# Recherches féministes

# Summaries of articles

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# SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

**Writing about Women and Space : Feminist Geography and Québécois Literary Texts**
*Rosemary Chapman*

This article is concerned with the contribution of feminist geography to the analysis of literary texts. In what ways have feminist geographers helped to question the very bases of traditional geography and expose their implicit gender bias? These aspects of feminist geography will provide a starting point for an analysis of the representation of space in a number of Québécois texts. To what extent do the texts of writers such as Hémon, Roy and Hébert reproduce a masculinist discourse of space, territory or cartography? Is there evidence to suggest that a feminist discourse of space has emerged in literary texts by women writers in the 80s and 90s such as Théoret and Robin, comparable to that which emerges in the work of feminist geographers of the same period?

**The Process of Reconstructing Social Networks among Female Immigrants in Montréal**
*Nathalie Chicoine and Johanne Charbonneau*
*with the collaboration of Damaris Rose and Brian Ray*

Immigration can create profound transformations in the nature of interpersonal relationships. When an immigrant woman arrives in a new country she often must begin the process of rebuilding her social networks around individuals who provide companionship and/or practical support. Primarily by means of detailed studies of individual ethnic communities and their formation, researchers have pointed to the importance of ethnic affinities in the creation of personal networks among recent immigrants in a new country. These studies, however, have seldom considered the rebuilding process in terms of the ways in which networks are created through individual experiences. In 1996, our team undertook a study of immigrant women who arrived in Montréal between 1988 and 1991 from Latin America, Poland and India and were mothers of young children. Using quantitative and qualitative research instruments, we traced the history of social network construction among the women since their arrival in the country through an examination of family, residential and employment/educational events encountered over several years. In this paper we present a synthesis of the processes involved in the construction of social networks among these women and in particular we analyse the influence of certain factors, namely ethnic origin, residential proximity and social encounters in the context of key life cycle events.

**Full Time or Part Time Daycare Centers?**
*Huhua Cao and Paul Villeneuve*

During the last twenty years, families in Québec have experienced dramatic changes through which it is difficult for parents to maintain an equilibrium in the midst of new domestic, social and professional responsibilities. These changes have had a profound impact on the choice and use of daycare centers. This context forms the background for a study of the factors influencing the decision of parents to put their children full time or part time in daycare centers. A survey has been conducted among fourteen daycare centers chosen from the various socio-economic environments of the Québec Metropolitan Area. A three-step logistic regression analysis (3SLR) is applied to the data gathered. We find

that the choice between full time and part time day care is influenced by the work schedules of parents which, in turn, depend on their socio-economic condition and their geographical location. We also find, interestingly, that there is a net and specific effect of residential location on day care schedules. In other words, if other contextual and work schedules variables are maintained constant, parents located further away from the city-center tend, more frequently than parents located closer to the center, to opt for part time daycare.

Key Words : daycare centers, work schedules, full time, part time, logistic regression, Québec Metropolitan Area.


### Daily Mobility and Sex Inequality seen through the Prism of Statistics
*Jacqueline Coutras*

A look at «official» statistics from northern European countries, seems to suggest that women's and men's mobility tend to homogenize; in some aspects, they are even similar. Does this mean that the daily trips of the two sexes show the same caracterics, respond to the same logic and that through them, women and men have the same ability to integrate the community and to influence the way it functions? Do they have the same advantages? Based on the example of transport surveys conducted periodically in Île-de-France (which are well known and scientifically reliable), this article examines the images and messages that the published statistics transmit. The second part of this article considers the concept of domestic mobility, without which, in my opinion, the existing sources do not enable us to tackle the theme of sexual differences in daily mobility.


### Do Women Participate in Elaborating Public Policies? A Contemporary Example in Brazil
*Jeanne Bisilliat*

This article is based upon five years of fieldwork in Brazil on a popular housing movement and on democracy and popular participation in the town of Diadema. The author shows that popular movements are composed of both sexes and argues that gender relationships help in formulating objectives in the struggle which turn out to be collective ones for men and women. Thus popular participation of both sexes has direct consequences on the nature of public policies and the implementation of social citizenship for the deprived.


### Women and Local Governments in Ontario : New Perspectives
*Caroline Andrew*

This text proposes an analysis of the decentralization process in Ontario and its impact on women. Municipalities in Ontario have always participated in the areas of health and social services, and this responsibility has increased considerably as of January 1998. The article tries to analyze the impact of these changes on women, in a context where it is largely invisible and where the absence of debate increases the invisibility. In addition, the article provides elements of a comparison with the situation in Québec.

## Women Mayors in Cities and Rural Municipalities in Québec
*Évelyne Tardy and Guy Bédard*

Based on data collected in a survey conducted in 1994 and 1995 (with self-administered questionnaires, sent by mail, and semi-directive interviews), the text describes the differences between women who are mayors of towns and cities in Québec (municipalities of 5 000 residents or more) and those who are mayors of rural municipalities. These differences are not numerous and are generally linked to the type of municipal organization, which varies with the size of the municipalities. The responsibilities of a mayor in a municipality of 1 000 inhabitants are not the same as those of a mayor in a city of 70 000. Moreover, in re-elections, women who are mayors in populous cities have powerful opponents to deal with, much the same as when they first got elected.

## Women actresses of change and the future of urban and rural regional spaces in Québec
*Danielle Lafontaine and Nicole Thivierge*

This paper informs about the existence since 1974 of a university based research team, «le GRIDEQ», and underlines its interdisciplinary works in the field of local and regional development in urban and rural areas while integrating the questions of gender differenciation and gender relations. Over the years, efforts have been made to reconceptualize the notion of development, investigating the complexity of sociospatial realities and emphasizing the role of social actors and actresses. This research program has also been a means of sustaining social sciences research in this eastern part of Québec, a peripheral region commonly caracterized by economic and demographic problems. Many forms of collaboration between the research team and the social milieu and especially women's group are also discussed. These efforts aim at meeting the needs of individuals participating in new politico-territorial bodies of public management created in all regions of Québec. The objectives of some current research dedicated to «Women actresses of change» are also presented. Some challenges related to the emergence of new forms of regulation and sociopolitical cooperation, with regards to women, are finally discussed.

## The European Charter for Women in the City
## Cities, Citizenship and Gender
*Monique Minaca*

The Charter is presented as a tool, an ongoing process. Its aim is to obtain a European contribution to an exchange about citizenship and urban planning, about women's place and the gender approach in these fields. It emphasizes the importance of women in decision making in the 21$^{st}$ century and relies on two paradigms : parity democracy and a gender approach. Five topics are developped in the Charter : urban planification and sustainable development, safety, mobility, housing and urban equipments. The Charter also proposes a strategy. Sixty six cases studies illustrate practical realizations. The priority is to promote a gender approach, to break stereotypes, to develop new knowledge and new operational concepts in order to lead society towards treating more equally men and women in the city. Therefore, research on how to achieve such equality is needed and must involve women researchers in its fundamental and applied aspects. Also, media and networking must be used at the same time to create new synergies between women. The gender approach has become a new scientific concern which has to be followed as a red thread in every research.

## Women and Cities : a Local Issue, a World-wide Issue
*Anne Michaud*

The participation of women in the development of cities and taking into account their specific needs is on the agenda of international issues, particularly since the Summit Conference on Cities (Habitat II). The international network «Woman and Cities» was started in this context, and its development is part of world-wide objectives aiming at equality between men and women. The purpose of this article is to put into perspective some of the actions initiated in the aftermath of Habitat II, to describe some of the strategic issues such as the application of a differential gender approach in policies and institutional practices, and to foresee, in this context, the actions women from Québec could take at the local and international level.

## The Experience of Quebec City «The Women and City Commission» : A View from the Inside
*Nicole Brais*

In this article, the author takes a critical look at the recent history of the Women and City Commission of Québec City, a new advisory body implemented by the Québec City Council five years ago. The aim of this Commission is to promote the participation of women in municipal public life and to improve their quality of life. Through her personal implication, the author is able to distinguish between the possibilities and the limits of such an experience in Québec. She discusses, among others things, the difficulty of making the Commission and women's groups work together at the local level, taking into account that the actions of these groups are largely nationally oriented. The vulnerability of this original municipal organisation in these times of financial austerity is also examined.

## Women and Regional Development, the Fifth Policy Direction of the Policy Statement on the Status of Women
*Pierrette Brie*

In April 1997, the Government of Québec added a fifth policy direction to the *Policy Statement on the Status of Women, Sharing a Future...* concerning women and regional development. The ongoing regionalization process increases the power of local and regional structures. Therefore, it becomes crucial that women play an important role as citizens and increase their participation in local and regional decision-making bodies. First, the author presents briefly the context and the elaboration process. Then, she presents a summary of the Fifth policy direction of the Policy statement on the status of women. The two components of the new policy direction are briefly described. Finally, a connection is established with the new *Policy for Supporting Local and Regional Development.*

**The Symposium Globalización de la solidaridad : an Exchange of Ideas about the Solidarity Economy**
*Cécile Sabourin*

This article is concerned with the contents of the papers and discussions that took place during the symposium *Globalización de la solidaridad*, in Lima Peru, during July 1997. Following a brief introduction to the theme of the solidarity economy discussed during the symposium, the text focuses on the most interesting and promising approaches to understanding and constructing an economy based on solidarity, especially to satisfy women's needs. Attention is drawn to the diversity of conceptions of the solidarity economy, in terms of theoretical approaches as well as field practices. The disciplinary and geographical origins as well as the characteristics of the work context are the background which allows us to understand the complexity and the challenge of building the foundations of a true solidarity economy.