Castells (especially 1977), the most prominent structuralist working in the area of urban conflict. While the chief objective of this researcher was to identify 'urban social movements', systems of practices capable of playing a meaningful role in the challenging of capitalist hegemony (1977, 432), he did address the question of the relationship between social conditions and community organizing.

Castells argument went as follows: (i) the city has assumed a central role in capitalist reproduction (both physical and social); (ii) however, the inability of most individuals to purchase the goods and services they need to reproduce their labour power on the open market meant that more and more goods and service provision in the city took the form of 'collective consumption'; (iii) this permitted the focussing of urban discontent upon the apparatuses of the state, which together are responsible for collective consumption. As a result,

The development of urban movements is a general characteristic of advanced capitalism. They arise on the one hand, from the urban crisis which derives from the socialization of consumption; and on the other hand, from the political crises that results because state intervention in social life is being questioned (Castells 1978, 133-34).

In this conceptualization, human practice is seen to embody structural contradiction in an unmediated way. Certainly, Castells avoids the perils of economic determinism:

Since the urban structure is a concept, it paves the way for an analysis of a concrete situation, but is not capable of accounting for it, in so far as any concrete situation is made up of systems of practices, defined by their position in the structure but whose secondary effects express a relative autonomy, capable of redefining the situation - beyond their structural charge. (1977, 432)

However, Castells' concept of determination remains an all-encompassing one: practices that express a relative autonomy "are structured around practices that condense and summarize the situation as a whole, namely, political practices." (1977, 432).

The structuralist perspective on community organizing has been the subject of much criticism, however. In assessing the origins of local collective initiatives, Katznelson (1981, 211) argues that structuralists see community group formation as being too automatic, for "not all structural possibilities find historic expression." Specific collective initiatives must be seen as contingent outcomes that may (or may not) be determined by underlying causal mechanisms,

but that can never be direct responses to those mechanisms.

Piven and Cloward (1977, 20-21) agree:

People experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, and not as the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experiences that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets. Workers experience the factory, the speeding rhythm of the assembly line, the foreman, the spies and the guards, the owner and the paycheck. They do not experience monopoly capitalism. People on relief experience the shabby waiting room, the overseer or the case-worker. They do not experience American social welfare policy. Tenants experience the leaking ceiling and cold radiators, and they recognize the landlord. They do not recognize the banking, real estate and construction systems.... In other words, it is the daily experiences of people that shapes their grievances, establishes the measure of their demands, and points out the targets of their anger.

It therefore is essential to recognize that a wide variety of contextual features play a role in constituting the conditions against which people organize (Katznelson 1981, 222). Otherwise, there would be no way to account for the tremendous diversity in the conditions that prompt community groups to emerge (Pickvance 1976; 1985).

Furthermore, structuralists deal inadequately with the patterns of consciousness required to initiate urban struggles. The identification of a problem by members of a society is a necessary but insufficient condition for broad-based action: the ability to challenge the status quo is not only a matter of individual psychology (Katznelson

1981, 215). Specifically, the extent of "collective definition and interpretation may halt or facilitate movement action" (Garner 1977, 10). This collective spirit is not an automatic consequence of structural contradiction, however, nor can it be reduced to the outcome of links between community movements, trade unions, and the communist party (argued by Castells 1977). Political culture plays a key role in determining whether people have the capacity to transform their discontent into a social force, and the nature of such culture is not an unmediated reflection of underlying causality. E.P.Thompson (1966) demonstrates this admirably in his study of the formation of the English working class. Similarly, Katznelson (1981), in his study of community struggles in the United States, notes the traditional separation of organization in the workplace and in the community unique to that nation, and the consequent failure of a collectivist orientation to spread from the first to the second.

The structuralist perspective on community organizing has been further criticised for its failure to address adequately the links between collective initiatives and other social institutions and arrangements that exist beside them. Such links are important, for "the dependency of voluntary associations on the resources of other organizations ... makes co-operation and support a vital matter"

(Ross 1972, 22). Alternatively, opposition by state institutions, especially in their refusal to provide funding or in legal prescription, can be devastating (Djao 1983). Despite this, Castells, beyond emphasizing the role of linkages with parties of the left and trade unions, pays insufficient attention to social context. True, this inadequacy is acknowledged: in The Urban Question (1977) Castells admits that his analysis of urban movements "takes into consideration only the internal characteristics of the movement and their impact on the social structure" (p. 452). He sees that he must also include "the structural interests opposed to the movement, the organizational expressions of those interests, and the concrete practices of this opposition" (p. 452). Yet even when other social institutions are mentioned by Castells, he tends to see them in reductionist terms, as bearers of structural contradiction. Pickvance (1976, 203), for example, criticizes the axiom present in much structuralist work that "authorities will not grant changes which threaten the stability of the mode of production." This view must be regarded as fallacious: the actions of state institutions are the outcome of human practice, and so must be seen as contingent outcomes, not unmediated reflections of causal mechanisms. In any case, structuralists pay no attention to the mundane, but

nevertheless essential, impacts of social context upon community groups. Such groups usually depend on volunteers, and one's ability to be a volunteer is a function of family and income status. For example, as the empirical work outlined in Chapter 4 shows, the costs associated with childcare frequently deter low income single parents from participating in community groups. Furthermore, people bring special skills into a group (public speaking or a professional knowledge of city design, for example), skills they derive from other aspects of their lives (Pickvance 1976, 215). Thus contextual features must be considered in explaining the success (or lack thereof) of community organizations, as well as in accounting for their initial formation.

But how do we integrate an appreciation of context into a conceptualization of community organizing that also acknowledges the role of determination? A number of approaches have been developed in opposition to the one presented by the structuralist school. These now are outlined.

One approach has been to assert that certain concrete conditions are the outcome of structural determination, while others are the result of untheorizable factors specific to a given situation. This is the approach taken by Katznelson in his book City Trenches (1981). Here, he discusses the failure of the American working class to carry its sense

of collectivity beyond the workplace. He explains this problem in terms of 'political culture', but notes that this intervening variable finds no place in the understanding of community struggles found in structuralist work. Katznelson recognizes, however, the role of underlying causality and hence is reluctant to reject determination altogether. He suggests, then, that one possible approach would be to "marry a structural account of the urban crisis to the cultural inheritance of the American working class" (1981, 212).

This suggestion suffers, however from a number of serious inadequacies. Beyond the fact that Katznelson's position contradicts those parts of City Trenches which are strongly critical of structuralism, it is necessary to recognize that 'political culture' is not the only contextual feature that affects local organizations in the United States, and in other circumstances might be a negligible consideration. What one ends up with is very much an ad hoc explanation capable of shedding light upon one concrete outcome (or, at best a set of outcomes), but which can not contribute to the development of a general theory of community group formation and evolution. In any case, one must ask whether it is legitimate to treat contextual features such as political culture separately. Given the

thorough penetration of the community by the logic of capitalist production, it is reasonable to assert that most social arrangements and elements of the collective consciousness are subject to determination by the causal mechanisms associated with that mode of production.

A second alternative to the structuralist account is offered by Pickvance (1985). Central to his perspective is the concept of linked submodels, each of which can specify the relationship between an urban movement and its determinants holding under specific contextual conditions (1985, 39). He thus develops a typology of urban movements, and a second typology covering the contextual conditions that have an impact upon them. In adopting this perspective, Pickvance does not reject the notion of underlying structures, but does not integrate these structures into his framework for analysis.

This approach in turn has been the subject of criticism, however. Castells (1985, 56) condemns the contextual features presented by Pickvance as "a disparate collection of characteristics which are theoretically unjustified, conceptually undefined, and empirically wrong." Castells (1985, 55) also notes that one contextual feature, "the development of a middle class", fails to grasp the ambiguity of that term, while another contextual feature, "general economic

and social conditions", is so broad and imprecise as to be meaningless. In addition, Castells (1985:55) notes that Pickvance mixes the explanatory and explained variables, by having the tautological situation where "the disposition to political activism" is a contextual factor explaining political activism! These criticisms are about the specifics of the model, not about its underlying principles. Castells' third criticism, in contrast, questions the whole validity of Pickvance's approach. He argues (p. 57) that generalized typologies of contextual features largely are meaningless; they cannot serve as the basis for the explanation of specific struggles.

A third alternative to the structuralist understanding of community struggles is found in the recent work of Manuel Castells, especially The City and the Grassroots (1983). As with his earlier work, Castells does not focus on the origins and development of community groups, but on their role as agents of social change, through the incorporation or transformation of such groups into true 'urban social movements'. Nevertheless, the question of the link between society and local collective initiatives is addressed. Here, in a profound alteration of his perception of the nature of the urban, Castells proposes that we should not attempt to marry a structuralist approach to an underst-

anding of the contextual, but should reject the former theoretical framework entirely. Castells argues that his earlier attempts to conceptualize local struggles as being under the umbrella of marxist theory were misconceived; marxism should be conceptualized as:

a theory of capital and the development of history through the development of productive forces, while also being the theory of class struggle between social actors fighting for the appropriation of the product and deciding the organization of society. (1983, 298)

Marxism thus deals with contradiction and conflict in the economic realm. Therefore, communist parties, which are not a historical accident, but an integral part of marxism because "only the theory of the party can establish a bridge between structures and practices in the marxist construction" (1983, 299), must be grounded in the sphere of production. As a consequence, the formal articulation between labour and community struggles outlined in The Urban Question is rejected.

Thus to understand the emergence of community struggles, Castells argues that it is necessary to look beyond marxist theory, to develop a model capable of dealing with the relationships between "ethnicity, class and community." (1983, 300) Here, experience (structured around gender relationships), production (organized in class relationships) and power (founded on the state) are seen as the key forces in society

(1983, 306), and therefore the key determinants in the constitution of the milieu within which local collective initiatives are launched. Castells does not attempt, however, to incorporate these forces into a framework capable of theorizing 'context'; indeed, he asserts that we should abandon 'formalism' in understanding the processes of social struggle and social change (1983, 300). Following the philosophy laid out in the work of Alain Touraine, Castells argues that we should approach contextual conditions by detecting "the effects of these important characteristics in the process of the movement itself." (1985, 59) Context is not ignored, but is introduced in an admittedly ad hoc manner.

This perspective may be criticized for two reasons, however: (i) Castells' emphasis on the proletarian party as the sole bearer of structural contradiction; and (ii) his treatment of context in his model. First, as noted by Fincher (1986) we can challenge Castells' assertion that the only agents for social change which reflect the contradictions of capitalist society are parties composed of members of the proletariat. As previously noted, Aglietta (1977) has demonstrated that the logic of capitalist production has penetrated thoroughly the sphere of reproduction. This means we cannot see struggles in the community in isolation

from the dynamics of capitalist society (Katznelson 1981; Mackenzie 1983; Fincher, 1984). Hence it is fallacious to assume that only parties rooted in the workplace are outcomes of the contradictions that characterize the prevailing mode of production. Thus, in rejecting structuralism, Castells falls back on an 'economistic' understanding of marxism, and so concludes that community movements are out of the scope of that theoretical framework. Second, Castells has been criticized for his ad hoc approach to the incorporation of contextual features into his model. In a harsh review of The City and the Grassroots, Pickvance (1985, 35) argues that Castells has developed a model that "refers exclusively to characteristics of the movement, and ignores characteristics of the context in which the movement exists." Notwithstanding Castells' belief that elements of context should only be analysed in terms of their effects on movements, Pickvance (1985) argues that in building a general model, it is essential to develop a systematic understanding of factors such as coexistence with a broader political movement, the presence or absence of political parties, and state structure and government policy that constantly appear in Castells' case studies. Otherwise, there it is impossible to cope with the diversity that characterizes community struggles. Thus while The

City and the Grassroots contains a wealth of comparative data on community struggle, it falls short in providing a framework for the emergence and evolution of local collective action.

In summary, a number of efforts to provide an alternative to the structuralist approach to the origins and evolution of community struggle have been unsuccessful. But what would a successful theory of local collective action resemble? First, such a theory must present a formal articulation between community group formation and development and social context. Second, a theory of community collective action needs to recognize that all 'contextual conditions' are subject to determination. This means that we cannot say a priori that certain features are unaffected by the logic of the capitalist mode of production. Third, this determination is a mediated determination: a number of different mechanisms, along with contingent conditions, may play a role in influencing a particular institution, social arrangement, or element of human consciousness.

These insights have come to underlie a variety of marxist work. Yago and Blee (1982, 12), for example, note that:

efforts at community organization, consumer movements tax revolts, and the like may indeed be more fruitfully analysed as new varieties of inter- and intra-class conflicts in advanced

capitalism than as 'fringe' social movements with no class context. While the class character of consumption or state-related movements cannot a priori be assumed, it follows ... that neither can the class content of such movements be dismissed.

Similarly, Harvey (1978, 294) argues that local struggles are to be seen as mediated manifestations of "the deep underlying conflict between capital and labour" and that there is an "underlying unity between work-based and 'community based' conflicts." At the same time, others, such as Fincher (1984) and Knowles (1985), have undertaken analyses of community struggles that do see local collective action as being mediated reflections of the contradictory nature of capitalist society. Still, a specific conceptualization of the origins and development of local collective initiatives, based on a realist/historical materialist epistemology and recognizing the thorough penetration of the sphere of consumption, has not been undertaken. The model outlined later in this thesis paper therefore represents a cautious first step.

(ii) The transformative potential of community organizing

It is uncontentious to assert that community organizations are not just influenced by the social conditions around them, but can also serve to alter those conditions. First, locally-based collective initiatives can lead to

the amelioration of certain social problems, if they wholly or partially succeed in achieving their initial objectives. Second, under certain circumstances community organizations can serve to alter local conditions so as to increase the chances of success of future collective action. This is achieved because community groups, whether they are successful in achieving their objectives or not, have a 'feedback' affect on the popular consciousness and nexus of institutions that influence the fate of collective endeavours. In the realm of consciousness, participation in the type of community group examined in this thesis can allow people to get accustomed to taking responsibility, and to the process of collective decision making. In time, those people may become radicalized, in that, through dealing with state agencies and private capital, they may become more aware of the objective nature of the social relations that structure their lives. In this way a 'socialist consciousness' can emerge (Prior and Purdy 1979, 36-37). Such a consciousness is not "a disembodied ethereal state attainable only by committed revolutionaries who are 'in the know'" (Prior and Purdy 1979, 38), but is the result of participation in the appropriate social processes. As emphasized by Marx, it is our experience of the material world that is at the root of our perceptions of how the world operates. Similarly, collective initiatives

can also have an impact upon the set of institutions that circumscribe the actions of the voluntary sector. If community groups establish themselves as permanent bodies, they can play a role in forming and developing other groups, by lessening their dependence upon state agencies, or extra-local charitable organizations. Indeed, if a high level of 'networking' leads to the coordination of those organization in an urban area dedicated to the collectivist ethic, it is possible to see the emergence of movements capable of posing a challenge to the status quo (Castells 1983).

There is a great deal of disagreement, however, as to the potential long-term significance of such alterations in popular consciousness, and such transformations in institutional structure. The chief point of contention is this: is it possible to conceptualize community movements as playing a role in challenging the hegemony of capitalist social relations? In other words, under certain circumstances can community struggles be conceptualized as class struggles? Because this thesis emphasizes community groups as being affected by the milieu within which they exist, we will not concentrate upon the various arguments in favour or opposed to this assertion. However, in order to construct a model linking underlying structures to specific community struggles, it is necessary to determine whether the latter

can have a feedback effect on the former. Therefore, it shall be stated here that the potential for such feedback does exist: collective action in the sphere of reproduction can assist in the transformation of the causal mechanisms underlying capitalism (see, for example, Prior and Purdy 1979; Yago and Blee 1983; Fincher 1984).

2.3 Modelling the Relationship between Community Groups and the Social Structure

In this section, we develop a model based upon conclusions drawn from the debates outlined above, for the purpose of understanding community organization in a temporally and spatially specific context. This model, is outlined in Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

Reflecting the tenets of realism, Figure 2.1 offers a general overview of the relationship between human action, the context within which that action takes place, and underlying causal mechanisms. Four assertions are made:

- (i) The social context within which human action takes place is subject to determination by underlying structures. However, this determination is a mediated one: contingent factors also play a role.
- (ii) The nature of the underlying mechanisms are reinforced or negated by the nature of concrete social phenomena.
- (iii) Human action is a response to a specific set of social conditions.
- (iv) In turn, human action can alter those conditions.

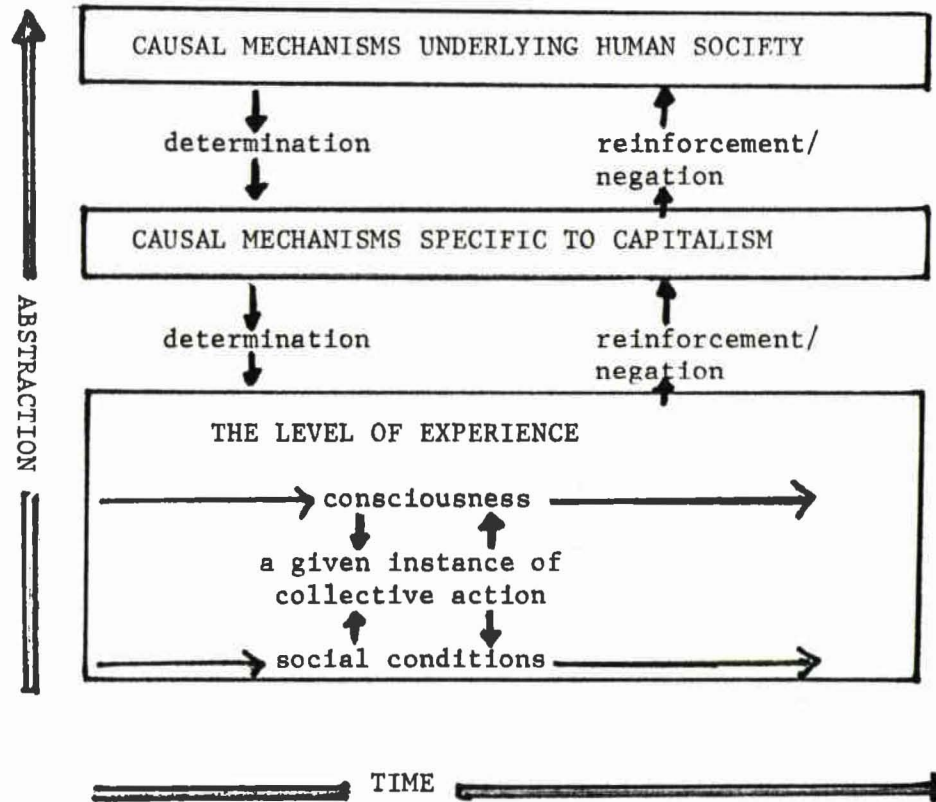


Figure 2.1: Social Context, Human Action and Levels of Abstraction

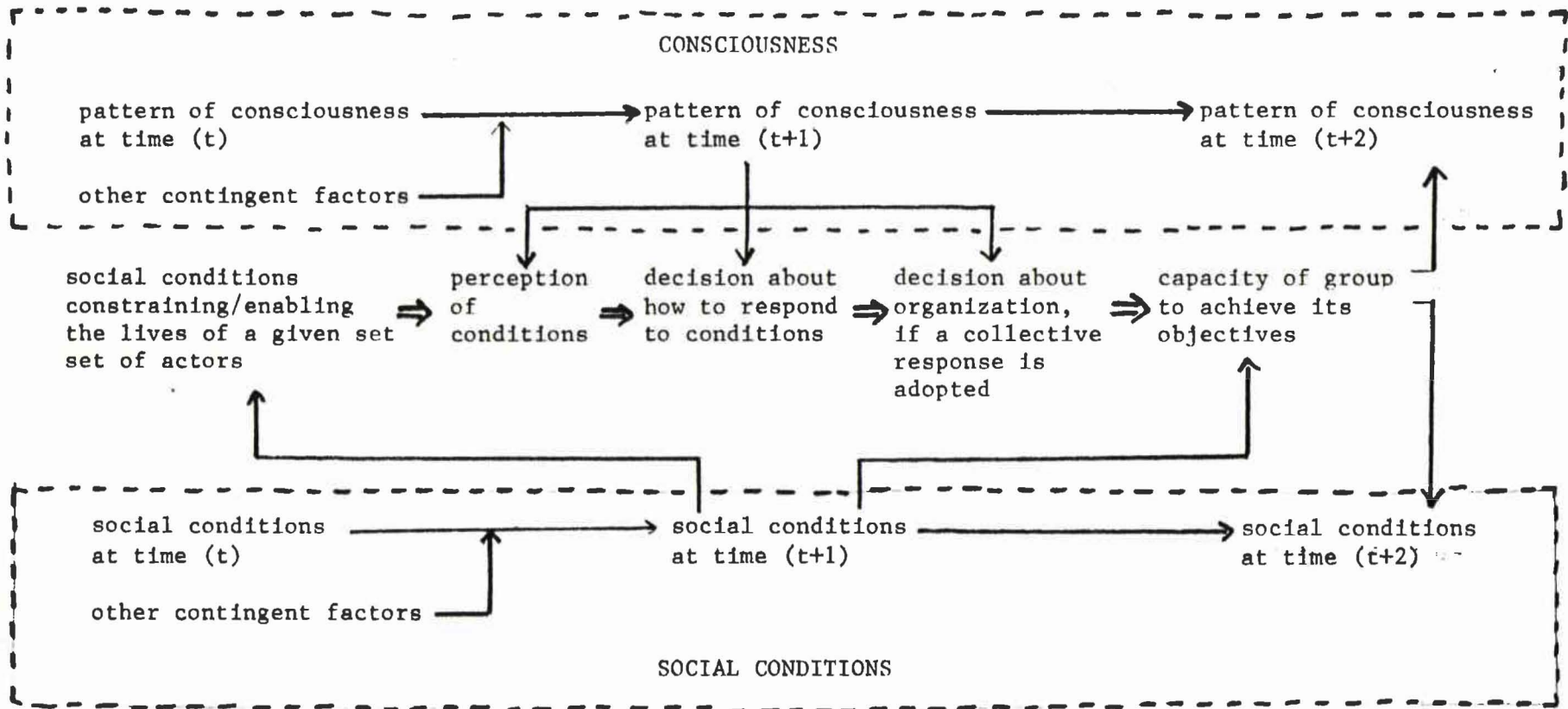


Figure 2.2: Links Between Social Conditions, Consciousness, and Collective Action

In this way, we can see the intrinsic role of human action in reinforcing the status quo, or in bringing about fundamental social change.

Figure 2.2 offers a more detailed account of the nature of the relationship between human action and the two key elements of social context: social conditions and patterns of consciousness. These in turn are the product of past social conditions and patterns of consciousness respectively, as well as of other contingent factors.

Working our way through Figure 2.2, we see that social conditions serve to constrain or enable the lives of given sets of actors. Equally important, however, is the perception of those conditions, and this is influenced by the concomitant pattern of consciousness; if constraints are not seen to be present, then people will not consider organizing to overcome them. If a problem indeed is seen to be present, the current pattern of consciousness comes to play another role: influencing whether a collective response is adopted. It is possible that the dedication to individualism is so great so as to preclude the possibility of joint action in problem solving. If a collective response is selected, then the existing patterns of consciousness has another impact: determining the policy objectives of the group, as well as the internal organization-type (co-

operative, 'professional', bureaucratic etc.) to be adopted. Social conditions again become a determinant, however, through their capacity to effect the ability of a collective initiative to achieve its objectives. Finally, we see how human action is not just an outcome, but potentially a force for change; Figure 2.2 shows how collective action has a feedback effect on both elements of social context. Social conditions can be altered through ameliorating the specific set of constraints the collective initiative was launched to resolve, through transforming the collective initiative in question into a permanent organization, or, to note another example, by convincing existing institutions to change their policies. At the same time, a given movement can alter people's perceptions as to the validity of the collective approach to problem solving.

2.4 The Welfare State and the Community

2.4.1 Introduction

If an attempt is to be made to explain those conditions that constrain the everyday lives of the single parents in Jane-Finch, it is necessary to identify the relationship between the causal mechanisms underlying capitalist society and the welfare state. The welfare state is defined as:

A liberal state which assumes responsibility for the well being of its citizens through a range of interventions in the market economy, e.g. full employment policies and social welfare services. The term includes both the idea of state responsibility for welfare as well as the institutions and practices through which the idea is given effect. (Mishra 1983, xi)

There are two reasons for adopting this focus on the welfare state. First, in contemporary capitalist society in general, the demise of the extended family as a unit of production and the trend towards people having few personal resources other than their labour power means that to an ever-increasing extent, individuals must look beyond the family unit for the fulfillment of their wants and needs (Djao 1983, 96). Due to its very nature, however, the capitalist marketplace is unable to provide all the necessary goods and services. Certain items, (public parks or a road network, for example) cannot be developed so that users are charged a fee, and the providers may make a profit. Other goods and services (such as police protection and medical care), could only be afforded by a minority of the population. A significant degree of consumption thus has taken the form of 'collective consumption' (Castells 1977). Institutions dedicated to the provision of goods and services for use, not for profit, must continue to exist. But what are these institutions? It is evident that while the churches and private charitable organizations play an important role, the state,

to an ever-increasing extent, has become the key player in the provision of social services; indeed, we can see a trend towards the 'statization' of society (Dear and Clark 1984). Second, this dependency on the welfare state is exacerbated in the case of Jane-Finch's single parents. As outlined in Chapter 3, the low incomes and family circumstances characteristic of this study group result in a high level of dependency upon the local community and upon the decommodified provision of goods and services. The institutions of the welfare state thus play a key role in constructing the milieu within which the single parents of Jane-Finch live their daily lives.

In this section it is emphasized that the welfare state is not a 'solution' to the problems stemming from the contradictions characteristic of capitalism. Instead, the welfare state represents an outcome of those contradictions. It is demonstrated that the structural inability of capitalist society to be reproduced spontaneously leads to the necessity of having a regulatory agent capable of regulating production and facilitating reproduction. The state is seen to represent such a regulatory agent, though its linkage with the existing pattern of social relations is a complex one, and we must not forget that specific state institutions may be brought into existence due to

collective struggles. Finally, it is asserted that the emergence of an all-encompassing set of state institutions is not a solution to the problems of capitalist society, for the capacity of those institutions to provide decommodified goods and services, and the manner in which they are provided, are themselves subject to constraint.

2.4.2. The State under Capitalism

Capitalism is incapable of its own spontaneous regeneration. The contradictions inherent in that mode of production (outlined in Mishra 1984) lead to a constant tendency toward crisis (Shaikh 1978; Rigby and Webber 1985). The crises of capitalism are not limited to the workplace: given the penetration of the sphere of reproduction by the logic of capitalism (Aglietta 1977), crisis directly affects the community also.

It is essential, therefore, for there to exist regulatory mechanisms, to facilitate the continued existence of capitalist society. In the words of Clark and Dear:

The inability of capitalism to guarantee its economic regeneration and the continued threat of class related political disorder implies the need for some systematic mediating agency. This agency must maintain the vital production and reproduction institutions of capitalist society, and possess the necessary political authority to protect these institutions when they are threatened (1984, 4).

Through exclusive rights to the utilization of de jure authority, such mechanisms can assist capitalist production by regulating inter- and intra-class conflicts, and by creating the conditions needed to permit the penetration of capital into new areas. Furthermore, such regulatory agencies can provide a conduit through which part of the surplus value extracted by capital may be appropriated to provide for the physical and social reproduction of the existing set of class relations.

These regulatory mechanisms taken together constitute the state. Given the role of collective struggles, the political process and other contingent factors in determining the nature and policies of government bodies, the state cannot be seen as a theoretical entity. We therefore reject the frequently-stated assertion (see, for example, Hirsch 1978, 97) that the state as an institution embodying certain powers and separated from direct control by one group is a necessary feature of capitalist society. This, of course means that more specific conceptual terms, such as the 'local state' (see Fincher's 1981 critique of Cockburn's 1977 use of this term) and the 'welfare state' are only meaningful in a specific context.

It is insufficient to say that the state as regulatory mechanism is required to deal with the outcomes at the

level of appearances of the contradictory nature of capitalist social relations. We also must address the question of how such institutions emerge, and what are their relationships to the broader society. In investigating these issues, the scope of inquiry is limited through the recognition of two a priori assumptions. First, it is argued that a specific set of state institutions must be linked inexorably to the world within which they are found. This 'society-centred' approach is a reflection of the historical materialist perception that social phenomena must be analysed as parts of a broader system, not as 'independent variables' (Clark and Dear 1984). In the words of Marx (quoted in Hirsch 1978):

Legal relations as well as [the] form of [the] state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life.

The implication of this is that:

the starting point of an analysis of the bourgeois state must therefore be the examination of the 'anatomy of bourgeois society', that is, an analysis of the specifically capitalist mode of social labour, the appropriation of the surplus product and the resulting laws of reproduction of the whole social formation, which objectively give rise to the particular political form. (Hirsch 1978, 58)

A second basic assumption about the nature of the state asserts that this set of institutions is an important actor in the structuring of society, and not, as certain classical

marxist theorists would assert, 'parasitic' or 'epiphenomenal' in nature (Hirsch 1978). This is especially true in contemporary capitalist society, where state institutions play a fundamental role in structuring our conditions of existence, both in the workplace and in the community.

Within the framework established by these two guiding assertions, a number of opposing perspectives on the state are evident in the marxist literature. It is not the purpose of this thesis to compare and contrast these; Jessop (1977) and Clark and Dear (1984) provide summaries of the 'state debate'. Instead, the perspective on the state employed herein is outlined. This is the 'materialist' perspective on the state, best represented in the work of Hirsch (1978; 1981) and Holloway and Picciotto (1978).

This perspective has a number of key tenets. First, the materialist theory of the state conforms to the notions of the links between underlying structures and elements of the level of appearances developed in this thesis. This means that the state is subject to determination by the causal mechanisms associated with the dominant mode of production. As a result, the policy initiatives launched by state institutions cannot transcend the contradictions associated with those causal mechanisms; the bourgeois state

cannot act as a regulator of the social process of development, but must be understood in the determination of the concrete functions as a reaction to the fundamentally crisis-ridden course of the economic and social process of reproduction. (Hirsch 1978, 97)

Second, this perspective on the state supports a specific theory of the political, despite numerous protestations to the contrary (Clark and Dear 1984, 84). Determination is emphasized, but so is the role of contingent relations: state institutions are seen as mediated reflections of underlying structures. Hirsch (1978, 107), for example, notes that: "the class character of the state must be noted out in its historical concreteness." In light of this, an analysis of changes in the state must analyse the interplay of human agents, not just transformations in the underlying causal mechanisms:

The concrete activities and measures of the state come into being not as a result of the abstract logic of a given social structure or of an objectively given historical process of development but only under the pressure of political movements and interests which ... actually succeed in pressing home their demands. (Hirsch 1978, 65)

The very political nature of the dynamics surround the policy-making process thus is recognized.

Third, the materialist perspective offers a way to explain the autonomy of the state. It has been argued that the appearance of autonomy is important in legitimizing

the existing pattern of social relations (Piven and Cloward 1982); in capitalist society, people perceive that the appropriation of surplus value does not depend upon direct relations of force or dependence, but upon the blind operations of the market (Hirsch 1978, 61). The materialist perspective proceeds one step further, and asserts that the independence of the state is more than mere appearance. It is believed that state institutions "seek to ... guarantee the collective interests of all members of a class society dominated by capital" (Offe 1984, 120). State programs are motivated by a number of factors, but all such programs must be financed through deductions from accumulation, meaning that 'institutional self-interest' demands that accumulation be facilitated (Offe, 1984, 121). Of course other determinants also play a role, and may negate this influence. Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that the outcomes of state policies, or of events outside of the political arena, may lead to the evolution of a society in which the logic of capitalist production is not preeminent.

Using this framework, it is possible to see the evolution of the state and state functions not as a passive reflection of the changing dynamics of society, but as the result of the actions of human beings constrained by a variety of contingent conditions, influenced by a political

process that has a life of its own, and structured by the necessity to engage in the management of the crises that threaten to undermine the accumulation that lies at the base of the capitalist state.

2.4.3 Crisis in the Welfare State

Through the twentieth century, the contradictions of capitalist society have increasingly become manifest (O'Connor 1973). In response, old institutions have had their powers altered or expanded, and new ones have emerged. This transformation began in the 1930s, when the Great Depression threatened to bring down the capitalist system, and gained momentum in the post-Second World War period (Mishra 1984). The result was a new state form, which has been labelled the welfare state. Thus we cannot see the welfare state as being a post-capitalist phenomenon. Instead, its emergence represented the logical outcome of the application of Keynesianism to state policy, and thus represented part of an effort to ensure the survival of capitalist society. As such, the welfare state was accepted to a greater or lesser extent in most of the major capitalist nations. Certainly, it came under attack from a number of economists and anti-collectivists (for example, Hayek 1973; Friedman 1962) who continued to advocate a laissez faire policy for the state. However, the consensus

through the 1950s and 60s was that the welfare state was working, and represented the best way to address the problems still confronting society. Thus among the western industrialized nations, "the correction of social imbalances through social programs and services became an almost bi-partisan policy" (Mishra 1984, 4). Parliamentary socialists believed that certain socialist aims could be reached through existing social and political institutions. In light of this, they saw the welfare state as a progressive step. Even many conservative factions realized that the redistribution of wealth was not a 'zero sum game', taking from the rich to give to the poor (Mishra 1984, 4). Indeed, this insight reflected the essence of the welfare state, as argued by its chief theorists, Keynes (for example, 1920) and Beveridge (for example, 1969). They asserted that "state intervention and service provision would complement the market economy." (Mishra 1984, 7)

Since the early 1970s, however, the capacity of the welfare state to manage the economic upheavals and social inequities that stem from the contradictory nature of capitalist society has been seriously eroded. In many western nations, extensive cutbacks in state expenditure, especially that associated with the decommodified provision of services to individuals, have occurred. These are

most evident in Britain under Thatcher (see, for example, Leonard 1979) and the United States under Reagan (see Piven and Cloward 1982); as demonstrated in this thesis, however, Canada has not been immune. Furthermore, it has become evident that the bureaucratized nature of social service delivery is becoming increasingly inadequate, and has led to the allocation of resources and the establishment of procedures that are not in the interests of the relevant client groups. Indeed, these problems have led to what Mishra (1984) calls 'a crisis of legitimacy'. In a period of 'stagflation', that has characterized the western world from 1973 onward, people in the business sector began to question the positive role of the state in facilitating accumulation. Increasingly, it began to be argued that state institutions were impeding the operations of the marketplace (Mishra 1984, 19). Such beliefs were articulated in popular works such as Friedman and Friedman (1980). This left only the social, or Beveridgian, aspects of the welfare state with any degree of legitimacy. But, now this has begun to be questioned also. Perhaps, the reproductive functions that have accrued to the state since the Second World War should be returned to traditional institutions, such as the church and family. Increasingly, big government has begun to be seen as the problem, not as the solution

(Woodside 1984). As seen in Reaganism and Thatcherism, such sentiments have given impetus to the further restructuring (dismantling?) of the social service structures of the welfare state, despite the fact that this imperils the necessity for producing a suitable labour force and maintaining the legitimacy of the existing social system.

It is now argued that cutbacks in expenditure and inadequate nature of social service provision are results of the fact that in attempting to manage the economic and social crises of contemporary society, the welfare state cannot transcend the contradictions that led to those crises. Certainly, specific state forms may succeed in regulating production and reproduction for a given period, in that policies are implemented that forestall or ameliorate crises. The regulatory capacity of that state form can be eroded, however, owing to its inability to cope with changing social and economic conditions. Indeed, this breakdown may be partially a result of the nexus of policies previously adopted; for, in the long run, such policies can exacerbate the contradictions of capitalist social relations.

It is evident empirically that over the last decade, cutbacks in social expenditure have been widespread in the western industrialized nations (see O'Connor 1973 and Piven and Cloward 1982 for a discussion of the situation

in the United States; Beamish 1981 and Djao 1984 for an analysis of what has happened in in Canada; and Leonard 1979 and Gough 1980 for a discussion of cutbacks in Britain). How can we account for this trend? One approach is provided by the concept of the fiscal crisis of the state, first formulated in O'Connor (1973) and since developed by a variety of marxist theorists, especially Gough (1980). This crisis is a result of the fact that the two functions that must be fulfilled by state institutions -- production and reproduction -- are contradictory in nature. The first of these functions can be seen to correspond to certain of the expenditures encompassed by the marxist category of social investment: namely, those directed towards creating the conditions for further accumulation, through direct support for private capital (subsidies, provision of infrastructure, etc.). In contrast, reproduction refers to those elements of social investment that support accumulation only indirectly (ensuring the training of a suitably trained workforce, or maintaining the reserve army of labour, for example), or else to those activities encompassed by the marxist category of social expenditure. These involve measures that do not directly support capital accumulation, but that help to maintain the legitimacy of the existing social relations. Included here would be social assistance

to marginalized groups in society (such as the elderly, the disabled, and single parents), which maintain the image of the state as being for the 'common good' (O'Connor 1973, 6-7). The key problem here is that while state expenditure for both production and reproduction represent deductions from capital accumulation, the returns from the latter are not immediately realized. This means that expenditure in the sphere of reproduction must necessarily be limited; even if the state, in managing the crises of capitalist society, sees the need for implementing reproduction strategies necessary for the long term preservation of capitalism, these cannot go so far as to threaten current accumulation. In times of economic growth, this restriction need not be a serious limitation. When the 'economic pie' is expanding, it is possible to increase social expenditure in absolute terms, while not increasing (indeed, even reducing) the percentage of aggregate surplus value that must be appropriated (Finkel 1977). Difficulties, however, are experienced in times of economic crisis. Social expenditure at a level needed to cope with the effects of the crisis, or even at the level found previously would threaten short-term accumulation, meaning that there is incentive for the state to restructure its social welfare system. As note by O'Conner (1973, 2) some possible options are to increase

personal income taxes, place limitations on increases in government salaries, or to resort to deficit financing. Experience has shown, however, that these have a limited impact. A fourth option therefore is of great importance: cutting back on state services.

Furthermore, O'Connor (1973, 2-9) argues that this fiscal dilemma is not one to be solved with the return of a booming economy. He believes that in facilitating the expansion of monopoly capitalism and in dealing with the social consequences of such expansion (a point expanded upon in Aglietta 1979), it has become necessary for the state to address more and more needs. As a result, there is a tendency for government expenditures to outrace revenues. There is a need to consider cutbacks even in times of economic growth, while the need for state institutions to restructure themselves in times of recession become all that much more imperative.

It is certainly possible to criticize this analysis of the fiscal crisis of the state. Firstly, inadequate attention is placed on the role of the political process and of contingent conditions in the structuring of the policies pursued by the welfare state. In essence, theorists such as O'Connor and Gough are utilizing a structuralist framework for analysis. Secondly, their explanation can

be perceived as being overly functionalist in nature. As Mishra (1984, 70) notes in his critique of Gough (1980), an excessive amount of emphasis is placed on the "needs of capital", without adequately articulating how these abstract needs determine state policy. Similarly, while the role of working class pressure is acknowledged by Gough, the way that this second determinant is related to the first is not adequately illustrated, meaning that the use of the formula "needs of capital plus class struggle equals the welfare state involves quite a bit of tight-rope walking," for, in essence, the welfare state is good and bad at the same time (Mishra 1984, 71).

At the same time, however, the notion of the fiscal crisis of the state is of use if we conceptualize it as one element of the framework within which the state must operate. The contradiction between production and reproduction can be seen to have an impact upon the policies pursued by state institutions, given their dependence upon further capital accumulation. True, collective struggles, the political process, and other contingent factors create situations where state institutions pursue goals incompatible with short term capital accumulation, or else can contribute to the emergence of a society less dependent upon deductions from private capital accumulation for social advancement.

However, we definitely can assert that in the present social context, a need to maintain short term capital accumulation is one key determinant of the policies of the capitalist state.

Thus cutbacks in state funding represent one outcome of the failure of the welfare state to transcend the contradictions of capitalist society. It can also be argued, however, that it is not only cutbacks in the level of funding that has threatened the legitimacy of the welfare state, but also the way in which social services are provided to the public. First, such social service provision has been subjected to a high degree of professionalization. The relevant state apparatuses are thus characterized by considerable autonomy, meaning that social service professionals are free to establish their own objectives, policies, and standards. Political interference is frowned upon, and input from client groups is not considered as important as the educated decisions of the official involved (Djao 1984, 190). As a result, the packages of benefits provided may not be the ones most appropriate. Second, the size and complexity of the social service system has increased significantly, meaning there has been a growth in bureaucratization; 'following the rules' becomes more important than providing services (Djao 1984, 89-90). As indicated in chapter 3

of this thesis, this frequently means that the policies adopted by the social service bureaucracy often represent a source of oppression to client groups. In the interest of bureaucratic expediency, a reluctance to deviate from 'the rules', people's lives are placed under further constraint.

How, however, can these features of social service delivery be seen to be outcomes of the contradictory nature of capitalist social relations? As noted previously, it is essential that if state institutions are to act as crisis managers, they must be separated from the control of specific interests in society. As Offe (1984, 131) notes, the influence of specific special interests groups on the formation of policy represents the most important obstacle to the efficient performance of governments. It is perceived that 'rationality' (measured by the presence of policies oriented towards the maintenance of an environment suitable for the steady accumulation of capital) is limited to state apparatus characterized by a high degree of autonomy. The professionalization of the social services, leading as it does to a formalized delivery system with little room for external input, thus facilitates rationality in this sector. Similarly, the growth of bureaucracies through the centralization of functions, a strategy pursued in

a number of western capitalist nations (Hirsch 1981, 604), mitigates the effects of popular political pressure on those functions, either by service users demanding increased benefits or conservative interests demanding a reduction in service to permit tax cuts. Finkel (1977) addresses this issue with regards to the reallocation of responsibility for welfare provision in Canada from the city to the provincial level. The fact that these moves have lead to the problems outlined about indicates again that the welfare state cannot transcend the contradictions which gave rise to it, and that measures adopted at one instance can cause problems later.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has achieved two things. First, it has developed a model linking community struggle, social context, and the structures underlying contemporary society. The social arrangements and elements of consciousness that lead to neighbourhood collective action were seen to be mediated outcomes of the causal mechanisms underlying capitalist society, while community struggles themselves have the potential to negate those causal mechanisms. Second, this chapter demonstrated the role of the welfare state in linking

the essential nature of capitalist society with the social conditions of importance in service- and community-dependent communities.

CHAPTER 3: THE CONTEXT FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter has two objectives: (i) to identify those historically-specific conditions that have an impact upon the everyday lives of the single parent population of Jane-Finch; and (ii) to determine the nature of the relationship between these conditions and the causal mechanisms that underlie capitalist society. Through achieving these objectives, we can achieve a better understanding of the constitution of those conditions that stimulate community-based collective action.

This chapter is organized in the following manner. Section 2 outlines the methodologies employed in the two empirical chapters of this thesis. Section 3 then notes a way in which the constraints that have an impact upon everyday life can be organized; such a framework is needed to lend some structure to the subsequent analysis of the impacts of community conditions on the single parents of Jane-Finch. Section 4 attempts to identify the links between these conditions and the underlying structure of capitalist

society. Building upon the analysis of the linkages developed in the latter part of Chapter 2, attention is focused upon the nature of the Canadian welfare state, given that government policy plays a key role in structuring the community environment, and has a special impact upon marginalized groups such as single parents. This task accomplished, Sections 5 and 6 subsequently identify the specific income and built environment constraints that pertain to single parents in Jane-Finch, and demonstrate the extent to which these are rooted in the nature of capitalist society through the mediations of state policy. Finally, Section 7 notes the ways in which this analysis can help us to illustrate the operation of the model of collective action developed at the end of the previous chapter.

3.2 Methodology

The two empirical chapters of this thesis address three tasks in sequence: (i) identifying the nature of the Canadian welfare state; (ii) outlining those social conditions that have an impact upon the single parent population of Jane-Finch; and (iii) identifying how certain members of this group have organized to challenge these conditions. The first two of these tasks are carried out in this chapter, while the third is addressed in Chapter 4. Below, the approaches taken and information sources employed are outlined, as are some of the limitations encountered.

The discussion of the Canadian welfare state is drawn exclusively from secondary sources. since an extensive body of literature exists on this subject. Adopting such an approach has one problem, however: much of the existing literature on the Canadian welfare state tends to be functionalist (e.g. Beamish 1981, Finkel 1977, Macrou 1980). Policies are related to the 'needs' of capital, either in ensuring production or reproduction. Such an approach, however, is incompatible with the concept of the materialist state employed in this thesis. As noted in Chapter 2, the materialist state sees state policy as being the work of human agents encompassed by a set of constraints that stem from sources not limited to the logic of the prevailing mode of production. In other words, we must not deduce the forms the state takes in practice from the roles we allocate it. True, under present conditions, the operation of the state is greatly facilitated through the acceptance of the logic of capitalist production, but, at the same time, the nature of the political process also has an impact. The success of struggles by groups that oppose the hegemony of capitalist social relations, the division of powers between the different levels of the Canadian state, along with other contingent factors stemming from the dynamics of day-to-day communications, all play a role in constituting state actions. Given that this thesis does not have as its central research question the derivation of state policy,

we cannot hope to analyse all the relevant state policies in terms of these considerations, meaning we must employ secondary sources that are functionalist. For this reason, we must be cautious about the conclusions of this work regarding the links between underlying social relations and policy.

The second empirical task involves identifying the nature of the social conditions affecting the life paths of Jane-Finch's single parents. Here, little evidence is available in published form. Therefore, I have relied to a great extent upon interviews with community residents and people involved in social service delivery. In the text, these interviews are identified by upper case attributions: e.g. (DAY). This reliance on interviews leads to two difficulties. For one thing, while claims about the policies adopted by government bodies or agencies such as the United Way can be confirmed by interviewing officials of those institutions, the effects of such policies cannot be identified so easily. Often, people's impressions about their community are as important as the objective reality in the formation of constraints upon everyday life. Another difficulty related to the use of interviews is that the Jane-Finch residents questioned were not selected at random, but mainly were people involved in the community's voluntary sector. This represented the only viable approach given the funding limitations of this project, and has the additional

advantage of focusing upon people who probably were more knowledgeable than average about local conditions. However, such an interviewing procedure has led to a biased sample. The feelings and attitudes attributed to the community as a whole by the people interviewed may not be wholly accurate.

The third empirical task addressed herein involves identifying the collective initiatives launched by the single parent population of Jane-Finch. Here, a 'case-study' case was adopted. Interviews (again, represented by upper case attributions) were conducted with people involved in the four groups selected, relevant studies were consulted, and (when available) group publications were examined. It must be noted, however, that this approach has two limitations. First, we cannot assert that the experiences of the groups studied are wholly representative. Certainly, the preferred method would have begun with a comprehensive survey of community-based groups in Jane-Finch. From these, we could have identified for further study those with a high level of participation by (or orientation towards the concerns of) single parents. However, such an approach was impossible, given the financial and time constraints of this study. The second limitation involves the lack of comparability. A study that spanned more than one community would permit us to gain insight into why differing levels of collective organization and differing levels of success

are found in different communities. Again, however, such a study was beyond the scope of this thesis.

3.3 Conceptualizing Constraints on Everyday Life

The conditions affecting the single parents of Jane-Finch can be grouped into two broad categories: (i) those that influence the level of their personal or family resources; and (ii) those that characterize the built environment with which they interact. The importance and very nature of the conditions in this second category are largely a function of those in the first. How an individual interacts with the surrounding environment is fundamentally dependent upon the level of personal or family resources to which that individual has access.

It must be emphasized that these constraint categories are not theoretical, but are used to organize empirical phenomena. Certainly, these types of constraints are universal to human society, in that they are not limited to a given historical period or a specific mode of production. However, to say that these constraints affect a given group of human agents at a given time is a tautology, unless we identify the form these constraints take in this situation. Furthermore, we cannot say that the specific constraints encompassed by these categories are unmediated reflections of the prevailing mode of production. Certainly, underlying structures have an impact upon the nature of social-economic conditions,

and upon whether those conditions constitute constraints, but a multitude of contingent factors also play a role here.

In contemporary capitalist society, 'personal resources' can be equated with monetary income, derived from participation in the wage labour force, or from wage substitutes in the form of social assistance. This situation results from the separation of most people from control over the means of production: most individuals are incapable of maintaining themselves at a socially acceptable level of subsistence using their own resources. As a result, obtaining an income through the sale of one's labour power represents the only way to make a living for the majority of the population.

In Canada today, low income does not necessarily mean absolute deprivation. However, low income does influence the nature of one's interaction with the built environment. First, given that housing in contemporary capitalist society is generally both commodified and unevenly distributed, residential location decisions are circumscribed by how much money is available for expenditure on shelter. Second, the quality of one's housing and one's legal relationship to that housing are influenced by income. Third, the importance of the immediate built environment is a function of personal wealth. Because the use of transportation facilities is subject to user fees (in the case of public transit) or is treated as a commodity (in the case of private automo-

biles), access to other built environments for the purposes of employment or gaining access to goods and services is also largely determined by income. Thus we can say that low income people are relatively more community dependent than those with higher incomes. Furthermore, income plays a role in establishing the level of an individual's service dependency. This concept has been developed with reference to groups such as ex-psychiatric patients (Dear 1981), the elderly (Dear, Fotheringham and Hayes 1979), probationers and parolees and the physically disabled (Beamish 1981). Here, however, it is argued that service dependency can be extended to all groups with a less than average capacity to fulfill their socially defined wants and needs through participation in the capitalist marketplace. As a result, people come to depend upon the decommodified provision of goods and services in order to subsist. This has been demonstrated recently in a report by the Social Planning Council of St. Catherines and Thorold (1983), which noted a clear correlation between the use of such decommodified provision and low income.

Certainly, these constraints do not encompass all those factors that structure everyday life. For one thing, they do not account for the origin of the special needs that characterize different groups in society. In the case of single parents, for example, a particular requirement for childcare affects the nature of their interaction with

the built environment. An understanding of this need entails an appreciation of the demise of the traditional support network of the extended family, and of recent trends in divorce and child custody. At the same time, the low incomes that typically characterize this group (largely a result of the fact that most single parents -- 81 percent in the Toronto CMA -- are female), lead to a need for either income support, housing support and/or social services designed to accommodate single parents' community and service dependency. An understanding of these special needs would require an appreciation of the status of women in the workforce. Nonetheless, the two constraint categories outlined above represent an appropriate way to organize those constraints that define the environment within which the single parents of the Jane-Finch area exist.

3.4 State Policy and the Structuring of the Community

3.4.1 The Welfare State in Canada

In order to understand the relationship between the conditions encompassed by these constraint categories and capitalist social relations, it is necessary to examine the nature of the Canadian state. As noted by Finkel (1977), the steady increase in state intervention in the sphere of reproduction is an integral part of the Canadian experience. This trend is of even more significance in the context of the population group emphasized herein. As noted below,

the single parents of Jane Finch are more dependent upon the state than average, owing to their reliance on social assistance payments, their occupancy of public housing, and their community and service dependency.

Below, the evolution of the Canadian welfare state is first outlined briefly. Next, it is demonstrated that this set of institutions reflect the fiscal limitations and bureaucratic organization that represent the essential contradictions of the state under capitalism. Conforming to the concept of the materialist state (outlined in Chapter 2), these contradictions are not seen, however, to be the only cause for state incapacity. It is recognized that contingent factors, especially the complex division of powers found in Canada, also represent determinants of state policy.

3.4.2 Historical Evolution

During the economic dislocation and social upheavals of the Great Depression, the policy orientation of the Canadian state underwent a fundamental transformation. True, the various levels of government had never adopted a pure *laissez-faire* orientation towards business (see, for example, early state involvement in the railway industry: Finkel 1977), nor have social issues been totally neglected (see Bellamy and Irving 1981 for a discussion of early social welfare legislation). However, the 'interventionist

state' that emerged in the early 1930s represented a distinct break with the past.

While intervention in the economy and in the provision of social security were key demands of the rapidly growing Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and other socialist movements, Finkel (1977) argues that a key consideration was that in dealing with the crises of the Great Depression, the state was obliged to act in a way that facilitated accumulation. In order to preserve their own integrity, and to finance the economic and social programs they desire, it was necessary for people in the state to adopt policies meant to stave off the collapse of the whole system. It was recognized by many government leaders that the traditional relationship between the state and society in Canada needed to be reconsidered, in light of a radically new set of conditions. Thus, in the words of R.B. Bennett, Prime Minister from 1930 until 1935:

A good deal of pruning is sometimes necessary to save a tree and it would be well for us in Canada to remember that there is considerable pruning to be done if we are to preserve the fabric of the capitalist system. (quoted in Finkel 1977, 351)

This new policy of interventionism saw the introduction of social assistance measures such as unemployment insurance, and lead to the centralization and co-ordination of welfare assistance. These measures "put a floor on the standard of living", thus facilitating accumulation by preserving people out of work. Furthermore, such measures were introduced

to co-opt working class agitation; it was recognized that sending in the militia to break up a strike was no longer an adequate form of social control (Finkel 1977). Since the 1930s, there has been a proliferation of state social programs, reflecting the fact that Canada was beginning to experience some of the problems characteristic of mature capitalist economies. Most of these programs were provincially run, a result of the the constitutional division of powers between the two levels of government (Wharf 1981), though Ottawa has maintained an element of de facto control, due to the role of transfer payments in financing social programs.

In summary, then, beginning in the late 1930s, the state in Canada began to assume a greater responsibility for social reproduction. An essential determinant of this was that it was recognized that further capital accumulation rested on state intervention in the community as well as the workplace.

3.4.2 Contradictions in the Canadian Welfare State

As argued in Chapter 2, the creation of a welfare state does not represent a long term 'solution' to the contradictions of capitalist society. A given set of state institutions and policies may work at one time, but built-in limitations may not permit them to adapt to changing circumstances. In this section, the limitations associated with the contradictory relationship between production and reprod-

uction and with the nature of the social service delivery system are employed to explain the crises experienced by the Canadian welfare state beginning in the early 1970s. The role of contingent factors is then recognized, in a discussion of the impact of the division of powers between federal, provincial and local governments.

O'Connor's concept of the 'fiscal crisis of the state' finds an empirical correlate in the budgetary problems facing the various levels of government in Canada in the the 1970s through the early 1980s. The fundamental problem for the Canadian welfare state was that while the demand for welfare services increased steadily, the revenues available to meet such demands have not. The appropriation of a greater proportion of the profits of private capital was not a viable option, for the Canadian economy was in a state of crisis. As seen in Webber and Rigby (1985), the aggregate rate of profit, the fundamental index of crisis, fell substantially through the 1970s and early 1980s. This also was reflected in more conventional economic indicators. For example, the national unemployment rate increased steadily through the 5.7 percent level in 1970 to 11.9 percent in 1983 (Dept. of Finance 1984). True, overall economic growth occurred in this period, but increases in real GNP per capita were erratic, and on the average were lower than in the past. Indeed, real GNP declined in 1983, for the first time since the early 1950s (Dept. of

Finance 1984). As a result of this crisis, corporate income taxes dropped steadily as a proportion of the total revenues of the Federal from 17.4 percent in 1975 to 10.8 in 1982 (Statistics Canada, Canada Yearbook, various issues), while in Ontario there was a reduction from 12.7 percent to 7.0 (Ontario Ministry of Treasury and Economics, 1984). The corporate profits simply were not there to tax, while legislation was altered to give the corporate sector tax breaks (Calvert 1984). The other way to pay for additional social expenditure (indeed, the way most commonly used through the post war period) was through the taxation of the general public. This was sufficient in times when the 'economic pie' was growing: the number of people perceived to be in need of state support was not increasing substantially meaning that the state could improve the services available to those who did need such support by appropriating part of the increase in real wages (Finkel 1977). This was revealed in the tendency through the 1960s and early 1970s for personal income taxes to increase as a percentage of total state revenues. In the mid-1970s, however, a slowdown in the growth of real income (culminating in real declines in per capita income and income per employee in 1982 and 1983: Dept. of Finance 1984) made this strategy become less viable. Personal income taxes maintained its share of total state revenue, but no longer increased (see Statistics Canada Canada Yearbook, various issues). Political limit-

ations upon how far the state could cut into social wage meant that additional personal income taxation could not make up the amount of funds needed to support the new levels of social spending.

Thus, an unbridgable gap opened up between the amount of revenue that could be collected by the Canadian state and the level of services that people had come to expect. How did the various levels of government respond to this problem? One option was to resort to deficit financing. From 1970 to 1983, the federal government went from a surplus of \$266 million to a deficit of \$24.5 billion (Dept. of Finance 1984), while the Ontario deficit mushroomed from \$570 million to just over \$2 billion (Ontario Ministry of Treasury and Economics 1984). Clearly, however, this 'solution' has its limitations. Thus the only remaining option was to initiate cutbacks in state services. Here, it was services in the field of reproduction, not production, that suffered. It began to be argued that Canadians could not afford such services, that they absorbed needed investment dollars, thereby contributing to an inflationary demand for capital (Beamish 1981, 102). In response to this sentiment cutbacks were initiated by the federal government, through, for example, placing additional restrictions on eligibility for unemployment insurance (see SPCMT 1982b). More importantly, the Ontario government, which has constitutional responsibility for most social welfare functions, also introduced cutbacks.

In 1975, Queen's Park established a Special Programs Review Committee to "Inquire into the ways and means of restraining the cost of government through examining issues such as the continued usefulness of programs." (OPSEU 1980, 17). In November of that year, this committee produced the Henderson Report, which became the primary policy statement in the Ontario government's cutback program. As outlined in Beamish (1981), this report offered three solutions to growing state expenditures: cutback, throwback, and shiftback measures. Cutback measures involved placing limitations upon the wages of state employees and upon the level of state social services. Throwback measures involved making the users of services pay an increased percentage of the costs of such services. Finally, shiftback measures involved the decentralization of provincial responsibilities to municipalities, and ultimately to individuals. As is demonstrated through this chapter, these measures have had an impact upon a variety of different social programs. While the implementation of cutbacks has been most important, shiftback measures have played a key role also, especially in the refusal of the provincial government to involve itself further in subsidizing the efforts of the voluntary sector engaged in the provision of decommodified social services, leading to the devolution of this responsibility to the municipalities. Here, we can see an explanation for further shiftback to the individual, given that local governments

in Ontario, dependent upon a narrow tax based focused on property assessment and prohibited by law from running deficits, frequently do not have the financial capacity to compensate for this loss of provincial money. Alternatively, municipalities have been obliged to resort to user fees to an increasing extent, providing an example of the implementation of throwback measures (BMR 1981).

A second limitation on the ability of the Canadian welfare state to ameliorate the social problems characteristic of contemporary capitalist society involves the nature of social service provision. The pattern in Canada clearly follows the general trend in capitalist societies, outlined in Chapter 2. For the purposes of developing a 'rational' system for social service delivery, responsibility for social welfare functions has been vested in institutions that are increasingly professionalized and bureaucratic. In her study of inequality, in Canada Djao (1984) notes the dominance in the social service sector of provider-client relationships; here, professionalization has led to a 'clinical' approach to service provision, meaning that the input of the people directly affected is not seen as relevant. In terms of bureaucracy, the centralization of functions (noted in Finkel 1977) has led to situations where policy is established by centralized agencies not directly accountable to forums accessible to the public. In such environments, political advocacy or sensitivity to the needs of client

groups are not beneficial attributes (Djao 1984). In this way, another contradiction in the welfare state is seen to be manifested in a Canadian context -- quite apart from the extent of resources needed to facilitate production and reproduction, the nature of social service delivery necessary to maintain the 'particularization' of state institutions is an impediment to the state successfully maintaining conditions favourable to accumulation.

As well as these two ways in which the welfare state, by its very nature, fails to overcome the contradictions of capitalist social relations, a variety of other determinants play a role in structuring government policy at any given instance. As indicated in chapter 2, these include historically contingent conditions and the impact of class struggle on the transformation of the logic underlying the level of appearances. It is now argued that in Canada today, the most prevalent determinant from among these is the former: specifically, the nature of the division of powers between different levels of governments. This is significant in social service provision because it can lead to a lack of coordination between bureaucracies associated with different levels of the state. Alternatively, such divisions may lead to situations where different state bodies have fundamentally different perspectives on issues, owing to the fact that they are responsible to different constituencies. Certainly, under certain circumstances the existing division

of powers can be seen as an outcome of attempts by state institutions to fulfill their welfare functions in an environment characterized by the two limitations described above. Efforts by the Ontario government to shift responsibilities back to the municipalities for financial reasons illustrates this, as does the centralization of social assistance provision to isolate this function from popular pressure. The division of power cannot, however, be reduced to a reflection of the internal workings of the welfare state. Constitutional history and traditional inter-regional rivalries also play a role. Below, these limitations represent a framework through which we can identify the links between the policies of the Canadian welfare state and constraints upon everyday life.

3.5 Income levels as a Constraint

3.5.1 The Income Situation of the Single Parent

As noted above, income constraints play a key role in determining how people select a community, what type of housing they inhabit, and how they interact with the built environment surrounding them. In this section, then, an effort is made to understand income constraints as outcomes of the contradictions embedded in, and the contingencies affecting, the Canadian welfare state.

Here, we investigate the economic status of single parents in Metro as a whole, for two reasons. First, most

data on the subject, especially that produced by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto (SPCMT), are not disaggregated to the community level, but focus upon the Toronto area as a whole. Second, we accept that community choice is influenced by income. True, this may not be the case in terms of isolated communities, where people may live their entire lives despite changing economic capacity. Jane-Finch, however, is a part of a much larger urban conglomeration. Thus, for reasons that will become clear, single parents in the community generally are not local residents who have become single parents; they move to Jane-Finch because they are single parents.

Most single parents in Metro have incomes that, by social standards, are seriously inadequate. Defining words such as 'adequacy' or 'need' is a difficult task, in that it is a socially defined concept, not one based simply on human physical requirements. Doyal and Gough (1984) address this issue from a theoretical perspective, while the SPCMT (1983) examine the various measures of need employed in Canada. If, however, we take the Statistics Canada Low Income Cutoff level and the SPCMT Budgetary Guidelines (both described in SPCMT 1983) as estimates of which income level should represent the 'poverty line', the situation of single parent families is clear. In 1980, the Statistics Canada minimum standard for a family with one parent and one child was \$9,434 a year, while the SPCMT

argued that an income of \$10,900 was needed if the parent was not in the labour force, or of \$11,700 if he or she was. In 1980, however, the income of many single parent families, many with more than one child, did not approach these levels. 25 percent of such families had incomes of less than \$7,000, while 34.9 percent earned less than \$10,000. The overall median was \$14,322, only marginally higher than the poverty line, and far below the median of \$29,589 for husband and wife families (SPCMT 1984).

These figures cover all single parent families, however, including those with children old enough not to need childcare. If single parent families with younger heads are examined, the income levels are even lower. In cases where the head is younger than 44, the median income was \$11,210, while the median for equivalent two parent families was \$24,392. The situation for single parents under 25 is worse; 84 percent earn less than \$10,000, while the median income amounts to \$4,374. This is far below the \$22,135 figure for corresponding husband-wife families, and represents only 46 percent of the relevant Low Income Cutoff and 40 percent of the relevant Budgetary Guideline (SPCMT 1983).

This income pattern is the direct result of two factors. First, because most single parents are female, they tend to have lower than average wages. This is a result of pay discrimination within given job categories,

and of the underrepresentation of women in many higher paying occupations (Armstrong and Armstrong 1983). Thus, in the Toronto CMA in 1980, the average female wage was \$9,831, compared to \$18,936 for male workers (1981 Census).¹ For single mothers, the situation is worsened by their frequent lack of job skills, a result of their having withdrawn from the labour force at an early age, or else never having a permanent job (Scarborough 1979, 14). For many women in these circumstances employment is simply not an option; even if they could find work, transport and daycare costs would represent an excessive percentage of their wages. Thus, in order to subsist, it often is necessary for single parents to accept social assistance. Far from the popular image of welfare mothers 'ripping off the system', "the choice between work and welfare is, in reality, no choice at all." (Family Benefits Work Group 1979, 2).

Inadequate social assistance benefits therefore represent the second factor determining the low median incomes of single parents. In the case of female single parents, for whom data are available, 15,289 out of a total of 59,266 in Metro, or 25.8 percent existed on welfare in 1980 (COMSOC figures for Sept. of that year; 1981 Census). The existence of welfare rates that challenge subsistence

¹It is necessary to remember, however, that part of this difference is a result of the fact that a greater percentage of the female labour force works part time (Armstrong and Armstrong 1983).

is a paradox, however, if we accept that the objective of the state is to ensure the survival of people without access to wage incomes. Reflecting the essential role of the welfare state in ensuring both production and reproduction, it is possible to see social assistance programs as having two purposes. First, reflecting the links between the state and capital accumulation, such measures play a role in ensuring the continued subsistence of the temporarily unemployed, the 'reserve army of labour'. Macorou (1980) argues that the relationship between state action and the reproduction of the labour force can be seen in the fact that welfare rates through the 1970s were kept at a level where unemployment was a survivable experience, but not a pleasant one: it is counterproductive to discourage people from participating in the labour market. Thus, in Ontario during this period, the minimum wage and the welfare rate for 'employables' tended to increase in 'lockstep', with the latter never being permitted to exceed the former (Ontario Welfare Council 1981). Second, income maintenance programs help to sustain 'surplus labour', those people in society who have no role, and no role in the foreseeable future, to play in capitalist production. In this way, the legitimacy of the state is potentially (though not necessarily) enhanced; working class opposition can be muted, while threats to social stability by marginalized populations themselves can be reduced.

This second function is of greater relevance to this thesis, for it is clear that most single parents receiving welfare benefits are marginalized in our society. But this brings us back to the initial problem: why was state assistance to marginalized groups in general (see Beamish 1981) and single parents in particular so inadequate? This issue is now addressed, with reference to the fiscal restraints that limit the actions of the institutions that constitute the Canadian welfare state. It is assumed that problems stemming from the bureaucratic nature of the welfare state do not play a role in establishing the extent of social assistance.

3.5.2 The Underfunding of Social Assistance in Ontario

Although social assistance in Ontario has a long history (see Bellamy and Irving 1981, for an overview), the current system of state income maintenance can be seen to date from 1967, the year in which the Federal Government's Canada Assistance Plan came into effect. This legislation was designed to provide comprehensive coverage to 'persons in need', those individuals

who by reason of inability to obtain employment
loss of principal family provider, illness,
disability, age or other cause of any kind ...
is found to be unable ... to provide adequately
for himself (sic), or for himself and his
dependents. (Barry Swadron of COMSOC, quoted
in OWC/SPCMT 1977, 15-16)

Under this new legislation, the Federal Government promised to fund 50 percent of Provincial income maintenance schemes,

with the provinces setting the actual assistance rates. To take advantage of this new arrangement, the Ontario government restructured its social assistance system. The existing General Welfare Assistance (GWA) plan was linked to the Canada Assistance Plan to permit federal funding of short term relief for 'employable' persons who are out of work and have no other source of income, and for 'unemployable' persons waiting to qualify for long term assistance. In addition, a variety of existing programs were incorporated into the Family Benefits Assistance (FBA) scheme, allowing for federal assistance in the long term funding of individuals unable to participate in the labour market. Included here are the disabled, the mentally and physically handicapped, and many single parents with preschool or school age children (OWC/SPCMT 1977).

Single parents represent a significant proportion of the welfare population. In March, 1983, 8,208 female single parents in Ontario were on GWA, while 55,046 received FBA. These figures represented 7.6 and 42.7 percent of the total GWA and FBA populations (COMSOC 1983). Given that women heads of low parent families in either case are considered 'unemployable' (although male single parents on GWA must be ill, or be physically or mentally handicapped to be classified as such), one would expect that social assistance rates would cover basic subsistence needs, given that such heads do not really have the option to find employ-

ment. However, it is clear that FBA, and even more so GWA, fall well below this standard. As noted in Table 3.1, the total incomes of single parent families on social assistance are well below the two 'poverty lines' previously discussed. The discrepancy is even greater, of course, when compared to the median income of equivalent two parent families who earn 50 percent or more of their income from wages or salaries.

Table 3.1:
The Inadequacy of Welfare Benefits, 1980

<u>GWA</u>				
Family Composition	Total Income(\$)	% Budgetary Guidelines	% Statcan Cutoff	% Median Income
Mother, child of 4	6,245	53.2	52.8	24.4
Mother, children 3,6,8	8,966	54.2	49.1	25.8
<u>FBA</u>				
Family Composition	Total Income(\$)	% Budgetary Guidelines	% Statcan Cutoff	% Median Income
Mother, child of 4	7,161	61.0	60.5	27.9
Mother, children 3,6,8	10,114	61.2	55.4	29.1

source: SPCMT 1980a

The situation of GWA and FBA recipients was not always so bad, but has come about as a result of a steady erosion in the real value of their benefits. Through the 1960s and early 1970s, the real incomes of social assistance beneficiaries increased, though not as fast as real wages (OWC/SPCMT 1977). Starting in the mid-1970s, however, this trend was reversed, to the point where, in 1982, GWA and FBA incomes, measured in constant dollars, were less than they had been fifteen years previously (SPCMT 1982a). Table 3.2 notes the changes in the period from 1976 to 1982, as they affected the single parent families referred to in Table 3.1. Under no circumstances did total income come close to keeping up to the rate of inflation. The real worth of GWA and FBA benefits declined precipitously, while other components of total income (mother's allowances, shelter allowances, property tax credits, and child tax credits) did not increase sufficiently to compensate.

Table 3.2:

Real Declines in Social Assistance Incomes

GWA

Family Composition	1976 Income (\$)	1982 Income (current\$)	1982 Income (1976\$)	shortfall (1976\$)
Mother, child of 4	3,925	6,245	6,972	727
Mother, children 3,6,8	5,604	8,966	9,887	921

FBA

Family Composition	1976 Income (\$)	1982 Income (current\$)	1982 Income (1976\$)	shortfall (1976\$)
Mother, child of 4	4,483	7,161	7,907	748
Mother, 3children 3,6,8	6,098	10,114	10,758	644

Derived from SPCMT 1982a and StatCan CPI Indexes for 1976-1982.

Why did expenditure on income maintenance come under attack? The fundamental reason can be found in the fiscal crisis of the Canadian state. In the face of a significant shortfall between revenue and expenditure in Ontario, welfare rates were cut back to the extent that it was politically feasible to do so. An additional impetus for such action was the significant increase in the number of people on social assistance (see Table 3.3). The economic

difficulties that contributed to the fiscal crisis of the state have led eventually to an increase in the demands placed upon the state. In the end, real expenditure on GWA and FBA remained fairly constant (see Table 3.4); increases in caseloads were compensated for by real declines in expenditure per case, meaning that there was a great deal of incentive to compensate for an increased caseload by reducing in real terms the outlay per case.

Table 3.3:
Welfare Caseloads in Ontario

Year ¹	Total cases (FBA+GWA)		'Employables' on GWA	
	('000s)	(% change)	('000s)	(% change)
1983	236.5	18.0	68.1	66.9
1982	200.4	5.0	40.8	29.1
1981	190.9	4.3	31.6	5.0
1980	183.1	3.5	30.1	9.5
1979	177.0	0.9	27.5	4.6
1978	175.5	6.2	26.3	23.5
1977	165.3	4.0	21.3	-0.5
1976	158.9	-7.3	21.4	-0.6
1975	168.2	-	22.8	-

¹Figures from March of each year.

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services, Quarterly Bulletin, various issues.

Table 3.4:
Real Social Expenditure in Ontario

Year	GWA + FBA (million \$)	Total Social Expenditure (million \$) ¹
1981/82	475.3	1203.7
1980/81	471.2	1167.7
1979/80	443.4	1103.2
1978/79	464.6	1089.2
1977/78	474.5	1084.0
1976/77	452.0	1011.9
1975/76	472.2	1012.0

¹Includes: GWA, FBA, services for the aged, services for children, rehabilitation and family services, misc. programs and grants, and capital expenditure.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Treasury
and Economics, Ontario Statistics
(various years).

It is apparent that in adopting such a policy the Conservative government managed to avoid significant controversy. This was accomplished through obfuscating the relationship between welfare rates and human subsistence. In the 1967 period, Ontario welfare rates were established through a budgeting system; the amount of income needed to meet minimum needs in terms of shelter, food, clothing and such were identified and social assistance rates were set accordingly (Family Benefits Work Group 1979, 10). After the Canada Assistance Plan was introduced, however, this principle was challenged. A separate shelter component was maintained,

Yet, in effect, any increases have been across the board, not in one specific area, thereby lessening the relationship between welfare payments and people's financial needs. (Family Benefits Work Group 1979, 10)

In doing this, the rationale for allowance levels is no longer clear, and it has been possible to put forward the idea that social assistance is not a right, but a privilege, one that must become subject to retrenchment at times when the 'economic pie' has ceased to grow (Family Benefits Work Group, 1979, 100. Still, the basic contradiction between production and reproduction has been obscured, not resolved; a reduction in the legitimacy of the state, or mass protest by marginalized groups exist as potential outcomes of cutbacks in social assistance.

3.6 Built Environment as a Constraint

3.6.1 Single Parents and the Urban Environment

As noted previously, the income level of the individual has a significant impact upon how he/she relates to the urban environment: (i) it circumscribes choices in residential location; (ii) it determines the quality and type of housing; and (iii) through affecting levels of residential environment and service dependency, it affects the importance of interaction with one's community. Below, we use this framework to examine how the low incomes characteristic of most single parents lead to a pattern of interaction with the built environment that serves to create constraints that circumscribe

the lives of those single parents. We focus upon a community within Metro Toronto that came to act as a repository for low income single parents: namely, the Jane-Finch area of North York. To conform to the agenda for this chapter, the role of state policy, and the links between those policy outcomes and the contradictions of the welfare state, are emphasized.

3.6.2 The Ghettoization of Single Parents

Income plays a major role in determining where such individuals can live in Toronto, owing to the uneven distribution of inexpensive accommodation. Indeed, a very low income can mean a complete inability to compete in the capitalist housing market. Certainly, recipients of GWA and FBA are eligible for shelter allowances, but these frequently fail to compensate for the high housing costs that characterize most areas of Metropolitan Toronto, meaning that a reliance upon private accommodation means "money is robbed from the food budget in order to pay for housing" (Family Benefits Work Group 1979, 16). As a result, many social assistance recipients trying to subsist in private buildings must spend 40 to 50 percent of their income on accommodation, far greater than the 25 percent standard recommended by the government (SCHULTZ-LORENTZEN). Furthermore, the housing that can be found tends to be substandard (Family Benefits Work Group 1979, 16). As noted by Elspeth HEYWORTH

of York University's Community Relations Office, the result of this is that many single parents are obliged to seek a place in the public housing system; this is not a cheerfully accepted 'solution', but a matter of survival. Of the 28,511 family oriented rent-g geared-to-income units run by the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) (SPCMT 1979, 124), one half are occupied by single parents (NFB 1983).

Public housing is not spread evenly across Metropolitan Toronto, but is found in clusters. This means that the decision to apply for public housing automatically means that one's choice in residential location is circumscribed. The Jane Finch community in North York represents one such public housing concentration. In this community, 2,316 MTHA units, representing 16 percent of the total housing stock, are found (Yin and Pizzardo 1976);¹ this figure contrasts sharply to 3.6 for the Toronto CMA as a whole (SPCMT 1979, 124; 1981 Census). Not surprisingly, low income groups are overrepresented in Jane Finch, and in the public housing found there. Immigrants make up 50.6 of the total population, compared to 37.8 for the Toronto CMA as a whole (1981 Census), and represent a large majority of the tenants of public housing complexes (NFB 1983). In one building

¹It is appropriate to use this 1976 figure, since the construction of public housing in Metro Toronto virtually has been at a standstill since then.

(15 Tobermory Drive), for example, 70 percent of the residents are from the West Indian community alone (McDOWELL). Similarly, 2,370 of the 12,700 family units (or 18.7 percent) are headed by single parents; this stands in contrast to a figure of 11.8 for the Toronto CMA (1981 Census). It is difficult to estimate exactly how many of these are in MTHA buildings, but if the 50 percent figure for Metro as a whole holds in Jane-Finch, this would mean that 1,185 are public housing tenants.

Jane-Finch is characterized by a mixture of income types, and it is not appropriate to think of this community in one-dimensional terms, as a 'suburban ghetto'. There are many families living in single family homes and living the stereotypical suburban existence. In comparison to Metro in general, however, Jane-Finch has a very low socio-economic status. The average family income noted in the 1981 Census was \$22,038, compared to 28,765 for the Toronto CMA as a whole, while the incidence of low income for families, based on the Statistics Canada Low Income Cutoffs, was 23.5 percent, compared to 11.4. Jane-Finch therefore can be seen to represent a repository for those who can not 'make it' in the private property market. People live there because they have little choice. This is especially true in the case of public housing: when people are accepted into the system they are often given only two choices as to where to live. One single parent interviewed in the

15 Tobermory MTHA complex notes: "They offered me two places to live, one on Jane Street and one called 15 Tobermory. I chose the latter because I didn't want anything to do with Jane-Finch. Well, here I am."

Thus Jane Finch has come to represent a repository for a variety of marginalized groups unable to make it in the private housing market. This does not mean, however, that Jane-Finch is suitable for such a population. The community is located at the periphery of Metropolitan Toronto, far from the employment, retail, recreational and social service opportunities of downtown Toronto or subsidiary nodes such as the North York City Centre. Further Jane-Finch is isolated; it is not located on a subway line, while using the bus outside rush hour is very time consuming, with a trip downtown taking over an hour. Thus for families without cars (a large percentage of those headed by single parents), achieving access to other parts of Metropolitan Toronto is a serious problem.

If we conceptualize public housing in Canada as being part of the effort to maintain marginalized groups, then one would expect such public housing to be located in areas with access to the appropriate support services. Clearly, this is not the case with Jane-Finch? Why is this so? We cannot say that the dispersed pattern of public housing development found in Metro evolved in an ad hoc manner, for the necessary decisions were the outcomes of

a clearly defined body of policy. The 1958 Official Plan for Metro Toronto had as one of its objectives the introduction of low income housing into the suburbs (SPCMT 1979, 127). As a result, a large number of public housing units were built in the periphery of the Metro area. Specifically, 5,417 units were constructed north of Highway 401 by the Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC), the predecessor of the MTHA in the provision of family-oriented geared to income units; these came to represent 19 percent of the total for this type of public housing (SPCMT 1979, 127).

Why, then, did State policy support such a pattern of public housing development? Perhaps such a distribution gives poor people the benefits of suburban living (Toronto Star, July 24, 1983), but it is evident that a more useful starting point for our analysis would be an investigation into the capitalist land market. Public housing must be situated on land with a price determined through competition with private capital. Given that the public housing system is not a 'money maker', it must be supported out of general state revenue. In this way, funds allocated to public housing represent deductions from accumulation, meaning that the extent of such funding is limited by the links between capital accumulation and the state. Thus the ability of public housing authorities to compete was hard hit by the inflation in land values that characterized Metro through the 1960s (Rose 1980, 146). Specifically, new public housing

was excluded from the downtown area. As land seeks its "highest and best use" (Smith 1983), land prices in such areas tend to rise astronomically, effectively excluding low income residential development. As a result, public housing in Metro was built where land could be obtained cheaply (Toronto Star, July 24, 1983). If a lot of land could be found in one place, a concentration of public housing, such as Jane-Finch or the Victoria Avenue-Midland Avenue area of Scarborough, emerged; if not, isolated public housing developments sprung up, such as the Parma and O'Conner MTHA complexes, representing a land use totally separate from those surrounding it.

It is evident that land prices were not the only consideration in the location of public housing, however. The division of powers between different levels of government also played a role. Among local politicians, public housing is not a popular land use. It is commonly perceived as attracting individuals widely regarded as being "poor, shiftless, and immoral" (Rose 1980, 166). Thus while there is agreement that public housing has to be built somewhere, no one wants it in their backyard. Thus there is a tendency for public housing decisions to focus on areas that are not the best for the client populations, but that offer the 'path of least resistance'. The Jane-Finch area, which in the late 1960s had an NDP member of the provincial parliament dedicated to public housing and which was encompassed by

a borough government that had not yet fully accommodated the rapid urbanization going on within its borders, did not have the capacity to present as effective an opposition as did other municipalities within Metro ("Metro Morning, CBC Radio, April 27th, 1985). Thus the explanation for the emergence of Jane-Finch as a concentration of public housing can be linked to both structural and contingent factors.

3.6.3 The Role of Housing

Two aspects of housing have a direct impact upon the everyday life of the individual: (i) the physical characteristics of that housing; and (ii) the tenure status of that individual. Here, the housing characteristic of the single parents of Jane-Finch is examined using this framework, to determine how their immediate built environment is a constraint upon their actions, and to assess the extent to which these surroundings represent the outcomes of state policies that embody the contradictions of capitalist social relations. Emphasis is placed upon the experiences of those single parents living in public housing, for two reasons: (i) as noted already, an estimated 48 percent of the single parent population of Jane Finch live in public housing units; and (ii) It is easier to see the links between state policy and housing conditions here than in a privately-owned development.

Public housing in Jane-Finch encompasses a number of different built environments. Highrises, smaller apartment blocks, and townhouse complexes are all represented. Below, we focus on one MTHA development, 15 Tobermory Drive, selected because it is the largest in Jane-Finch, and as a result of the fact that one of the community groups studied in Chapter 4 is centred in this building. This does not mean, of course, that the characteristics of this complex are necessarily found in all MTHA projects. 15 Tobermory, the location of which is illustrated in Figure 1.2, is a 24 story highrise with 374 units and an official population of 1,100, though the actual population, counting illegal aliens and unregistered cohabitees, is likely in excess of 1,400. Of this population over 100 are pre-school age children, about 60 percent are in single parent families, and about 70 percent are of West Indian origin (Yin and Pizzardo 1976).

The tenants of this project suffer from all the problems of high rise living: the lack of recreational space immediately at hand; small dwelling unit size; close proximity to neighbours; and social isolation (Hagarty 1975). However, these constraints are of more significance to the single parent residents of 15 Tobermory, especially those with preschool children. Owing to an inability to gain access to inexpensive daycare (either of an formal or informal nature), such parents are tied to the complex

for much of the time. This was a chief complaint of the members of the Planning Committee in 15 Tobermory, and reflects the finding of Hagarty's (1975) time budget studies of single parent apartment dwellers.

Unfortunately, the design of 15 Tobermory does not compensate for this isolation. True, the building is equipped with one large meeting room, five smaller rooms, a day care, a toddler play area, a swimming pool, a volleyball court, and an outdoor rink (see Yin and Pizzardo 1976, which contains an inventory of public housing facilities. However, one must question the adequacy of this range of facilities when the sheer number of 15 Tobermory residents is taken into account, and especially when the demographic characteristics of those tenants is considered. DALTON JANSKI, the building's Mennonite Chaplain, argues that recreational facilities for children are inadequate, and that there is insufficient opportunity for adults to interact socially. This, along with the transient nature of the building's population (JANSKI estimates that upwards of 100 families have been known to move in a year) makes it difficult to build up contacts or informal support networks. Janski concludes that the 'feeling of community' that could help to make the occupancy of public housing a happier experience is retarded.

The physical character of 15 Tobermory makes being

dependent upon that building an even more serious constraint. According to the members of the Planning Committee of the Tobermory Community Activities (a community group described in detail in Chapter 4), mice and cockroaches are a problem, the elevator system is frequently out of service (and never stops at one particular floor), the units themselves are cramped, and the level of general maintenance leaves a lot to be desired. Furthermore, the members of the Planning Committee agree that the social atmosphere is frequently tense; they find the youths 'hanging around' the complex intimidating.

How can these conditions be explained? Again, it is possible to point to the contradiction between production and reproduction embedded in the welfare state. Because public housing does not pay for itself, and does not facilitate capital accumulation directly, as does expenditure on sewers and roads, state expenditure in this area must be seen as an essentially unproductive investment. Therefore, the extent of the funds allocated to public housing must be limited by the logic of capitalist society, though clearly factors such as working class pressure influence the extent of the state's commitment towards socialized housing. Small (and hence inexpensive) units and a general failure to plan for features such as recreational facilities and meeting rooms can be seen as being outcomes of such limitations. Furthermore, following Lojkine's (1976) work on

state housing in France, it can be argued that when a housing development is built with 'devalorized capital' (i.e. the resale of the finished product is not a consideration), long term maintenance costs, as opposed to the 'livability' that sells a commodified dwelling unit, is of primary importance. Thus the needs of tenants clash with the constraints under which the institutions of the capitalist state must operate.

In the Jane-Finch context, this point can be illustrated through a comparison of the quality of the immediate built environment of 15 Tobermory with that of the nearby Yorkwoods Gate MTHA complex (see Figure 1.2). In a study of the latter, Young (1978) notes the provision of facilities such as a community centre and the pleasant layout of the dwelling units and concludes that there is nothing inherent to public housing "which prevents the design of a satisfactory project and the provision of services within the residential built environment to satisfy at least the basic needs of the selected population group" (p. 152-53). However, Young fails to see the significance of the fact that Yorkwoods Gate was not 'purpose-built' as public housing, but was a private condominium project that had gone into receivership, and subsequently had been purchased cheaply by the OHC. The contrast with 15 Tobermory reveals the different considerations present in building a private development.

The poor quality of life experienced by most public

housing tenants is not ameliorated by the nature of their relationship with the MTHA authorities. The MTHA is a quasi-autonomous body not directly linked to other elements of Ontario's social service delivery system and with a very specific mandate: to provide housing to low income people (DARCEY). This identification of the MTHA as a landlord leads to two key problems. First, the MTHA does not see itself as being in the business of providing social services. This is one explanation for the lack of state run activities in public housing buildings, or of meeting space in such complexes, either for informal gatherings, or (as outlined in Chapter 4), for the activities of the community's voluntary sector. Second, the MTHA is free to operate its buildings in a way that is economically efficient or that sees the greatest number of people housed, but that leads to individual hardship. This approach is facilitated because the MTHA is a landlord like no other, in that it is not covered by the Landlord Tenants Act. This means that the public housing bureaucracy can make its own laws, which can be challenged only with great difficulty. This is reflected in the fact that Legal Aid in Jane-Finch and the Jane Finch Tenants Council do their best to discourage people from challenging the MTHA, although these organizations are very active in advising the tenants of private buildings of their rights (SCHULTZ-LORENTZEN). An example of such a rule is that cohabitation is illegal

(DARCEY). Many tenants attempt to overcome this, though they fear that discovery would lead to eviction (McDOWELL). Similarly, a change in the number of children living at home can lead to a forced change in apartments, and even of buildings, or can lead to a complete withdrawal of public housing eligibility (DARCEY). Certainly, as noted by Dalton Janski (the Chaplain in 15 Tobermory), many MTHA employees are perceived to be sympathetic to the needs of tenants, but the nature of the system can lead to uncertainty in everyday life. In the process, certain tenants may become alienated. Dianne Howell, a community activist who lived in public housing for a number of years, notes the presence of a 'them and us attitude' towards the MTHA management. A popular perception exists in Canada that public housing tenants are morally inferior individuals who are likely to 'rip off' the system (Rose 1980). Ede (1978) notes that many public housing tenants see this attitude embodied in MTHA policy.

3.6.4 The Community and the Single Parent

The nature of the community within which Jane-Finch's single parents live makes a further impact on their everyday lives. First, the surrounding community can serve to ameliorate some of the inadequacies of the immediate residential environment. As illustrated in a series of time-budget studies carried out by Haggarty (1975), this is a coping strategy

for the residents of highrise apartments. As has been noted, escaping from the dwelling is difficult for the single parent with preschool children, but even if such forays are infrequent, they can play an important role in the lives of the single parent (McDOWELL). Second, given that low income single parents tend to be community dependent, the extent to which the goods and services they require are available locally is a key concern. Third, given the service dependency of such individuals, the degree to which these are available in a decommodified form is a matter of importance.

It is now argued that while the Jane Finch area may have more facilities than the average Metro Toronto suburb, the neighbourhood is seriously inadequate when seen as the container for a community- and service-dependent population. Below, the lack of appropriate recreational facilities, commercial establishments and social services is outlined. This is followed in the next section by an examination of why this is the case.

(i) Recreational facilities

Here, Jane-Finch clearly is underequipped. The community has 92.3 acres of parkland, or 1.8 per 1,000 persons. This is short of the 2.5 standard set by the City of North York, and far below the 4.0 acres per 1,000 persons found in areas such as Don Mills (North York Planning Department 1983, 85). True, land nearby has some recreational

potential, but there are impediments to its utilization. For example, the Black Creek Ravine to the east of the community has been equipped with a network of jogging trails. However, most parents see the Ravine as a dangerous place, and would not go there themselves, far less permit their children to play there (McCDOWELL).

Jane-Finch also has an insufficient supply of 'hard' recreational facilities. The community is endowed with two community centres, an arena, and a number of outdoor swimming pools, ice rinks, and tennis courts. However, while this complement of facilities might be suitable for a typical suburban community they are hardly adequate for an area with a population equal to that of many small cities (JANSKI). Thus in the summer, "the community centres run programs close to 24 hours a day, and still do not approach meeting the recreational needs of the population." (HOWELL)

In addition, if we follow the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation and broadly define 'recreation' as "those activities in which an individual chooses to participate in his or her leisure time of a physical, artistic, cultural, social and intellectual nature" (quoted in BMR 1981, 3), a whole range of other inadequacies are exposed. As Novack (1976) notes, the residential built environment can enhance or inhibit the opportunities for association that create the interpersonal networks that allow us to cope with urban living. It is arguable that Jane-Finch

must be seen as an inhibitor. For adults single parents and other adults dependent on the community, the lack of movies, discos, taverns, restaurants, and cultural facilities (limited to the programs run by the Yorkwoods Public Library: see Figure 1.2) are acutely felt. In a survey of a group of single parents in one Jane-Finch public housing complex (Young 1978), the lack of meeting places was seen as a key constraint on everyday life. Most single parents longed for the variety of activities found in downtown Toronto, but realized that opportunities to get there are infrequent. Similar problems are faced by children and teens. They too lack social meeting places. For them, a common complaint is that "there is nothing to do." (Toronto Star, August 26th, 1979). Thus, congregating in the Jane-Finch Mall (see Figure 1.2) is a common way for local youths to spend their time, though even this activity faces restrictions. Unlike the traditional main streets Canadian towns and cities, shopping malls are private property. Metro Police frequently are called in to remove 'trespassers' those individuals who are not there to consume (NFB 1983). (ii)

Commercial facilities

In common with most suburban built environments, access in Jane-Finch to specialized functions such as legal firms concentrating in family law, requires a trip to Downtown Toronto or to the North York City Centre (Young 1978), while many 'low grade' retail activities, like thrift shops,

are absent (SPCMT 1979). In addition, the retail facilities in Jane-Finch do not permit a great deal of comparison shopping; there is frequently only one place to buy a given product. For single parents on tight budgets, these are serious limitations indeed (Young 1978).

(iii) Social service provision

Following Djao (1983, 131), social services are defined here as "the broad range of non-income security measures that are introduced to enhance the wellbeing of individuals and communities." They can be provided in three ways: (i) directly by the state; (ii) by a privately-run agency originating outside of the community; or (iii) by a locally based organization that has emerged in response to specific problems. These are now discussed in the context of Jane-Finch.

In that community, social services provided directly by the state are limited to schools, a library, an employment centre, a welfare office and one subsidized daycare centre. Most other services (facilities for vocational training, for example) are all located outside the community. Given the community dependency of most low income single parents, gaining access to these facilities, especially outside rush hour, is time consuming if the bus is used, or expensive if taxis are employed. Pat O'Neal, Alderman for North York's Ward 3 (which includes Jane-Finch) through most of the 1970s, has long argued for the establishment of

a multi-service centre in the west part of the city (Toronto Star, March 31, 1980), but this ambition has been consistently thwarted by the City Council.

The city-wide voluntary sector in Toronto is also underrepresented in Jane-Finch. Most of the large city-wide service agencies concentrate their operations in the City of Toronto (SPCMT 1979, 81), reflecting the traditional spatial distribution of service dependent populations (Beamish 1981). In the process, concentrations of needy people in the suburbs are poorly served.

Essentially, locally-based groups have been obliged to fill in the gap. In common with other suburban communities, such involvement has been emphasized by the various government departments and agencies involved in social service provision (Joint Task Force on Neighbourhood Support Services, 1983). Local organizations, funded either by state agencies or by bodies such as the United Way, are seen to be the key player. In Jane-Finch, the voluntary sector has expanded remarkably. Organizations have been established to provide services such as: nonprofit daycare; 'life skills' training; English instruction for immigrants; a forum to facilitate interaction among people isolated in public housing; temporary shelter for battered women; legal aid; and many other services. For reasons outlined in Chapter 4, however, the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch has not been able to address all these needs. The structure

of the Canadian welfare state not only demands that groups be formed to confront problems, but then places limitations on the capacity of those groups to effect change.

Attention is now focused on one social service of essential importance to single parents in Jane-Finch: the provision of daycare. This problem has two dimensions: (i) the availability of daycare; and (ii) the availability of subsidized daycare.

As indicated by Table 3.5, the concentration of daycare in Metro's inner municipalities noted in SPCMT (1979a) continues today. This is especially true for the Jane-Finch area, where there is only one daycare place for every seven children under five years of age. Thus daycare in the home community is not an option for working single parents, or those considering entering the job market. The other alternative (daycare situated near one's place of employment) is less desirable at the best of times, especially if this entails submitting one's child to two rush hour public transit trips a day. Furthermore, if as is increasingly the case (SPCMT 1979a) employment is found outside of the inner municipalities, daycare near the workplace may not be an option either.

Table 3.5:
The Availability of Daycare in Jane-Finch

	Inner Munic. ¹	Outer Munic. ²	Study Area	Metro Total
Daycare Centres:				
number ³	205	256	9	461
% of Metro total	(44.5)	(55.5)	(2.0)	(100)
Daycare places:				
number ³	9,360	13,017	584	22,383
% of Metro total	(41.8)	(58.2)	(2.6)	(100)
Population:				
Total in 000s	847 ⁴	1,293 ⁴	50 ⁵	2,140 ⁴
% of Metro total	(39.6)	60.4)	(2.5)	(100)
Children under 5:				
Total in 000s ⁵	25	41	4	66
% of Metro total	(29.5)	(70.5)	(6.1)	(100)
Ratio between daycare places and children under 5	1:2.6	1:3.2	1:6.9	1:3

Notes:

¹City of Toronto, City of York, and Borough of East York.

²Cities of Etobicoke, Scarborough, and North York.

³1985 figures.

⁴1982 figures.

⁵1980 figures.

Sources: Community Information Service of Metropolitan Toronto (1985); Ontario Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (1985); 1981 Census.

The second problem with licenced childcare involves gaining access to subsidized daycare. True, for low income earners, becoming eligible for subsidized daycare is not difficult. For a lone parent with one child, the after-tax income threshold for total subsidization is \$15,600 in the case of renters, or 21,600 in the case of home owners (United Way of Greater Toronto 1985a, Vol. 1, 13). However,

difficulties are experienced in finding a daycare with open subsidized spaces. While in 1985 approximately 100,000 children in Metropolitan Toronto were eligible for full or partial subsidization (14,000 of which were registered for subsidization), only 10,000 subsidized spaces were available (United Way of Greater Toronto 1985a, Vol. 1, 13). The problem lies in the fact that while Metro Community services runs a network of daycare centres itself (including the Edgely Daycare in Jane-Finch: see Figure 1.2), municipal daycare in 1983 only accounted for 10.7 percent of total spaces. 47.0 percent were in private nonprofit daycares, and 42.3 percent of spaces were found in commercial daycares (SPCMT 1984c, 43). In its report Caring for Profit, the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto (1984, 43-47) notes that in general, nonprofit daycares are less likely to have subsidized spaces, and commercial daycares are less likely again (see Table 3.6). The reason for this is that government subsidies are not subject to negotiation, and therefore place a ceiling on revenues per daycare space. Therefore, subsidized spaces are less attractive for nonprofit daycare, concerned with breaking even, and even less attractive for commercial daycares, concerned with making profits. Of the nine licenced daycares in Jane-Finch, one is Metro-run and the other eight are non-profit (Community Information Centre of Metropolitan Toronto 1985), meaning that the area does not suffer from the low subsidization

rates characteristics of for-profit daycares. For a low income community, though, space hardly seems adequate.

Table 3.6:
The Proportion of Subsidized Spaces
in Different Types of Daycare,
Ontario, 1983

Operator type	Total Spaces (%)	Subsidized Spaces (%)
Municipal	13.8	36.6
Non-Profit	39.2	33.5
Commercial	47.0	29.5

Source: SPCMT (1984c, 43-46).

Why has this pattern of recreational, retail and social facilities come to characterize an area dominated by a population that is both community and service dependent? Three explanations are now put forward, and are linked to the underlying character of the Canadian welfare state.

(i) Inadequate social planning

It has been argued that inadequate social planning is a key reason for the imbalance between the available recreational, commercial and social service facilities and the needs of Jane-Finch's community and service dependent population. Indeed, Ede (1978, 1) asserts that "Jane Street and Finch Avenue is the epicentre of a social planning nightmare." Why was this so? We first review a number

of contingent considerations, and then proceed to see how this situation stems from the nature of the social service system.

One key factor is that frequently it is difficult to identify the level of need in suburban communities. In built environments such as Jane-Finch, looks can be deceptive. The traditional signs of urban poverty are not present; there is little physical deterioration outwardly manifest in the housing stock, while residential and commercial developments are well spread out with grass growing inbetween (NOVACK). As a result, there is no intuitive understanding with regards to the nature of the social problems present.

Another explanation for inadequate social planning in Jane-Finch is related to the division of power between the different levels of government in Ontario. Specifically, it is apparent that many local politicians in suburban municipalities "reflect our old understandings of what the suburbs are about." (NOVACK) As the SPCMT made clear in their exhaustive 1979 study Metro's Suburbs in Transition, the suburban stereotype (a predominance of single family homes, economic prosperity, the nuclear family as the only significant household type, etc.), is increasingly a myth, and that communities such as Jane-Finch represent virtually complete negations of it. Yet, there has been a failure to adjust to this new reality. This is certainly true in North York, the municipality within which Jane-Finch

is located. Criticizing here colleagues on that city's council, for example, Eleanor Caplan, alderman and chairman of the Human Services Advisory Council, notes that: "North York's commitment to social services is less than zero. We'd all like these problems to go away, but they won't." (quoted in Toronto Star, May 8, 1984). Thus we have the following statement by the Mayor of North York, Mel Lastman: "I can't think of a thing the area needs." (Toronto Star, October 20, 1982) He had previously noted the presence in that neighbourhood of the type of recreational facilities commonly found in a suburban community and comes to the conclusion that the city government has fulfilled its mandate in providing for the population (Toronto Star, November 10, 1978). As for the findings of the Metro's Suburbs in Transition, Lastman dismisses them, by saying the report "deals in generalities." (Mirror, April 18, 1979)

What is the origin of this attitude? In a 1981 report, the Bureau of Municipal Research came to the conclusion that it was a result of the makeup of the North York City Council (see Table 3.7). Reflecting a widespread differentiation between local governments in the suburbs and in central cities, the number of people there with a business background was significantly greater than in, for example, the city of Toronto. Such individuals were seen to be more likely to have an ideology constructed upon the tenets of competitive individualism, meaning they would be more

resistant to the notion of government social planning. In this way, an interesting paradox can be perceived. Due to the historical contingency represented by divisions of power between different levels of government, certain functions essential for social reproduction are in the hands of state bodies that are actively hostile to their facilitation. This threatens the viability of the system as a whole.

Table 3.7:
Orientations of city council members,
North York and City of Toronto

Municipality	% Business Affiliation	% Labour Affiliation
North York	63.2 (12/19)	21.1 (4/19)
City of Toronto	17.4 (4/23)	43.5 (10/23)

Source: BMR (1982, 23-24).

The nature of Ontario's social service delivery system also plays a role, however, permitting us to tie in inadequate social planning with the contradictions underlying the welfare state. The essential problem is that there is a lack of coordination between the relevant state agencies. Thus:

Each level of government or special purpose authority has assumed responsibility for its own social programs. None have seen themselves as responsible for developing social data and identifying overall patterns of community need, assessing how existing services compliment each other, and for identifying who will fill in the gaps. (SPCMT 1979, 82)

While problems may exist objectively, their full extent is not perceived by policy makers.

Even when the problems are perceived, inadequate coordination sometimes can preclude the emergence of the built environment most appropriate for the resolution of those problems. In the case of Jane-Finch, clearly there was a lack of communication between the public housing authorities and local government. As has been noted, the 1959 Official Plan for Metro contained a commitment to building low income housing in the suburbs, but did not identify Jane-Finch area as a site for such development (SPCMT 1979, 67). It is evident that the planning arrangements surrounding the emergence of public housing in the area were very ad hoc in nature, largely responses to the decision by the Ontario Housing Corporation in the 1960s to buy up existing structures (Longhouses to Highrises Project, Interview 35), especially apartment blocks, but also including the Yorkwoods Gate townhouse complex (Young 1975). Eventually, in the Official Plan of 1969, the Jane-Finch area was designated as a centre for further low income housing, but again events were not anticipated adequately. According to the Plan, such growth was to occur "over the next decade or two" (quoted in Ede 1978, 9), but by 1976, the area was 80 percent developed (Ede 1978, 9). The massive increase in population from 34,030 (1971 Census) to 49,624 (1981 Census) thus does not represent planned growth. Thus, the devolution

of policy making to quasi-independent bodies may have the effect of insulating certain functions from popular political pressure, but has resulted in a set of outcomes that challenge the viability of state policy.

The coordination problem is also reflected in the general failure on the part of the planning profession to achieve an integration of physical landuse planning with a concern for social issues (see Gandy 1979). Too much emphasis is placed on 'hardware issues', and not enough on the social activities that go on within the 'container' created by the physical design of a community. Thus the 1969 Official Plan under which Jane-Finch was developed emphasized three main issues: land use, population, and transportation. There was no provision for social services beyond the designation of land for schools and parks (Ede 1978, 9). As argued by NOVACK, the attitude present here, as in other communities is this:

if you give people decent housing and some facilities then you would have stable, healthy communities and that the problems, the social problems, would be picked up by the specialized agencies, by the voluntary sector... [The government did not believe that] you have to look at the question of what kind of population was going to move into a community ... and what kind of social structures did that community have to have in order to meet the daily needs of the people.








The social services are not ignored, but responsibility for them is allocated to a multitude of different agencies, with a subsequent lack of coordination.

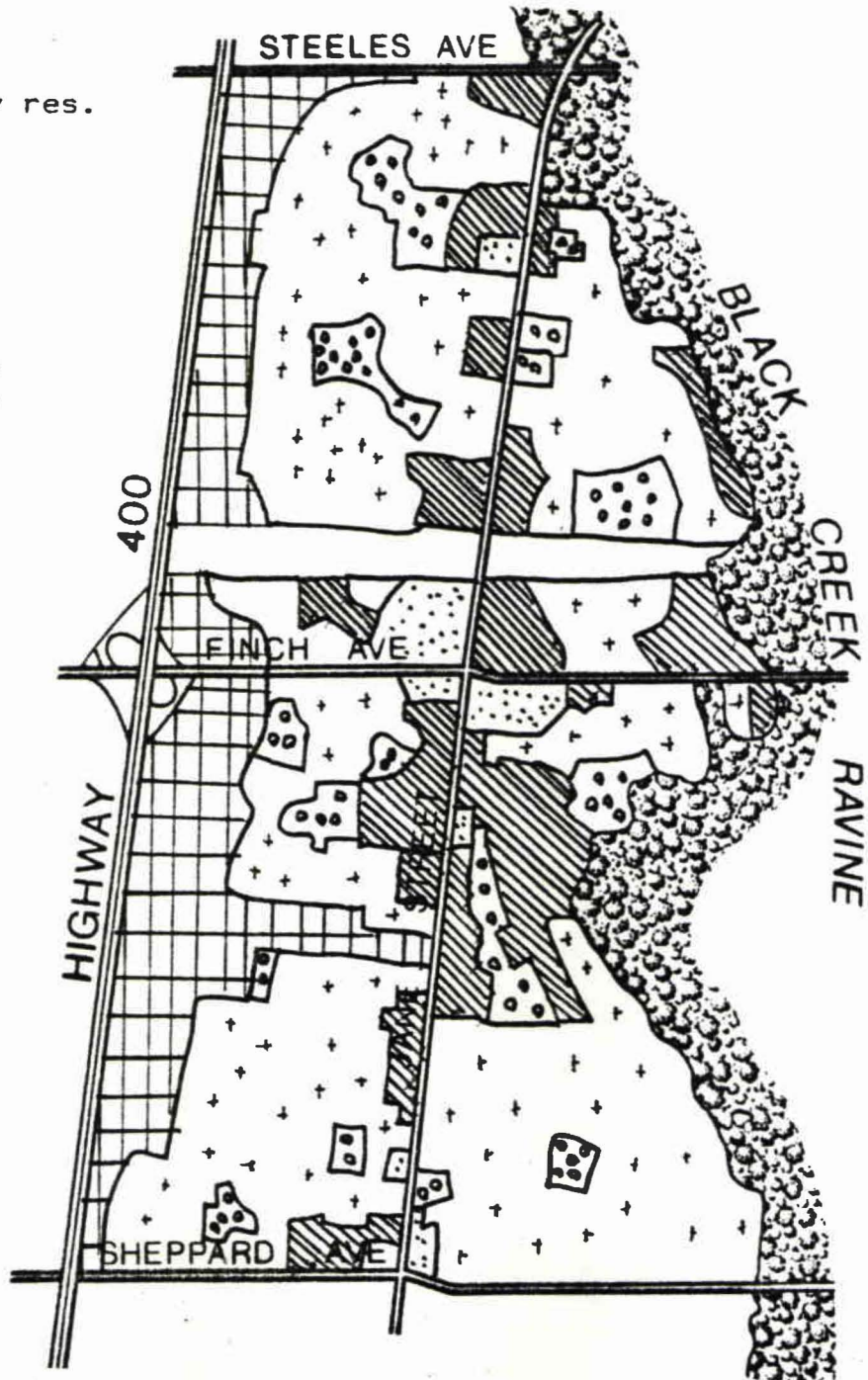
Paradoxically, this inherent flaw in the planning process long has been recognized by the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, one of the key actors in developing Jane-Finch. However, Metro has been consistently frustrated by Queen's Park and Ottawa in its attempts to provide integrated urban policy leadership in areas of critical interest to Metro's residents" (SPCMT 1979, 8).

This failure to link physical and social planning also is reflected in the problematic design characteristic of each of the community's neighbourhoods. As noted in Figure 3.1, each is centred upon some parkland and a school-yard. Surrounding these are low density housing, while apartment buildings are located at the periphery, along the major traffic arteries. This pattern was adopted because it worked in most communities; families with small children live in the low density housing, and so have access to the school and park. Young couples or singles live in the apartment blocks, and value access to the transportation system more than local parkland. However, in the case of Jane-Finch, there was a failure to recognize that the apartment blocks were to be public housing, and therefore to be family oriented. The result was that the MTHA complexes for the most part were located along busy roads and removed from the available parkland (Birmburg 1980). This situation could have been avoided if the social implications of physical design were considered.

FIGURE 3.1.
ZONING IN THE JANE-FINCH COMMUNITY



- Legend**
-  High density res. (RM5-RM6)
 -  Other res.
 -  Commercial
 -  Industrial
 -  Semi-private open space
 -  Parkland + Schools
 -  Greenbelt



Simplified from the zoning designations found in North York Planning Dept. (1980).

(ii) Limitations on State Expenditure

A second explanation for the current makeup of the June-Finch community rests on recent restraints imposed upon state expenditure, given that the utility of recreational facilities and social services is partially a function of the level of sustained funding allocated to them. A community centre that cannot afford to run any programs is not of much value, while a social service that is seriously underfunded cannot live up to its potential.

In terms of recreation, it is evident that in recent years, many of the facilities present in North York frequently have not been used to their full potential, owing to budget cutbacks (Toronto Star, November 10th, 1978). For example, the Driftwood Community Centre (see Figure 1.2) often has gone underutilized, owing to a lack of funds (Toronto Star, August 26th, 1979). In the summer of 1984, funds were found to ameliorate this particular situation, and the centre was used "almost 24 hours a day" (HOWELL), yet this funding was insecure. Indeed, the Federal government announced that Summer Canada funds, which have financed various youth programs run out of the centre, as well as youth camps, will not be renewed for 1985 (HOWELL). There is no evidence that North York has adopted the perspective taken in Scarborough, where the large-scale introduction of user fees has been seen as a solution to maintaining recreation facilities, although this is clearly a province-wide

phenomenon (BMR 1982, 45). For the residents of Jane-Finch, this is indeed fortunate, given their generally low incomes. User fees may represent a way to deal with the realities of tight municipal budgets (see Hine 1974 for a discussion of this issue in an American context), yet by definition they are discriminatory.

The second area where cutbacks have had an impact is in the provision of social services. True, overall social spending in Ontario increased in real terms through the 1970s and early 1980s (see Table 3.4). There is evidence, however, that there has been a failure to increase funding to the extent needed to keep with with the additional demand created by cutbacks in social assistance, which has increased community and service dependency. This can be seen in the claim by the voluntary sector that to an increasing extent, it is being used by Metro and the Ontario Government "as an extention of welfare services" (Toronto Star, May 27, 1984). This increased need for social services is in such basic areas as obtaining food. Charitable groups in Metro noted a doubling in demand for emergency food aid between 1983 and 1984 (Toronto Star, June 25, 1984).

This solution is no solution, however, due to the inability of these groups to obtain funding. As is outlined in Chapter 4, this is one way in which community conditions can constrain community groups in their efforts to overcome problems they see in the built environment. For now, suffice

to say that to the extent that these cutbacks have been in state funding, it is possible to identify again the embodiment at the level of appearances of the contradiction between production and reproduction that is embedded in the welfare state. At a time of economic crisis, programs that help sustain the legitimacy of the existing social relations can only be maintained at the expense of accumulation, and, clearly, there has not been the political will to undertake such a course of action.

(iii) The nature of the social service bureaucracy

This represents another explanation for the nature of the imbalance between the facilities available in Jane-Finch and the needs of its population. Dealing with such bureaucracies is a reality of life for individuals living under the welfare state. This is even more so for groups such as the single parent population of Jane-Finch, given their special dependence upon certain key state services. It is evident that such interaction represents a further constraint upon everyday life. As with the bureaucracies associated with the provision of social assistance and public housing, it is clear that the procedures and regulations that structure the provision of certain social services represent a source of oppression to the users of such services. This situation can best be outlined by examining the rules governing the provision of daycare in Jane-Finch. The regulations associated with the direct provision of daycare are examined first;

this is followed by a discussion of the limitations related to subsidy eligibility placed upon parents who place their children in other licenced daycare centres.

In Jane-Finch, the Edgely Daycare Centre represents the only centre run directly by the state. There, Metro Social Services provides 82 totally subsidized spaces. The daycare is designed to accommodate the children of low income working parents. The Edgely Centre also can provide daycare on a short term basis to the children of parents eligible for subsidization who are attending school- or looking for work (REDFORD). Unfortunately, parents sending their children to the Edgely Daycare face a number of restrictions that serve to make this arrangement less attractive than it first appears. For example, with the exception of a three week annual vacation, parents must ensure that their children are in attendance every day. A failure to meet this condition results in either a loss of the child's subsidized space, or else means the parents must pay the unsubsidized rate of \$19 per diem for the days missed. This regulation represents a serious constraint on the lives of low income families. Beyond problems caused by unexpected illness, parents effectively are prevented from sending their children to 'visit Grandma in the country' for a month; the cost would be prohibitive. HOWELL argues that the approach adopted by the Metro Community Services bureaucracy alienates local residents. As a result, many

people who qualify for subsidization do not consider the Edgely Daycare. This contention is substantiated by the fact that Edgely's waiting list contains only nine names (REDFORD), in a community characterized by a desperate need for more subsidized daycare.

More commonly, the state agencies involve themselves in the provision of daycare through subsidizing places in private daycare centres. Eligible parents end up paying from as little as \$10 up to the full rate of \$85 a week, depending on income (Community Information Services of Metropolitan Toronto 1985). The problem here is that increases in income can result in greater daycare expenses; if the parent involved also lives in public housing, meaning that their rent increases concomitantly, it is possible that total disposable income may decline through taking a job.

Again, we see that the welfare system frequently serves to inhibit the ability of individuals to improve their socio-economic status through 'self help'. The direct impact of the bureaucracy does not represent a key constraint in the context of Jane-Finch (as seen below, it is most important as an indirect constraint, in that it limits the ability of community groups to engage in the provision of social services in the first place). But it does reflect another way in which the devolution of inherently political functions to nonpolitical bodies potentially can serve to inhibit the provision of those services.

3.7 Constituting the conditions for struggle

This chapter has presented material that illustrates the operation of the model of collective action outlined in Chapter 2. Specifically, it was demonstrated that those social conditions that may prompt collective action cannot be considered as 'independent variables', or merely as the outcomes of historical factors. Instead, this chapter illustrated how such social conditions can be conceptualized as being mediated outcomes of underlying causal mechanisms. In the particular instance of the single parent population of Jane-Finch, it was shown that the policy outcomes of the institutions of the welfare state played an important role in affecting the life paths of this group, though a wide variety of other influences also were present. As previously noted, the welfare state is intimately connected with the contradictory nature of capitalist society. We must remember, however, that historical legacy, the nature of 'the political', and other contingent factors also play a role in formulating concrete policy.

CHAPTER 4: COLLECTIVE ACTION IN JANE-FINCH

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the efforts of Jane-Finch's single parents to overcome the constraints placed upon their lives, and attempts to account for the degree of success of these efforts. Here, 'success' is measured in two ways: (i) in relation to the relevant stated objectives; and (ii) in terms of the extent to which they contribute to the creation of an environment which can facilitate the emergence of future community groups.¹

Single parents have responded to socio-economic constraints in a variety of ways. However, only a subgroup of these are of interest here. First, attention is focused on collective initiatives, those that involve people con-

¹In certain groups, the creation of an environment within which collective action may thrive is a stated objective. As is noted later in this chapter, this is the case with the Downsvew Weston Action Community (DWAC), and with one of the groups focused upon herein: the Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre.

fronting issues as a group. True, it is possible to challenge 'the system' through individual action. For example, single parents attempt to evade the MTHA authorities by having cohabitants in their public housing units, or by working illegally (McDOWELL). Such individual initiatives are not considered here, however; given the negligible degree of political or economic power characteristic of the typical Jane-Finch single parent, it is difficult to see how the actions of one person acting alone can contribute in any meaningful way to the amelioration of the problems he or she faces in everyday life. Second, emphasis is placed on those examples of collective organization that have a significant proportion of single parents among their founders, and that have been created to address issues of special concern to that demographic group. Third, only those initiatives characterized by local people getting together to help themselves, or people like them, are examined. This means that groups which represent branches of extra-local organizations are not considered. Similarly, groups that are 'professionalized' (i.e. that have policy making power effectively vested in a hierarchy of paid staff persons) are outside our area of interest. The best indicator of professionalization is the extent to which 'participants' and 'clients' are differentiated. The greater the distinction

between the people providing a service and the people using a service, the lesser is the grassroots nature of the group in question (BIRMBERG). While professionalized groups may do good work, the development of a clear hierarchical organization necessarily limits the involvement in decision making by service users.

The empirical work presented in this chapter focuses upon four community groups that meet the above criteria: the Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre; Tobermory Community Activities; the Shiftworkers' Daycare; and the Yorkwoods Family Care Network. The methodology associated with this case study approach, along with its strengths and weaknesses, is outlined in Chapter 3.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. Immediately below, the history of collective action in Jane-Finch is outlined, and four recent or ongoing efforts at overcoming environmental constraints (that conform to the above criteria) are identified. The next section outlines the relative levels of success of these groups in achieving their objectives and in creating a context within which future community struggles may occur. This section also identifies how this success is constrained by the nature of the social structure within which the groups operate. An attempt is made to employ the policies

of the welfare state as a link between the underlying dynamics of capitalist society and the specific constraints upon the success of community groups in Jane Finch. Finally, we develop further the model of collective action presented in this thesis, to show how it can be employed to understand the nature and impact of community organizing at a particular time and place.

4.2 The Evolution of Collective Action

4.2.1 Historical Overview

Ever since its emergence as a concentration of community and service dependent groups, many local residents perceived that the Jane-Finch built environment suffered from a number of serious deficiencies (HEYWORTH). However, the development of collective action as a response to these conditions did not occur immediately, reflecting the fact that the recognition of a problem is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the emergence of viable efforts to overcome it. In Jane-Finch, there were two reasons for this. First, efforts at collective organization were impeded by a lack of institutions that could provide help in establishing local 'self-help' initiatives. Initially, the local government institutions were not concerned with this task, while nongovernmental bodies such as churches

and city wide voluntary agencies were underrepresented (Birnberg 1980). Thus local residents, frequently lacking in organizational skills and political influence, had serious difficulties in finding a forum in which to address the problems they encountered in their everyday lives. Second, it is evident that while many problems were identified by the residents of Jane-Finch, initially there was little inclination to join together to fight them. This was partially the result of two problems that continue to this day: (i) the fact that members of marginalized groups in general and single parents in particular are stigmatized in society as a whole, and therefore may lack the self confidence to 'get involved' (Hodgson 1984); and (ii) the everyday lives of many such people are fraught with stress as it is, meaning that they might perceive participation in a community group as 'one more hassle', even if the value of such a group is recognized (SEYMOUR).

In the early days of Jane-Finch, however, these problems were exacerbated by a third one: there was little sense of community (Ede 1977, 11). Few residents had roots in the neighbourhood, and therefore had little emotional commitment to its future. Ironically, this meant that many of the first community organizations in Jane-Finch were formed by those upper and middle income property owners

who did develop an early stake in the future of the community, not an emotional stake, but a financial one. These ratepayers' associations traditionally have not been concerned with the amelioration of the constraints facing single parents or other marginalized groups, however, since such groups tend to be seriously underrepresented among home owners. Indeed, a number of ratepayers associations have been actively hostile to the presence of low income groups in their community, saying that the public housing they inhabit represents a threat to property values (Jane Echo, April 30th, 1982). This has led to pressures on local government to support a reduction in the number of subsidized units in Jane-Finch, by selling off or renting MTHA at market prices when they are vacated (Toronto Star, Oct. 18, 1983).

Eventually, however, an indigenous voluntary sector did emerge in Jane-Finch. This was brought about by the establishment in the community of various churches and city-wide organizations such as the Children's Aid Society. These institutions initiated outreach programs, to help nurture community groups. Furthermore, an increased awareness that Jane-Finch was a 'problem area' led to the community being a focus for state action (although, as noted in Chapter 3, this view was not fully shared by the North York municipal government). Some of this attention has taken the form

of greater efforts at direct social control. Jane-Finch has a greater police presence than most suburban communities. It represents the only area of Metro outside of the central business district where police officers 'walk the beat'. In addition, regular police patrols in the corridors of the MTHA projects serve to impose an even greater degree of social control (NFB 1983). At the same time, however, government agencies have directed some of its resources towards the formation of a local voluntary sector. Though seriously constrained by cutbacks in social expenditure, efforts were made to provide funds and make available community relations workers capable of helping local groups through the maze represented by the social service bureaucracy.

Of course, 'outreach programs', financial support and community workers do not in themselves lead to the genesis of a local voluntary sector. It is also necessary for people to wish to engage in community organizing. By the early 1970s, this was beginning to happen in Jane-Finch; many local residents had come to see themselves as members of a community and had come to the realization that collective action was necessary to confront the constraints affecting their everyday lives (HEYWORTH; MORGAN). As a result, community groups directed toward the amelioration of specific social problems began to emerge. MORGAN, for example, talks

about the organization in 1973 of a local drop-in centre for teenagers, as a response to the absence of any recreational opportunities for this age group outside of school hours.

The development of a commitment towards a community, however, can better be translated into action if that community is organized politically (see Castells 1983, Prior and Purdy 1979, Pickvance 1976b). In a pattern of cumulative causation, such organization must be seen as both the outcome of initial concerns about the future of a neighbourhood, and as the impetus behind the development of additional community consciousness. In Jane-Finch, the emergence of local political activism can be traced to 1973, when the Yorkwoods Resources Group was founded. This body represented a forum for use of groups involved in social service provision in the Jane-Finch area. Initially, only state agencies (such as The North York Board of Education and the Yorkwoods Public Library) were involved. Eventually, however, input was received from Jane-Finch's nascent voluntary sector, and from concerned individuals. In this way, local residents who had identified problems in their community, and who were willing to take action to overcome them, became aware of each other. They came to the conclusion that what was needed was a co-ordinating body to act as a source of information, to prevent the duplication of

services, and to pressure for social change. In short, the desirability of forming a 'political wing' to the Jane-Finch voluntary sector was recognized (MORGAN).

Out of this conviction emerged the Downsview Weston Action Community (DWAC). This organization never achieved its potential in developing into a significant political pressure group, though, as noted by MORGAN, DWAC was instrumental in organizing grassroots opposition in the early 1970s to certain development proposals. However, the group did play a key role in disseminating information; this can be seen in the 1976 publication of DWAC Statistics, which provided socioeconomic data on Jane-Finch and adjacent areas. In addition, DWAC succeeded in bringing together and coordinating people interested in community development (Hodgson 1984). The resultant interpersonal network contributed to the formation of other community organizations (Hodgson 1984). Moreover, this served to illustrate that grassroots initiatives were possible, leading to the emergence of local groups outside of the DWAC network (MORGAN; HEYWORTH).

Thus there developed in Jane-Finch a mutually reinforcing relationship between commitment to the quality of the built environment and political activism. Marvin Novack of the SPCMT has asserted that the resulting 'sense of community' was stronger than in most suburban neighbour-

hoods. It is possible to identify two reasons for this. First, the scale of the problems in Jane-Finch demanded a response. The residents' associations of other suburban communities, Don Mills for example, may find it difficult to achieve a quorum because of the lack of pressing issues (Toronto Star, March 15, 1978), but a similar situation is not likely to happen in Jane-Finch. Second, the Jane-Finch area has a population sufficiently large to ensure that there are a sufficient number of people to 'share the burden' of community activism. The self depreciation associated with being a member of a marginalized group, the reluctance to pursue an activity that represents 'one-more hassle' in a life full of hassles, and the general lack of education that characterize most single parents considerably narrow the number of possible activists in low income communities; however, in Jane-Finch, such individuals were found in sufficient numbers to unite the community through action. In this way, Jane-Finch stands in sharp contrast with isolated low income areas, such as the Parma and O'Conner public housing projects, also in North York. There, many of the same environmental constraints are found, yet community organization is virtually nonexistent (Children's Aid Society of North York 1983). One can speculate that this is a

result of the fact that because most people in the communities surrounding these MTHA complexes are from a significantly different socio-economic background, it is difficult for the few potential activists in the public housing projects to organize the tenants.

4.2.2 Collective Action Today

Here, we examine some of the efforts by single parents to address the constraints that limit their lives. Four groups active at the beginning of my field work (September, 1985) are introduced. The process through which they were selected is noted in Section 4.1.

(i) The Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre

This organization was founded in 1975 by a subcommittee of DWAC, aided by community workers on loan from the Children's Aid Society and the Addiction Research Foundation (Hodgson 1984). After consulting with community residents this subcommittee established a set of priorities for what was needed most urgently in the community. First among these was the requirement to meet the needs of low income families with small children. It was perceived that the stay-at-home parent in such families, especially when he or she (almost always the latter) was a single parent, had little opportunity for social contact or self improvement within the Jane-Finch

community. At the same time there was a realization that the children of such families typically did not have access to the range of experiences found in the preschool years of children from wealthier families (Hodgson 1984). It was concluded that the establishment of a range of 'preventive programs' aimed at parents with young children represented the best way to deal with this situation. (Birmberg 1980; BIRMBERG; MORGAN). Initially, a 'true multi-service centre', which would encompass formal health care, was considered. This idea was rejected, however. Beyond the question of where the necessary funding would come from, there was a realization that health care professionals would come in "to respond to the problems of the individuals in the community" in a provider-client relationship. This clinical approach would provide help, but only after the fact. The preventative approach envisaged by the DWAC subcommittee had a different focus: it envisaged community programs that would help people by getting them involved in the provision of social services (Hodgson 1984). In light of this orientation, then, efforts were made to establish a centre that would meet three objectives (see Hodgson 1984):

- Increase the extent to which women with young children have the personal support they need.

- Increase the extent to which these women feel confidence in themselves in general and as parents in particular
- Increase the number of people involved in identifying and meeting community needs.

ii) Tobermory Community Activities

This group was formed in response to concerns about the quality of everyday life of public housing tenants. These concerns included the isolation of parents with young children that the Family Centre was formed to ameliorate, but also involved more basic issues, such as the inability of many public housing tenants to purchase the food and clothing they need to subsist. The efforts of the TCA, have been limited to one public housing complex: 15 Tobermory Drive, discussed in Chapter 3. As well as being a reflection of the more modest objectives of the founders of the TCA, this concentration on one MTHA building was based on the recognition (previously noted) that many low income families with small children are virtual prisoners of their immediate built environment, meaning that the most relevant services are those that are provided within that environment. The TCA was formed as a result of external agency, though this does not diminish the existence of the group as a 'grassroots' organization. As a result of the high transiency in the building and the general reluctance of low income people to 'take the lead', community organization in 15 Tobermory

was largely absent through the first years of its existence. However, in 1980, when Dalton Janski, the Mennonite chaplain in the building, asked a group of residents to judge his performance as part of his sixth-month review, a latent desire to confront some of the problems facing building residents was tapped. That group of residents became a permanent institution, first called the Planning Committee. They began to circulate questionnaires as to what 15 Tobermory's tenants saw as problems, and what should be done to overcome them (JANSKI; McDOWELL).

iii) Shiftworker's Daycare

Our third community service has its origins in a subcommittee of the Yorkwoods Public School Parent Teacher Association. This group of parents, many of whom were single parents and/or had low family incomes, saw the need for more subsidized daycare. If based only on personal experience, it was perceived that such daycare frequently was necessary to gain employment, given the low income potential of most of the parents concerned. Furthermore, it was recognized that there was a need for a subsidized daycare centre that operated in the evenings. This would permit single parents to attend evening classes, or to take jobs that involved shiftwork. With these concerns in mind, it was concluded in 1981 that the best course

of action was to attempt to establish a daycare centre, and to set it up in such a way so that it would become eligible for Metro Social Service subsidies (SEYMOUR).

iv) Yorkwoods Family Care Network

This organization was established in 1982 by a group of Jane-Finch residents, who saw a number of grave inadequacies in the type of childcare facilities available in their community. These residents, many of whom were single parents and thus had a high need for daycare, argued that not only did the number of subsidized positions and the hours of when centres were open represent problems, but that the daycare system did not cover all cases where a need for such facilities was present. First, it was noted that the existing system provided no outlet for those parents who require childcare on an emergency or temporary basis. This means, for example, that unexpected job opportunities might not be able to be taken up. Second, the founders of the Child Care Network perceived that there was a requirement for a system to provide short-term shelter for children at times of family crisis. The Children's Aid Society in Jane-Finch frequently identifies cases where a time away from home would be a good idea, but cannot follow through, due to a lack of placements. It was concluded that a childcare referral service, subsidized by the state,

represented a way to address these needs. Supervised individuals would act as 'providers', taking children into their homes, for the work hours or overnight depending on the case. The goal of the Childcare Network, then, was to establish such a system (HOWELL).

4.3 Constraints on Community Group Action

4.3.1 The Socio-Economic Context for Collective Action

This chapter has outlined a number of situations where collection initiatives have been undertaken in response to perceived inadequacies in the community. However, an objective of this thesis is to argue how the social structure plays a role in guiding the 'life paths' of efforts at community organizing. We already have seen that the presence of state or private institutions supportive of the voluntary sector, and variables such as the age of a community, represent constraints upon community group formation. We now argue that social conditions also play a significant role in determining the success of those groups. We first examine 'success' as defined as the extent to which stated objectives are achieved. The experiences of our four community groups are outlined, and the various constraints upon their actions that resulted in these outcomes are identified. Next, we examine the extent to which community organizations

in Jane-Finch have been successful in creating institutional structures or informal networks that can play a role in future community struggles. Throughout, an effort is made to link specific constraints to the underlying nature of capitalist society, through the intermediary of the welfare state. Specifically, the funding restraints that limit the operations of government agencies and the bureaucratic mode of organization prevalent in state institutions are seen to be key factors in limiting the success of the Jane-Finch voluntary sector.

4.3.2 Achieving their Stated Objectives

The four community groups outlined above vary considerably in terms of the extent to which they have met their stated objectives.

i) The Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre

This organization has expanded considerably since it was founded in 1975. Initially, the Child-Parent Centre had only two full-time staff persons, a miniscule and insecure budget and programming limited to a drop in-centre for mothers and a community office providing liaison with other groups in the Jane-Finch area. Currently, in contrast, the Family Centre has a full-time staff of nine, and a secure budget that in 1984 amounted to over \$200 thousand.

We cannot say, however, that success in increasing the size of the Family Centre's operations has led to complete success in meeting the organization's two client oriented objectives (the third objective of the Family Centre is more political in content, and therefore is discussed later in this chapter).

As noted, the first objective of the Family Centre was to increase the extent to which women with young children have the personal support they need. Certainly, the Family Centre has acquired the physical resources to address this task. The Child-Parent Centre, the component of the Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre that deals with the problem of isolation, has expanded substantially since 1975. The original drop-in centre is still in operation, and this has been supplemented by a series of women's groups operating in different places in the Jane-Finch community, including two public housing projects. These provide forums for guest speakers and facilitate the development of social networks among local residents. In addition, craft classes are operated, giving mothers an opportunity to express their creativity, and to have further opportunities to engage in social interaction. Childcare, involving Family Centre staff and parents in rotation, is provided in conjunction with all these programs. This permits mothers to attend

these events, allows them to escape from their children for a while, and gives these children exposure to experiences they might not otherwise have before kindergarten. Another program, also related to the problem of the isolation of the children of low income families, is a toy library. This gives children access to educational, but expensive toys they might not otherwise see.

Furthermore, it is evident that the Family Centre is attracting people from the community who are most isolated, and who need the most help. BIRMBERG estimates that of the families making use of the facilities of the Child-Parent Centre, one half of these are headed by single parents. Given the traditional low incomes and high isolation of this demographic group (see Chapter 3), it is possible to state that the Family Centre is reaching some of its target population. This assertion is supported by Hodgson's (1984) comparison of a sample of Family Centre users and a sample of women with children selected from the Jane-Finch community. True, she notes that the Centre attracts women who are more educated, and less likely to be public housing tenants. However, she argues that Family Centre users also are more likely to be recent arrivals, to be isolated, to be unable to meet their 'basic needs'. As well, they are often young, and have preschool children (see Table

4.1). Of course, any optimism about the effectiveness of the Family Centre in attracting an appropriate set of users needs to be tempered by the realization that the it is likely that the number of people who could benefit from the services of the Family Centre is considerably greater than the number of actual users. BIRMBURG wishes the Family Centre had the resources needed to reach out to more people. Hodgson (1984) also argues that not only has the Family Centre succeeded in attracting users that correspond to its target population, the Centre also has succeeded in reducing the isolation of its users. Her research indicates that involvement with the Family Centre typically leads to a growth in one's personal networks, and in one's capacity to use these networks to meet basic needs (see Table 4.2). In conclusion, then, the Family Centre has contributed to the amelioration of the isolation of the children and stay-at-home parents of low income families.

Table 4.1:
Demographic Characteristics of Family Centre
Users Vs. Community Women as a Whole¹

Characteristic	Centre women, n=30 (%)	Community women, n=74 (%)
Schooling		
-completed high school	36	27
-more than high school	28	8
Housing		
-MTHA tenant	28	59
Family life stage		
-just preschooler(s)	86	55
Age		
-under 34	90	85
Length of residence		
-under 1 year	47	19
Isolation ²		
-no intimates	24	12
-one or less intimates	47	31
Coping ²		
-often/very often have difficulty meeting needs	43	26

¹At the time of Hodgson's first interview.

²The sample size for the Family Centre women here is 29. The sample was originally designed to measure women new to the centre (i.e. involved for less than six months), but one did not conform to this criteria.

Source: Hodgson (1984, 30-31)

Table 4.2:
Changes in Isolation between First and Second Interviews

Interview	Family centre women (n=21)		community women (n=50)	
	#1	#2	#1	#2
Having no intimates	44%	22%	12%	14%
Having 2 or less people to provide needed support	44%	0%	18%	21%

¹Numbers for the first interview need not be compatible with those of Table 1, owing to the shrinking of the sample size between the first and second interviews.

Source: (Hodgson 1982, 52)

The second goal of the Family Centre is: to increase the extent to which isolated women with young children feel confident about themselves in general and as parents. Hodgson's study indicates that this goal has not yet been achieved. She fails to note any correlation between increases in coping skills and length of involvement with the Family Centre. Furthermore, the Centre does not appear to be attracting women who are suffering from the greatest amount of stress. Thus in one way, the Centre's target population is not being reached.

Overall, we can say that the Family Centre has partially been successful in achieving its user-oriented objectives.

ii) Tobermory Community Activities

Our second community organization also has achieved a measure of success in achieving its objective: improving the quality of life of public housing tenants, especially those such as single parents who are tied to the building for most of the time. From its beginnings as a loose-knit group of building residents considered with the lack of services in the 15 Tobermory Complex, the TCA has developed into a formal organization with a wide variety of programs. This development has been helped by hiring a full-time programmer and by developing formal links with the Family Center. Currently, the programs offered include:

- (i) The 'Tuesday Morning Group', which represents an opportunity for women in the building (mainly single parents) to develop social networks and to develop life skills and an awareness of pertinent issues through the bringing in of guest speakers. This program is run in conjunction with the Family Centre, which provides staffing. To permit parents to attend these meetings, child care is provided concomitantly. This service is run by three workers from the Family Centre and by one volunteer, selected in rotation from the members of the Tuesday Morning Group.
- (ii) The Preschool Co-op, which runs two mornings a week. The goals of this program are to permit single parents to have some times to themselves, and to give their children valuable learning experiences. As with the childcare run in conjunction with the Tuesday Morning Group, the Preschool Co-op is run by workers from the Family Centre and a parent volunteer.

- (iii) A handiwork club, which runs various arts and crafts classes.
- (iv) The Seniors' Club, which runs activities for the small number of seniors in 15 Tobermory.
- (v) The Thrift Shop, which collects and sells items donated by local churches and building residents. The goals of the Thrift Shop are to provide necessary goods, especially clothing, to building tenants at a reasonable price, and to raise money for the activities of the programs outlined above.
- (vi) The Food Supply Service, which freezes and sells at a low cost bread (near its due date) donated by a local bakery. Frozen food donated by McCain's is also sold, though this service is ending. The Food Supply Service is invaluable for people on social assistance, given that it reduces the most significant part of their budgets: their food bill.

Still, the TCA clearly does not affect the lives of as many building residents as it could do. Norma McDOWELL, the current co-ordinator of the group, estimates that between 150 and 200 people either do work for the TCA or use its services. The higher of these figures represents less than 20 percent of 15 Tobermory's official population. Programs such as the Tuesday Morning Group (12 members) and the Pre-School Co-op (15 children) are especially small. In this way, we can see that the TCA is only 'scratching the surface' of the problems associated with living in public housing.

iii) The Shiftworker's Daycare

By early 1985, this organization was well on its

way to addressing the first of the two problems which it was formed to address: the lack of subsidized daycare spaces. Although the process turned out to be far more time-consuming than the original board members anticipated (the exact problems experienced are outlined in our section on constraints on community group activities), the Shiftworker's Daycare obtained an operating licence, and opened in January, 1985 in Topcliff Public School. The group has every expectation that it will become eligible for subsidies in June of that year, once it has proven to Metro Social Services that it represents a viable operation by staying open for six months; the renovations needed to bring these quarters up to Metro standards have been completed, and a staff with the appropriate credentials has been hired. It is true that the daycare now in operation has only 24 spaces, instead of the envisaged 50-60, and can only take children in the 2 1/2-5 age range, instead of 2 1/2-10, but progress has been made in increasing the number of subsidized spaces (SEYMOUR).

The Shiftworker's Daycare was unsuccessful, however, in addressing adequately the second problem it was established to confront: the need for childcare facilities open in the evenings. As well as the complexities involved with hiring more staff, an attempt to extend the hours of the

Topcliff daycare would have required an additional licence from Metro Social Services. After the protracted nature of the Shiftworker's Daycare's efforts to obtain a standard daycare licence, this was viewed as a project for the future (SEYMOUR).

iv) The Yorkwoods Childcare Network

The fourth community group examined in this thesis differs from the above organizations in that it has ceased operations. The organization did operate for a period of time, and served to bring together children who needed emergency daycare or overnight accommodation with people willing to provide these, but the number of 'providers' was always disappointing, and when the number slipped below 20 in November, 1985, the decision was made to disband the group. It must be said, then, that the Yorkwoods Childcare Network failed to address the problem it was established to confront.

4.3.3 Constraints on Goal Achievement

The community groups outlined above were characterized by differing levels of success in achieving their stated objectives. No organization, however, succeeded wholly in overcoming the problems it was established to overcome. Why was this the situation? Why has the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch not been wholly successful, and in certain

cases wholly unsuccessful, in addressing the constraints that limit the scope of everyday life? Below, four factors are outlined.

(i) Funding

Funding is frequently regarded as the key restraint on the operation of the voluntary sector (see, for example, The Joint Taskforce on Neighbourhood Support Services 1983). Two aspects of funding serve to limit the actions of community-based organizations: (i) the absolute amount of funding available; and (ii) the rules and regulations surrounding its allocation.

This first limitation now is addressed. As noted previously, responsibility for the provision of social services has been shifted partially from state agencies to the voluntary sector. This solution is no solution, however, for two reasons: (i) the inability of these groups to obtain adequate funding and (ii) the concomitant occurrence of cutbacks in the budgets of state (or state-financed) agencies that loan personnel to community organizations, to help them get established. The net result is that funding represents a serious constraint on community group activity. Although factors such as the question of the distribution of responsibility between different levels of government play a role here, it is possible to see these difficulties

associated with financial support as being reflections of the fiscal limitations inherent in the welfare state under capitalism, limitations that were manifest through the 1970s and early 1980s.

The chief sources of funding for the voluntary sector are the United Way and related agencies on the one hand and the government on the other. Neither, however, has been able to meet fully the additional needs of the voluntary sector. Through the early 1970s, the United Way had a series of dissapointing campaigns (see Table 4.3), reflecting a general downward trend in the percentage of income Canadian individuals and firms give to charity (United Way of Greater Toronto 1983, Vol.I, 20) . This meant that most funds went to keeping existing programs alive. This has been especially detrimental to suburban communities, where established United Way programs are less likely to be found (Joint Taskforce on Neighbourhood Support Services 1983, 48-49). In the Planning District containing Jane Finch (10b), for example, the offices of 5 agencies funded by the United Way could be found. In contrast, Downtown Toronto (Planning Districts 1a-1f), an area with approximately the same population, had 53 such offices (SPCMT 1979, 81). True, in the early 1980s the United Way began to allocate money to suburban 'Special Projects', (Joint Taskforce

on Neighbourhood Support Services 1983). This was part of the commitment of 'Developmental Funding' to aspects of social service provision not adequately covered by the state or existing voluntary agencies. As well as for the suburban areas, special funds were set aside for agencies assisting the unemployed and their families, helping low income single parents overcome their isolation, and those representing and serving Metro's ethnic communities. (United Way of Greater Toronto Vol. III, Section IV, 1). However, Developmental Funding in 1985 was limited to \$540 thousand, or only two percent of the United Way's total budget. Only 15 of the 40 grant requests from suburban-oriented agencies could be met (United Way of Greater Toronto, Vol. III, Section IV, 1).

Table 4.3:
Trends in United Way/United Catholic Charities
United Jewish Appeal Funding of Social Service Agencies

Year	Funding (thousands \$)	Change (%)	C.P.I. (%)
1972	4,856		
		24.1	42.1
1976	6,025		
		24.2	28.4
1979	7,938		
		9.3	23.9
1981	8,180		

Based on a survey of agencies.

Source: SPCMT (1983b)

Thus, the United Way and related agencies did not succeed in accommodating the ever-increasing need for social services through the 1970s and early 1980s. Indeed, the percentages of the voluntary sector's revenue from this source declined steadily. Among the organizations surveyed in SPCMT (1983b), the percentage of total funding stemming from the United Way/United Catholic Charities/United Jewish Appeal decreased from 39 percent in 1972 to 23 percent in 1981.

Similarly, government bodies were unable to meet the new financial requirements of the voluntary sector. As noted previously, overall social spending in Ontario increased in real terms through the 1970s and early 1980s. At the same time, state funding for the voluntary sector as a whole increased in this period (see Table 4.4), though likely not enough to compensate for increases in the demand for services. This general upward trend was quite selective, however. First, the revenues of agencies not concerned with the provision of health care decreased in real terms (see Table 4.4). Clearly, such services had a lower priority. Second, serious cutbacks were experienced in the early 1980s by neighbourhood-based agencies (Joint Task Force on Neighbourhood Support Services 1983). Because the funding of community groups does not have a firm base in provincial

social welfare policy, such funding is one of the first areas affected in a period of general 'belt tightening' (Joint Task Force on Neighbourhood Support Services 1983). This shifted the onus for maintaining the voluntary sector onto the municipalities (Toronto Star, May 9, 1984). The local state has also been subject to fiscal restraint, however, and therefore has only a limited ability to provide additional assistance to the voluntary sector. Thus in 1984, Metro had \$3.4 million in grant requests, but only 1.9 million to allocate. A similar situation was experienced in North York. There, the entire budget of \$185 thousand was used up by the middle of June (Toronto Star, June 14th, 1984).

Table 4.4:
Changes in Income:
All Voluntary Agencies vs. Non-Health Agencies

	1976 (\$)	1981 (\$)	Change (%)	C.P.I (%)
All agencies				
-total funding	23,197	40,285	63.9	52.3
-gov't funding	10,698	19,429	69.7	52.3
Non-health agencies				
-total funding	13,266	21,936	20.1	52.3
-gov't funding	4,728	8,397	27.7	52.3

Based on a survey of the voluntary sector.

Source: SPCMT (1983b)

The outcome of this lack of funds was that the existence of many community organizations was threatened, never mind their ability to cope with an increased demand for their services. Of 95 neighbourhood-based groups surveyed in the 1983 report of the Joint Taskforce on Neighbourhood Support Services, 68 reported that funding problems represented a threat to their continued operation (p. 38). This survey also revealed that that average community group experienced an absolute decline in income between 1982 and 1983, and that the steepest declines were among those small organizations most likely to be found in the suburbs. Furthermore, the Taskforce noted that even for those receiving United Way or government support, funding frequently was not enough to cover core funding requirements, identified as the money needed to hire a programmer and clerical help, and to pay for office space and office equipment (p. 41). In the 1970s, groups attempted to overcome the growing gap between the resources available and the demand for the services they provided by increasing client fees (see Table 4.5), and a similar strategy was pursued subsequently. Between 1981 and 1982, for example, user fees increased 22 percent among agencies funded by the United Way in Toronto, while their total income increased only 16.9 percent (United Way of Greater Toronto, Vol. II Section II, 14). However,

such an approach has serious limitations in the case of community groups that deal with low income people.

Table 4.5:

Trends in Client Fees among United Way Organizations

	Year(fig. in \$000's)			% Change	
	1972	1976	1979	72-76	76-79
Total budget	12,995.2	19,836.5	27,177.6	52.6	37.0
Client fees	1,445.7	2,832.0	4,348.6	95.3	53.6

Source: SPCMT (1981, 18)

But how have these general funding constraints affected the four community groups examined in this thesis? The Family Centre was initially supported by small, short term grants from a variety of sources, including the Children's Aid Society and the Addiction Research Foundation. In the first few years of its existence, then, finding the money to continue operations was a serious problem; the organization truly "lived a hand-to-mouth existence" (BIRNBERG). In 1978, however, the group obtained guaranteed funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and received a Special Project grant from the United Way. In the following year, the Family Centre achieved sustained funding from the United Way. Thus by 1979, the future

of the organization was ensured. This did not mean, however, that funding problems had ceased. Partially as a result of the limited funds which were available, and partially as a result of following the strategy that small grant requests were more likely to be granted than large ones, the Family Centre budget was 'fixed' at a level far below one considered desirable by the organization. This led to concern about the ceiling upon salaries imposed by the funding agencies; with the wages that could be paid, it was difficult to keep qualified people. Eventually, though, this problem was resolved, when the Ministry of Community and Social Services granted an increase to cover higher salaries. A second problem remains unresolved, however; the Family Centre has not been able to obtain even a small percentage of the funds that it sees as being needed to reduce the isolation of women with young children, increase the self confidence of those women, and heighten their community involvement (BIRNBERG). In 1984, the Family Centre collected \$203,530 in revenue, of which 197,308 represented grants from the United Way, The Ministry of Community and Social Services, Metro Community Services, The Ministry of Health, and the Secretary of State (Jane Finch Community and Family Centre 1984, 6-7). Although this represented a healthy 27 percent increase over the

past year, and a fifty-fold increase over the first budget, the Centre's staff believe that there is a lot more that could be done to reduce the isolation of women with young children, increase the confidence of these women, and heighten their community involvement (BIRNBERG).

Tobermory Community Activities is distinguished by the fact that it directly receives neither state nor United Way funding. The main source of revenue is the Mennonite Church, which pays the salaries of the building chaplain and the TCA's programmer. Other funding is provided by the money making activities of the TCA (especially the Thrift Shop). At the same time, the Family Centre provides a small amount of direct funding, to cover supplies for the Children's Co-op, and pays the salaries of the staff for the Tuesday Morning Group and Children's Co-op. The TCA staff apparently are quite happy with this arrangement. The limited sums available prevent the group from expanding its scope of operations, but such an expansion might not be seen to be desirable, given the TCA's status as a Mennonite 'outreach' project (McDOWELL).

In its initial phase (i.e. before accommodation was found), the Shiftworkers' Daycare was supported by a number of small Self Help grants from the Children's Aid Society. In the Spring of 1984, once quarters were

established in Topcliff Public School, the organization began searching for larger amounts of grant money. Such funds were required to cover the startup costs needed to establish a daycare with the physical accommodation and staff that would meet with Metro approval, and so make the daycare eligible for subsidies. Such subsidies were essential for the Shiftworkers' Daycare, given the low and middle income clientele it hoped to attract. Subsidization cannot begin, however, until a daycare has been open six months, so additional funds were required to cover operating losses through this period; the rent of \$700 a month and premiums on liability insurance had to be paid, as did the director and other staff. The Shiftworkers' Daycare was able to obtain the funding to cover these startup costs. Employment and Immigration Canada provided a grant of \$17,000 to cover the salary of the director, and a second grant of \$3,000 to cover the cost of size-reduced playground equipment. As well, the Children's Aid Society allocated \$30,000 to pay for the salaries of other staff, alterations to the building, and toys costs. Finally, Metro Community Services granted \$8,000 to cover various other startup expenses (SEYMOUR). Thus funding cannot be seen as a primary restraint on the operations of the Shiftworkers' Daycare.

The Yorkwoods Family Care Network began providing services to the Jane Finch community after obtaining a Developmental grant from Metro Community Services. This grant was just enough to pay the salaries of two part-time workers, but through sharing office space with the Red Cross, the organization was able to operate. The organization believed that it was likely that this funding from Metro could become permanent. However, funding problems in another area obliged the group to cease operations. While childcare in established centres is eligible for subsidy, home childcare is not. This meant that the Yorkwoods Family Care Network could not afford to pay childcare providers full childcare rates. As a result, the stock of providers was small and unstable. When it slipped below twenty in November 1984, the group ceased operations.

Thus, the four community groups examined herein had quite different experiences in obtaining funds. Two were largely successful (TCA and Shiftworkers' Daycare), one was partially successful (the Family Centre) and one unsuccessful (Yorkwoods Family Care Network). Overall, however, we can say that these organizations do not reflect the desperation experienced by Metro's voluntary sector as a whole. This might be due to the fact that Jane-Finch is a publicly acknowledged 'problem area' that has drawn

more than its share of funds (HEYWORTH). A second possibility is that the author generally was directed towards groups that were considered 'successful'; in the process, other groups, with lower levels of activity because they lack funds, may have been disregarded.

As well as depending upon the state and non-local agencies for direct financial support, the capacity of community groups in Jane-Finch to achieve their objectives also is influenced by the nature of the support networks funded by these bodies. Local organizations, especially ones in the planning stage, can benefit from the presence of community workers, who can guide the group through the maze of government bureaucracy, and (unlike many community group members) are available during business hours, the period when many meetings must be scheduled. Thus cutbacks affecting the support networks available to groups in Jane-Finch have had serious implications. The startup process for the Shiftworker's Daycare, for example, was more difficult than it could have been. Initially, the group had access to a community worker from the North York Board of Education. However, this job position disappeared before the Shiftworker's Daycare had been in existence long. SEYMOUR attributes many of the problems associated with renovating the group's quarters in Top Cliff Public School to communication barriers

between the group and the Board of Education, a problem that would not have existed if there had been effective liaison between the two. In addition, the Shiftworker's Daycare depended upon a community worker from the Children's Aid Society, someone experienced in obtaining start-up funding and in dealing with Metro Social Services. Further problems were encountered here, however. The Children's Aid community worker position was not eliminated, but it was constantly under threat. Occupants of the position thus regularly resigned when they found more secure employment elsewhere. SEYMOUR believes that the fact that the Shiftworker's Daycare had to deal with three consecutive CAS community workers contributed to the delays associated with the opening of the Top Cliff daycare.

Thus the amount of funding available to support community organizations or their support networks represents a key constraint on the ability of such organizations to achieve their stated objectives. In this way, the fiscal limitations characteristic of the welfare state are brought to light, given the importance of government funding in the case of Jane Finch's voluntary sector. At the same time, however, the ways in which the funds that do exist are allocated represents a further difficulty. This reveals one way in which the bureaucratic organization of the state

limits the potential of the community-based components of the social service delivery system. For example, virtually all funding agencies require that budgets be prepared well in advance, and outline in great detail how monies are to be spent. HOWELL feels this represents a major limitation on the activities of both her Yorkwoods Family Care Network and other local organizations. Frequently, little room is left for 'discretionary funds', to deal with unanticipated crises. Indeed, concern over financial matters occasionally is given priority over the provision of social services. In the words of one government official (who wishes to remain anonymous): "We do not care about the services being provided; we are only concerned with financial accountability".

In conclusion, funding represented a serious constraint on the activities of our four community organizations. However, the level of funding cannot in itself account for the respective degrees of success of these organizations in reaching their objectives. Other constraints therefore must be considered.

(ii) Lack of Meeting Space

In Jane-Finch, it is often difficult for community groups to find the quarters necessary to 'set up shop'. Finding enough rooms to run a service such as a daycare

is a challenge. Even groups with space requirements limited to a small office experience difficulties. There are two explanations for this situations: (i) the absolute lack of space which could be occupied by the voluntary sector; and (ii) how the space that is available is allocated by the state agencies that have responsibility for most of it.

We first turn attention to the question of the extent of the stock of accommodation that can potentially can be used by the community organizations. It is clear that in this respect, the basic characterists of the Jane-Finch built environment place the community at a considerable disadvantage, compared to inner city areas. The newness of the building stock in Jane-Finch means that there are no older properties that could be purchased or rented cheaply, for conversion into daycares, drop-in centres or similar facilities (BIRMBERG). The 'storefront' accommodation found in downtown Toronto, for example, does exist in Jane-Finch.

In light of this situation, and given the commitment on the part of government agencies to utilize the voluntary sector to provide certain key social services, one would expect that the state would have provided alternative quarters, available to the voluntary sector free or at reduced cost.

This is not the case, however. For example, space for the voluntary sector in public housing complexes is limited, and is unlikely to grow substantially. As noted by DARCEY of the MTHA, formal mechanisms exist through which groups, either from the community at large or from within a given MTHA complex, may apply for such space, and which have led to the establishment in public housing structures of groups such as Family Centre and the TCA. However, the MTHA is reluctant to allocate too much space to community groups. It is acutely aware of the lack of subsidized apartments in Metro, and therefore is reluctant to reduce further the stock of public housing units (DARCEY). Schools also allocate space for the meeting and weekly activities of community groups. Indeed the North York Board of Education encourages such use, through the establishment of a formalized request procedure and a commitment to provide facilities free of charge to organizations mainly composed of North York residents (EWING). However, a need to serve a very large number of organizations generally means that groups must pack up and leave when finished. Certainly, there are exceptions to this: the Shiftworkers' Daycare and other daycares, for example, or organizations such as the Red Cross and Information Downsvew. But for other groups with a need for a desk and phone, or permanent storage

space for files, school facilities are of limited utility. For this reason, community groups that do use NYBE property tend to be sports organizations (EWING). Community Centres represent another possibility for housing community organizations. However, they are already over-utilized (see Chapter 3), and have restrictions similar to those of the NYBE on the number of groups who can establish offices within them (HOWELL).

The prevalence of these problems is reflected in the difficulties in finding accommodation experienced by the community organizations focused upon herein. The Family Centre was fortunate enough to obtain at its inception the use of two recreation rooms in the 4500 Jane Avenue MTHA Complex, and to expand subsequently into an adjacent apartment. Now, however, the Family Centre is "bursting at the seams" (BIRNBERG). The staff is forced to work in very crowded conditions, while the drop-in centre frequently cannot accommodate all the people wishing to use it. Furthermore, no relief is in sight. Expansion at their present address is not an option. Even if the MTHA offered the use of another apartment, the Family Centre would not accept it, because they are sensitive to the fact that there is an acute shortage of public housing units. At the same time, renting enough space elsewhere to accommodate all

or some of the operations of the Family Centre is not economically feasible. Thus, we can see that space problems even serve to constrain the activities of successful community movements; inevitably, space limitations play a role in the Family Centre's decisions on the nature of new programming (BIRMBERG).

In contrast to the Family Centre, the TCA currently has sufficient space in the 15 Tobermory MTHA complex. However, its present quarters were only obtained through displacing the administrative offices of Cradleship Creche, a nonprofit daycare network. In putting its case to the MTHA, the TCA successfully argued that it, unlike Cradleship Creche, was oriented towards addressing the specific needs of the residents of 15 Tobermory. (JANSKI). This controversy reflects the extent of the accommodation problem in Jane-Finch, where different community organizations come into conflict over scarce resources.

The Shiftworker's Daycare clearly has been constrained by a lack of space. The quarters in Top Cliff Public School were only found after a lengthy search, which delayed the organization's startup date for over a year. Even these quarters were not wholly adequate. Owing to Metro Social Services regulations, there was only space to accommodate 24 children, instead of the intended 50-60 (SEYMOUR).

Clearly, the general lack of excess spaces in suburban schools, churches and other institutional structures is one explanation for the underrepresentation of daycare (noted in SPCMT 1979) characteristic of that built environment.

Finally, the Yorkwoods Family Care Network also suffered from accommodation problems. The organization's needs -- really only for a desk and phone -- were modest, but caused difficulties nonetheless. Initially, a crowded office was shared with the Red Cross in Yorkwoods Public School. However, in late 1984 the Red Cross began expanding its staff there, forcing the Family Care Network to look elsewhere. The group never did succeed in finding alternative quarters. It should be noted, though, that the space problem was not the major cause of the group's demise (HOWELL).

But why have state agencies failed to provide the accommodation needed by the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch? One possibility is the presence of a municipal government reluctant to treat Jane-Finch as a 'special case' (see Chapter 3), though Metro takes a different view. This suggests that funding limitations also have an influence; Metro at least would allocate more money if it were available (Toronto Star, August 26, 1979). At the same time, the control of certain state facilities by semi-autonomous bodies also is a factor in the allocation of space to the

voluntary sector. For example, the MTHA is responsible for a significant amount of the publicly-owned floor space in Jane-Finch. However, the MTHA is guided by a mandate that classifies the organization as a landlord, not a provider of social services (DARCY). Thus, public housing complexes were subsequently built with this in mind, even though the provincial government in general might have been in favour of creating greater opportunities for the voluntary sector.

Not only is the absolute amount of space available to the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch a problem, so too is the way that space is allocated by the state bureaucracy that has effective control over most of it. In certain cases at least, quarters are assigned on an ad hoc basis, at the discretion of individuals low down in the hierarchy. This can be seen in the processes through which the Family Centre and the TCA obtained accommodation in their respective public housing complexes. Members of both groups perceive that the allocation was not the result of MTHA policy, but reflected the attitudes of the building managers concerned. The success of the Family Centre and the TCA in obtaining space was viewed as a result of fortuitous personal relations, meaning that things could have turned out differently if other personalities had been involved (BIRNBURG; JANSKI).

To a certain extent, this belief reflects the way in which the MTHA decides whether or not to set aside space for community organizations. Decisions are made by the MTHA Board when the conversion of storage or recreation space to community group use is being considered, or by the Board of the Ontario Housing Corporation, the MTHA's parent organization, in the case of the conversion of residential accommodation (DARCY). However, in the case of applications for space from groups internal to a given public housing complex, or from groups already established in a MTHA building, the management of the structure concerned acts as a liaison between the organization and the public housing authorities, and so plays a pivotal role in determining whether requests are granted (DARCEY). Such management teams are not circumscribed by an MTHA policy supporting the allocation of space to the voluntary sector (as noted, the MTHA sees itself as being first and foremost a landlord) and so have a great deal of latitude in applying their own values, in either helping or hindering community groups that wish to use MTHA facilities.

A further example is provided by an examination of the process through which the Shiftworker's Daycare became housed in Top Cliff Public School. In 1984, the North York Board of Education, acting upon the recommendations

of an internal report examining the city's daycare needs, committed itself to the provision of community-based and nonprofit daycare centres in schools, and established formal procedures to encourage this outcome (DAY). Previous to 1984, however, the decision making process lacked this clear policy orientation, and was much more ad hoc. The attitudes of the staff of the schools in question played a much greater role (DAY). SEYMOUR argues that the Shiftworker's Daycare was able to establish itself in Topcliff Public School because the organization addressed the concerns of its staff. These concerns did not focus, however, upon the lack of subsidized daycare in Jane-Finch, but instead were based upon the unpopularity of the school, compared to other public schools, in the eyes of local residents. It was thought that the housing of a daycare in some of the vacant space that resulted from this unpopularity would result in parents dropping off their school-age children at the school, thus increasing total enrolment. Again, the machinations of the bureaucracy benefited the voluntary sector, but only because the aims of the Shiftworker's Daycare were compatible with those of the state employees in question.

Bureaucracy represents a constraint upon the acquisition of space in a second way also, through its emphasis on

'established procedure'. This is reflected in the difficulties experienced by the Shiftworker's Daycare in renovating their rooms in Top Cliff Public School. The group had to conform to the building standards of Metro Social Services, which licences daycare centres, and the North York Board of Education, the organization's landlord. In one instance, however, these two sets of standards contradicted each other. A frustrating dispute over the nature of a fire door in the daycare centre prevented the startup of date by six months.

(iii) Limitations on Voluntarism

The community groups that constitute the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch depend upon volunteers for their successful operation. Most have paid staff, but owing to their origins as grassroots organizations, and/or reflecting the realities of funding, virtually all have unpaid executives and require volunteers to run most programs. This dependency represents a serious constraint upon the activities of many community organizations.

There are a number of reasons for this. First, as noted previously, a sense of stigma and insecurity characterizes many of the low income persons most likely to need the social services provided by the voluntary sector. As a result, individuals are reluctant to get involved,

reducing the pool of possible volunteers. This is a problem noted by SEYMOUR, in her discussion of the Shiftworker's Daycare. The organization has had difficulties in finding parents willing to sit on the board, or to act as volunteers in the daycare itself. Second, ethnic tensions, especially between Blacks and Whites, are serious in Jane-Finch (NFB 1983; McClarren 1981). As a result, organizations often tend to be associated with one ethnic group or another. For example, it is evident that the TCA has very weak links with the West Indians in 15 Tobermory, despite the fact that they represent 70 percent of the total population. Certainly, West Indians make use of the TCA's facilities, but they are not represented in the Planning Council, or in many of the groups that run specific activities (McDOWELL). Members of the Planning Council attribute this to the West Indians having their own support networks. In the process, however, the possibility of developing solidarity within a tangible constituency, namely the population of one building, effectively is precluded. Finally, for many low-income people, the childcare costs incurred through participation in community work can be prohibitive (Hodgson 1984). Certain funding agencies recognize this situation and provide funding for daycare. For example, the startup funds for the Shiftworker's Daycare supplied by the Children's Aid Society

paid for the daycare costs of people attending meetings (SEYMOUR). However, this generally is not permitted. The United Way, for example, makes no provision for the out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers, beyond travel expenses associated with service delivery (United Way of Greater Toronto 1985b). This inevitably limits the number of people who can become involved in organizations such as the Family Centre. Thus while the policies carried out by the Welfare State do not play a fundamental role in imposing limitations upon the extent of voluntarism, they do have some effect. Through the presence of a bureaucracy that is unwilling to 'bend the rules', and permit the allocation of funds to cover the out-of-pocket expenses of volunteer, many potential participants in community struggle are prevented from getting involved.

* * *

In conclusion, then, the capacity of the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch to meet its stated objectives is limited severely by a number of constraints. Ironically, these constraints are the outcomes of the same contradictions embedded in the welfare state that lead to the emergence of the problems the voluntary sector emerged to solve. Not only does the welfare state have a limited capacity to address the needs of certain marginalized groups, it

frequently militates against struggles on the part of people in those groups to improve their own lives.

4.3.4 Developing a Framework for Future Collective Action

As well as being measured as the extent to which a group meets its stated objectives, 'success' is measured in a second way also, as the extent to which a given community organization has contributed to the creation of an environment which can better nurture future collective initiatives. In assessing whether this is the case, two criteria are employed. The first of these is the extent to which community volunteers (as opposed to paid staff persons) play a meaningful role in the group's operations. This permits individuals who previously might have been wholly marginalized to find an environment where they can both provide a service necessary to the community and also develop a sense of their own self worth. The second criteria is the extent to which community groups lead to the establishment of formal institutions or informal networks that can assist new groups in 'getting off the ground'; clearly, different groups have different levels of commitment to the principles of collectivism. Below, the extent to which our community groups can be considered 'successful' in this way is assessed.

The Yorkwoods Family Care Network is not dealt with, however, since it no longer has an institutional form.

i) The Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

The Family Centre clearly has played a role in creating a context for future community action. Firstly, the Centre has encouraged community participation. The operations of the Family Centre itself stress involvement by local residents. True, the paid staff has grown to the point where there are 9 full-time and 13 part-time employees. At the same time, however, the Family Centre has not become 'professionalized'; as Hodgson (1984, i) notes, it "began as and remains a community-based, community-controlled organization." Decision making power rests firmly in the hands of a board of directors composed of Centre users and other community residents (Hodgson 1984, i). At the same time, over fifty community residents contribute time to the organization's operations. Some of these volunteers now serve on the Family Centre's board, or are on the paid staff, while others display their emerging community consciousness by getting involved with other organizations (BIRMBURG). Furthermore, merely participating in Family Centre programs can encourage the development of a commitment to community organizing. In her study of Family Centre users, Hodgson (1984) notes that while Centre women were more likely to

in developing further the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch. The Family Centre's administrative offices proved secretarial services at cost to 25 smaller organizations in the community. As well, the Family Centre's Community Development Office has played a role in the formation of other groups in the Jane-Finch community, through the provision of staff persons. Partially compensating for the inadequate supply of state and CAS community workers, these individuals can help groups in their start-up phase, by offering advice on internal organization and how to obtain funding.

Thus, through encouraging community involvement and through establishing an institutional framework capable of encouraging the further growth of the voluntary sector, the Family Centre has played a significant role in encouraging collective action in Jane-Finch. As we have seen, the Family Centre was born with a political objective: to increase the number of people involved in identifying and meeting community needs. We can say that this objective has been met, though we must not over-estimate the significance of the network of community groups nurtured so far. These groups are not linked in any formal way, and thus do not have the potential to constitute any kind of a 'common front'.

ii) Tobermory Community Activities

The TCA plays less of a role in creating a context for future collective action. Certainly, the organization emphasizes participation. Given that the organization only has two paid staff persons (though the Family Centre provides staff for the Tuesday Morning Group and the Childcare Co-op), volunteers in effect run many of the programs. In addition, a significant amount of decision making power is vested in the Planning Council, composed of building residents. However, while such involvement may lead to a commitment to activism, this is not manifested in any wide-spread participation in other community groups (McDOWELL). Furthermore, the TCA as an institution does not see community development as being within its mandate. The group does have links with other organizations (for example: with the Family Centre through the Tuesday Morning Group and Child Care Co-op; and with the Mennonite Church), but simply uses these links to achieve its own objectives, which are limited to improving the lives of the tenants of 15 Tobermory.

iii) The Shiftworkers' Daycare

In terms of nurturing further community organizing, this group also played a limited role. Certainly, community residents participate through sitting on the board of directors. Specifically, the organization's bylaws state that

four of the six board members must be parents of children in the daycare, although the first board did not meet this objective. Indeed, this experience was a true "eye-opener" for those Board members holding office during the painful birth of the Shiftworker's Daycare (described above), an experience that has led to other community involvement (SEYMOUR). As with the TCA, however, the Shiftworker's Daycare was established as, and remains, a single issue organization. It is not concerned in working as an institution towards creating conditions favourable for future collective action.

* * *

But what is the situation with regard to collectivity in the Jane-Finch voluntary sector in general? According to HEYWORTH, while large number of community groups have been formed recently, there is little evidence for the development of a true urban social movement (in Castell's or Pickvance's sense of the term) in the Jane-Finch area. The groups generally lack a commitment to the principles of collective action, and there is no real organizational focus. DWAC really never emerged as an effective political body, and today is largely inactive, while no similar group devoted to co-ordination and broadbased action has come into being.

4.3.5 Constraints on the capacity for community organizing

Why was there this limited success in creating a context for future community-based action? Below, four possible explanations are outlined. The link between these and the nature of the welfare state under capitalism is less clear than was the case with the constraints upon community groups achieving their stated objectives, however, a relationship can be identified in the case of the first factor listed below.

(i) Pressure from External Bodies

As has been demonstrated, community groups in Jane-Finch commonly depend upon other private organizations and state agencies for funding and other types of support. This frequently serves to circumscribe the range of programs and policies that can be adopted, given that it may be necessary to conform to the agendas of these external bodies. The social service bureaucracy today is oriented towards addressing specific needs. Therefore, if community groups want support, it is best for them to tailor their prospective programs to comply with this orientation. This means that an orientation towards community development, not the delivery of concrete services, frequently leads to funding problems. This is reflected in the experiences of DWAC. The Family

Centre, which has a limited political focus, was only able to obtain funding because it directed most of its energies toward addressing specific needs, through the Child-Parent Centre. In this way, it can be said that the bureaucratic organization of the institutions of the welfare state lead to co-optation of community groups; such groups must conform if they are to get vital financial support. There is insufficient evidence, however, to go one step further, and assert that such co-optation is part of a deliberate strategy on the part of the state.

(ii) Popular attitudes towards collectivism

In western society, a widespread commitment to the principles of collective action is rarely found, at least outside of the unionized workplace. Therefore, while people may see the need to get together to solve problems, this is seen as an ad hoc solution; they fail to take things one step further, to the recognition that community-wide collective organization represents a fundamentally different mode of social organization that more fully represents their class interests (see Katznelson 1981 for a discussion of this problem as it is experienced in the United States). Certainly, it frequently happens that as individuals operate an organization they become 'radicalized' and come to see the need for broad-based community action, but, as noted

by HEYWORTH, initially they are more likely to be concerned exclusively with the issues their group was formed to confront.

(iii) The Paradox of 'Crisis Management'

A third constraint upon increasing class capacity is a reflection of the fact that, for reasons previously outlined, the number of activists in Jane-Finch, and the quantity of resources available to them, are small when compared to the extent of the problems they must address. Thus, in the words of HEYWORTH, "community organization thus becomes an exercise in crisis management." The maintenance of even a minimum level of service represents a forbidding task. Most people therefore do not have the time or energy to involve themselves in activities of a political nature also, for such involvement would mean "going to yet another weekly meeting." (BIRMBERG) Along with its funding problems, we can see this as an explanation for why DWAC has failed to evolve into a force for effective political action. Many members 'burn out', as they attempted to involve themselves in the direct provision of services, as well as with DWAC.

4.4 Community Struggle and our Model of Collective Action

This chapter has illustrated further how the model outlined in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 operates in practice. The collective initiatives described above clearly represent

responses to the social conditions found in the Jane-Finch community. In turn, those social conditions, especially those stemming from the policies of the welfare state, served to constrain the ability of the voluntary sector in Jane-Finch to meet its stated objectives, or to create an environment more amenable to further collective action. At the same time, however, the patterns of consciousness characteristic of community residents in general and single parents in particular played an equally important role in determining the life paths of the collective initiatives examined. The perception that given conditions are constraints upon everyday life is an essential prerequisite for the decision to challenge those conditions. Furthermore, the emergence of a consensus that a joint approach was needed influenced the type of response selected, and the internal organization of the response (collective, as opposed to bureaucratic or professional). Finally, it was demonstrated that the Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre, Tobermory Community Activities, the Shiftworkers' Daycare and the Yorkwoods Family Care Network did have 'feedback' effects on both social conditions and patterns of consciousness. With regards to the former, certain constraints on everyday life were ameliorated, while the Family Centre has structured itself so as to help launch further collective initiatives.

With regards to patterns of consciousness, we can conclude that community involvement led to a greater sense of efficacy, and to a belief that collective action can bring about change.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to shed some light on the complex relationship between community-based collective action and the social context within which it occurs. A model of community struggle was developed, and this was utilized to come to an understanding of the reciprocal links between community organizing and social conditions in the Jane-Finch area of Metropolitan Toronto.

Through the adoption of a marxist framework for analysis, we endeavoured to move beyond the basic insights that context: (i) acts as a catalyst for the formation of community groups and enables/constrains their 'life paths'; and (ii) community struggles in turn have an impact upon the context within which they are launched. Accepting the ontological proposition that observable phenomena are subject to determination by underlying mechanisms, an effort was made to identify the ways in which community struggles and social context are related to these mechanisms. In

order to establish that community organizing represented a legitimate focus for marxist analysis, it first was argued that struggles in the sphere of reproduction, not just in the workplace were influenced by the causal mechanisms of paramount importance in contemporary society: those associated with the capitalist mode of production. Next, an assessment was made of the ways in which the relationship between local collective action and social context has been understood in the marxist literature. In terms of the impact of the latter upon the former, it was concluded that the structuralist approach and the various responses to it were inadequate. Instead, what was needed was an approach recognizing that contextual features were an outcome of underlying causal mechanisms, but that contingent forces also are determinants. We also briefly touched upon the influence of community struggles on social context. It was concluded that social conditions can influence social conditions, and, in order to develop a fully dialectical understanding, this thesis asserted that community struggles can have an impact upon underlying mechanisms. Informed by these insights, a model was constructed that illustrated the links between the institutional apparatus and patterns of consciousness that constitute context, the community

organizations prompted by them, and the causal mechanisms underlying society.

In order to account for the nature of those contextual elements of paramount importance in contemporary capitalist society in general and service- and community-dependent communities such as Jane-Finch in particular, the welfare state was examined. It was concluded that the welfare state does not transcend the contradictions of capitalist society, and that the fiscal limitations and bureaucratic nature of social service provision are in part outcomes of these contradictions. Thus the welfare state constitutes an intermediary between underlying mechanisms and specific social conditions.

Chapter 3 outlined the methodology employed in collecting the information presented in the two empirical chapters, and then proceeded to examine the social conditions that structure the life paths of the single parents of Jane-Finch. First, we developed a method to conceptualize constraints on everyday life. Here, the level of personal resources (under capitalism, this is largely equivalent to monetary income) and the nature of the built environment represent the two key constraint categories. The first of these largely determines the nature of the second: income influences which built environment one inhabits,

the type of housing which may be occupied, the level of dependence upon decommodified goods and services, and the extent to which one is dependent on the immediate community. Next, these constraint categories were employed to organize those social conditions that have an impact upon our study group, and it was shown that these were influenced by limitations on state expenditure and by the bureaucratic nature of social service provision. It first was demonstrated that single parents in Metropolitan Toronto typically have low incomes, and that this is the immediate result of cutbacks in state expenditure on social assistance. Chapter 3 then argued that this lack of income often leads to a dependence on decommodified housing. This, in turn, constrains neighbourhood choice, since public housing is not evenly distributed throughout Metro Toronto. Specifically, many single parents are obliged to move to the Jane-Finch area. In many ways, however, this community, is inappropriate for low income single parents. The MTHA complexes they are obliged to inhabit are unsuitable for a largely 'house-bound' population, the facilities needed to accommodate the service dependency of such individuals are not present in sufficient numbers, and the community as a whole does not offer the cultural/recreational/retail opportunities required by a community-dependent population.

Chapter 4 proceeded to examine how the single parents of Jane-Finch have organized themselves to overcome these constraints. Four organizations then described: the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, Tobermory Community Activities, the Shiftworker's Daycare, and the Yorkwoods Family Care Network. We noted the problems that prompted the organization of each, their differing levels of success in ameliorating these problems, and the varied extent to which each contributed to the formation of an environment more amenable to future community-based collective action. The chapter illustrated that the policies pursued by the welfare state represented a key constraining/enabling influence upon the life paths of these four community organizations. Again, the fiscal restraint and bureaucratic orientation of the welfare state, stemming from the essentially contradictory nature of capitalist society, represented a key determinant.

What are the implications of this study? First, it serves to confirm the emerging consensus (see Prior and Purdy 1979; Fincher 1984; and Knowles 1985) that community struggles cannot be given a subordinate status compared to struggles in the workplace. Neighbourhood collective action deserves to be studied, in that it may represent an outcome of the causal mechanisms underlying capitalist society. Second, this thesis provides evidence that deterior-

rating social conditions stemming from cutbacks in the welfare state are not just an outcome of, but a cause of social processes. In communities such as Jane-Finch, people are fighting back, despite their initially low level of politicization. The third implication of this study, however, notes that the capacity of people to ameliorate their conditions of existence in itself is limited by the nature of the welfare state. This does not mean, though, that human action is pointless. The institutional apparatuses that can either enable or constrain community group formation can be altered, while involvement in community groups can lead to a greater commitment to the idea that people acting together can achieve meaningful change.

Of course, much more needs to be done. First, studies that examine the entire voluntary sector of a given community, not just selected initiatives launched within that community, should be undertaken. Such an approach would permit us to achieve greater insights into the broader relationship between community struggles and the social conditions that surround them. This would especially be true if the resources were available to permit the collection of data in a more systematic and comprehensive manner. Second, while this thesis has illustrated the operations of a model of collective action in a specific context,

the approach taken herein lacks a comparative dimension. It would be useful to undertake a study that analysed more than one community. In this way, it might be possible to account for why collective action is more prevalent in some communities than in others. Finally,, additional work on how we can conceptualize the links between the contradictions of the welfare state and policy outcomes would help to clarify the linkages that exist between social context, community struggle, and the dynamics of capitalist society.

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Defining the Study Area

In this thesis, the Jane-Finch community has been defined as the area bounded on the east by the Black Creek Ravine, on the south by Sheppard Avenue, on the west by Highway 400, and on the north by Steeles Avenue (see Figure 1.1). These boundaries were selected for two reasons: (i) to facilitate data collection; and (ii) because they encompass a physically separate urban area.

A key reason for selecting the study area boundaries outlined above is that the area they encompass corresponds exactly to six census tracts (312.01; 312.02; 312.03; 312.04; 316.01; and 316.02)². This permits us, for example, to use Census data to identify the percentage of families in Jane-Finch which are headed by single parents. As well, the study area corresponds closely to North York's Ward Three. We therefore are able, with some qualifications, to employ information collected on a ward-by-ward basis. An example of this would be Yin and Pizzardo's (1976) housing data.

At the same time, however, selecting these study area boundaries has its drawbacks. We are not permitted to make full use of data collected at larger levels of

spatial aggregation. For example Statistics Canada monthly unemployment figures are collected only collected for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) level; COMSOC figures for FBA caseloads encompass Metropolitan Toronto as a whole; while figures for municipal social expenditure pertain to North York, not to the communities within it. For this reason, a case could be made for utilizing a larger study area.

This case, however, would be based on statistical expediency alone, and would disregard the way in which the physical makeup of Metropolitan Toronto results in the creation of physically distinct communities. Clearly Jane-Finch as defined herein represents a discrete component of Metro. The community is separated from other urban development on the east and west, and is bounded on the north by nonurban land uses. Only on the south is there any ambiguity: Sheppard Avenue does not constitute a clear boundary between two components of Metro.

In conclusion, then, the boundaries of the study area can be justified when both problems associated with data collection and the presence of physical barriers to communication are considered together. True, another consideration would be how local residents themselves defined Jane-

Finch. This would involve extensive survey work, however, and therefore is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Appendix 2: Statistical Profile of Jane-Finch

Below, the Jane-Finch Study Area is described in statistical terms, and compared to the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Information from the 1981 Census is employed. Census categories and definitions are used, except where otherwise indicated.

	Jane-Finch	Toronto CMA
Population Characteristics		
Total Population (000's)	49.6	2,998.9
Population Density (persons/km ²)	6,798.1	801.2
Age Distribution (%):		
-0- 4	8.1	3.3
-0-19	37.4	29.3
-15-24	22.0	9.2
-20-64	57.3	61.6
-65+	5.3	9.1
Social Characteristics		
Language:		
-mother tongue neither english nor french (%)	40.5	27.2
-can speak neither english nor french (%)	6.9	3.5
Born Outside of Canada (%)	50.6	37.8
Recent Immigrants (%) ¹	6.0	5.1
Lone Parent Families:		
-% of total families	18.9	11.8
-% with female heads	89.2	84.0
-% with no members in the labour force	23.9	15.2
Divorced (%) ²	3.2	3.2
Children per family (av.)	1.6	1.3

continued...

	Jane-Finch	Toronto CMA
Dwelling Characteristics		
Number (000's)	15.0	1040.3
Tenure		
-owned (%)	38.0	56.5
-rented (%)	62.0	43.5
Type:		
-single detached (%)	8.0	40.3
-apartments (%)	56.5	39.4
-other (%)	35.5	20.3
Persons per room (av.)	0.6	0.5
Rooms per dwelling (av.)	5.3	5.7
Private market rents(av.) ³	318.0	364.0
Economic Characteristics		
Male Labour Force Activity:		
-work activity rate (%) ³	84.6	87.7
-unemployment rate (%)	4.0	3.4
-15-24 unemployment rate (%)	7.2	7.6
Female Labour Force Activity:		
-work activity rate (%) ³	61.7	67.0
-unemployment rate (%)	5.7	4.6
-15-24 unemployment rate (%)	6.1	7.1
Overall Labour Force Activity:		
-work activity rate (%) ⁴	73.0	77.3
-unemployment rate (%)	4.5	3.9
Income:		
-av. male income (\$)	14,113.0	18,936.0
-av. female income (\$)	7,605.0	9,831.0
-av. household income (\$)	22,038.0	28,765.0
-incidence of low income families (%)	23.5	11.4
-incidence of low income unattached individuals (%)	47.2	32.9

Notes

¹Defined as % of population that has moved to Canada in the past five years, excluded those immigrants under five.

²Defined as the total number of divorced people divided by total population over 20 years old multiplied by 100.

³Average of 6 census tracts -- the census does not differentiate between private market and public housing households.

⁴Defined as number employed divided by population 15-65 multiplied by 100.

Appendix 3: Interviews

In researching this thesis, a number of people involved in the Jane-Finch voluntary sector were interviewed:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Date</u>
Peggy BIRMBERG	Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre	March 27, 1985.
Richard CORBETT	Youth Without Shelter	Oct. 29, 1984.
John DARCEY	Tenant Placement Division, Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority	Jan. 14, 1986.
Karl DAY	Permits Division, North York Board of Education	Jan. 14, 1986.
Susan EWING	Permits Division, North York Board of Education	Jan. 14 1986.
Elsbeth HEYWORTH	Community Relations Office, York University	Oct. 29 and Nov. 15, 1984.
Dianne HOWELL	Yorkwoods Family Care	Oct. 29, and
Norma MCDOWELL	Tobermory Community Activites	Dec. 6, 1984.
Finn SCHULTZ-LORENTZEN	Jane Finch Tenants Council	Nov. 15, 1984.
Cathy REDFORD	Metro Community Services	Jan. 29, 1986.
Marilyn SEYMOUR	Shiftworker's Daycare	April 15, 1985.

In addition, transcripts of the following interviews, part of the Longhouses to Highrises Project of York University's Community Relations Office, were provided by Elspeth Heyworth of York University:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Dalton JANSKI	Tobermory Community Activities
Marvin NOVAK	Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto
Anon. [Interview 23]	early community worker in the Finch area
Anon. [Interview 35]	property developer in the Jane- Finch area

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