



**Weaving memory :
Cercle de Fermières,
age and looms**

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Lunch and Learn

Concordia University

Cercles de fermières

(back then)

- Funded in 1915
- Seen as a way to promote rural women's wellbeing and the **transmission of cultural and 'traditional' heritage**
- At their peak in 1980, there were 850 cercles with over **75 000 members**



Cercle de fermières, 1952

Cercles de fermières

(nowadays)

- Members are ageing rapidly, although the cercles count approximately **34 000 active fermières**



Cercle de fermières, 2013

Gender studies

- Feminism and do-it-yourself movements have a long history.
- Women not only as consumers, but as producers.

De Lauretis (1987)

- Fluid relationship between gender and technologies.


Wajcman (2007)

Age studies

- Despite social and technological barriers, older adults do engage with technologies.
- Engagement with objects and technologies over the years, ageing *with*.

Katz (2005), Grenier (2012)

Fieldwork in two Cercles



Cercle du
Coeur-de-l'Île-
de-Montréal



Cercle de
Baie Saint-Paul

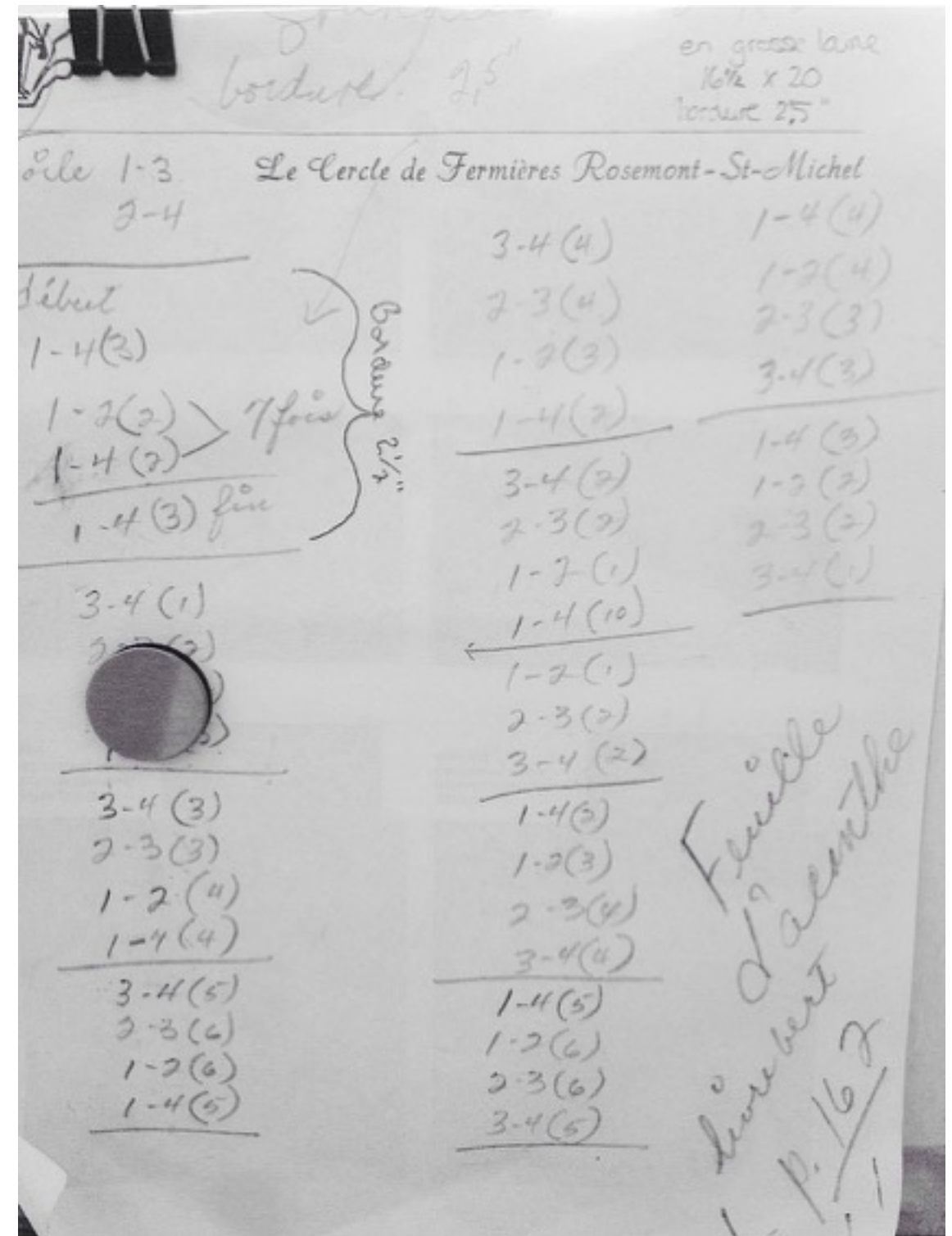
#1 Participant observation

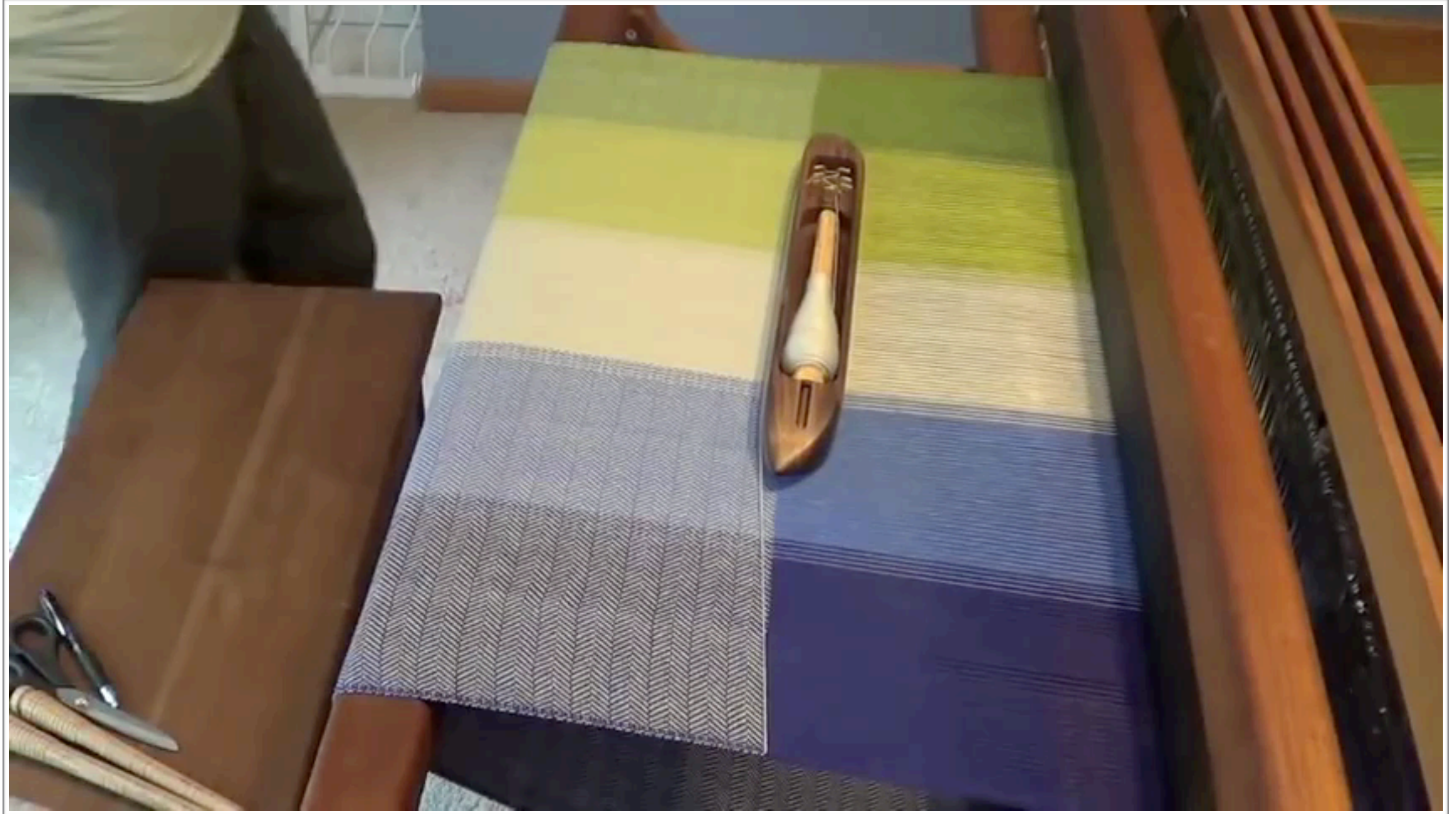
- I became a Fermière in January 2017
- Become familiar with the terminology, the objects, the issues that relate to weaving at a Cercle de Fermières.
- Ask better questions



#2 Interviews

- 5 participants in total, over 80 years old, recruited at both Cercles.
- I was careful to let them define technologies in their own terms.
- Questions about practices and objects related to their weaving.





PART I

***Assembling
the Cercle***

Actor Network Theory



Martine



a catalogne



her grandson



old bedsheets



balls of cut fabric



weaving skis



*the threads
of the warp*



a catalogue

Martine



Raymonde



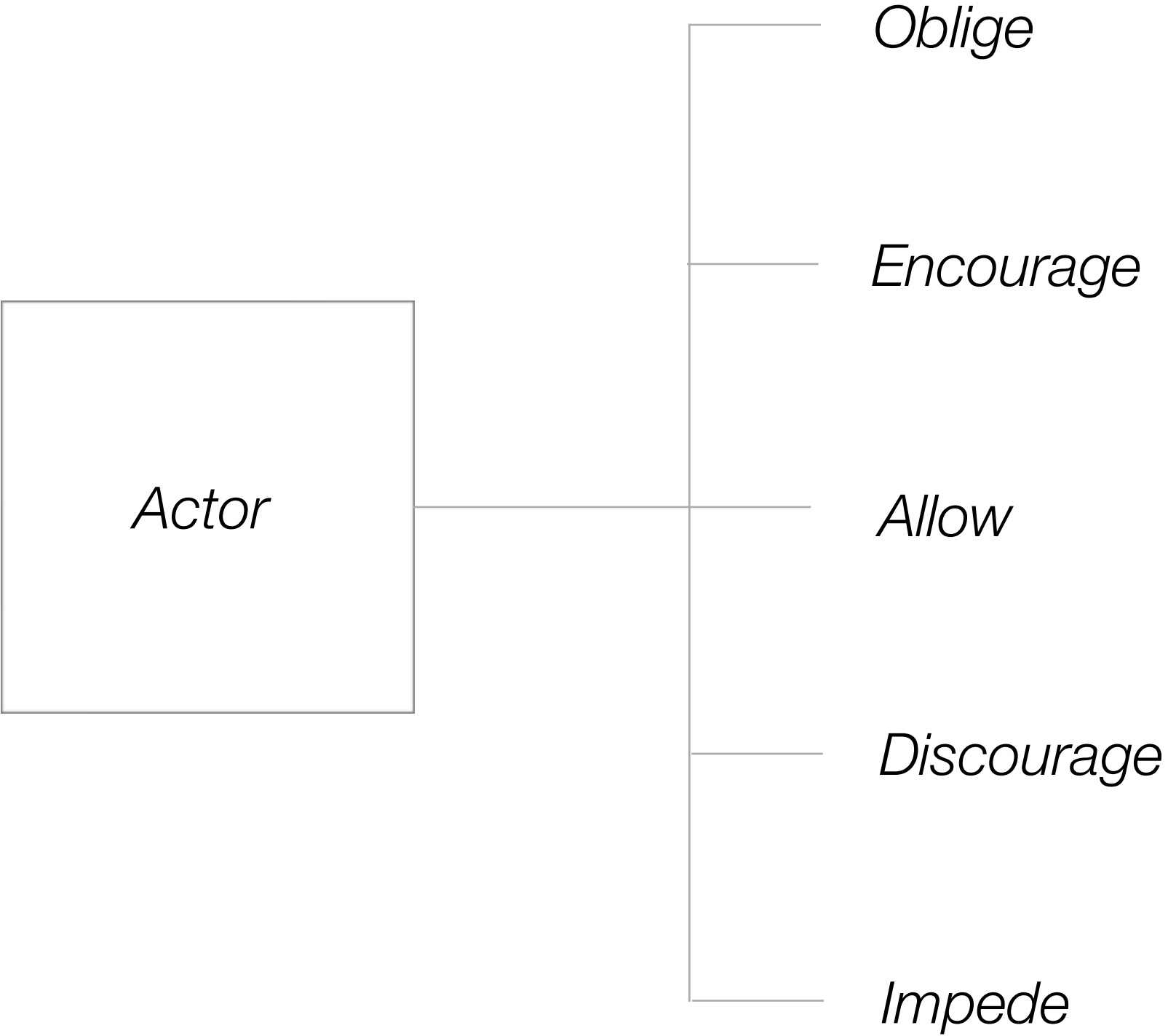
beater



pedals



100 inch loom





100 inch loom

Obliges

Encourage

Allow

Discourage

Impede



Ferrières' phone



Maison Mère



The elevator



A rocking chair

PART II



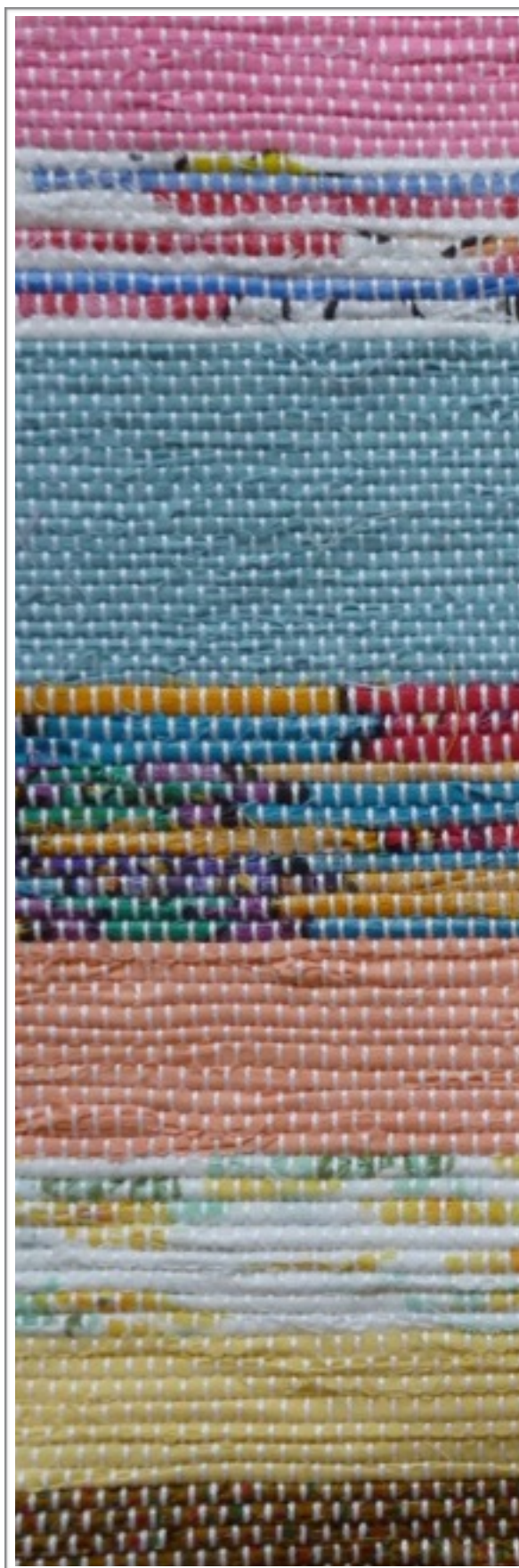
Weaving memory

Memory studies

- **Used to explain change and continuity in communities.**
- **Relationship between traditions and modernity**
- **Debates as to where to locate memories**

" **Memory** is not these series of recalled mental images, but a synonym for cultural storage of the past. "

- David Berliner (2005, p. 201)



Making a catalogue

- Memory as **tradition**
- Memory as a **material object**
 - Passed down in the family
 - Made of other fabrics
- Memory as *a* **memory**



Weaving at the Cercle

- Memory as **experience**
- Memory as **knowledge**
 - **embodied**
 - **inscribed**
- Memory as a **continuity**

Thank you



ageing + communication + technologies

*Fonds de recherche
Société et culture*
Québec 

engAGE



Centre de recherche et d'expertise
en gérontologie sociale