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**A Comparison of Elderly Residents from Age Dispersed  
and Concentrated Neighborhood Housing Environments  
as they Affect Social Interaction and Attitudes  
Toward Self, Family, Neighborhood and Society**

presented by

**Veena Mandrekar**

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in Human Environment & Design

  
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**A COMPARISON OF ELDERLY RESIDENTS FROM AGE DISPERSED  
AND CONCENTRATED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ENVIRONMENTS  
AS THEY AFFECT SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ATTITUDES  
TOWARD SELF, FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD AND SOCIETY**

**BY**

**Veena Mandrekar**

**A DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of Human Environment and Design**

**1986**



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## ABSTRACT

### A COMPARISON OF ELDERLY RESIDENTS FROM AGE DISPERSED AND CONCENTRATED NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ENVIRONMENTS AS THEY AFFECT SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF, FAMILY, NEIGHBORHOOD AND SOCIETY

By

Veena Mandrekar

The research problem was based on speculations about social networks as well as interaction and the nature of beliefs and attitudes among elderly individuals. In his "Ecological Framework", Powell Lawton defined the 'Supra-personal Environment' as the modal characteristics of persons surrounding an individual. This definition was axiomatically adopted as the basis of this investigation and a comparison was made of elderly individuals who perceived themselves to be physically surrounded by different age groups (dispersed) with those who perceived themselves to be surrounded by a high concentration of elderly (concentrated).

The 'Ecological Framework', the 'Activity' as well as the 'Sub Culture' Theories of Aging provided the moorings for this investigation. One of the conclusions drawn from this investigation is related to Activity Theory of Aging. The widely accepted view that with the passage of time, elderly participate in a 'Contracting Social Sphere of Activity', was not substantiated by this investigation.

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It was also concluded that the older-elderly who lived among neighbors of varied age groups, interacted to a greater degree with a sub-group of age peers from within their family and within their friendship circle.

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To

my Parents

My father Padmakar K. Dixit whose dediction to his own research has been an inspiration to me, and my mother Vimal P. Dixit whose gentle strength and patience I strive to achieve.

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Rudimentary ideas of this research occurred during my association with Professor Duncan Case and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for an initial start on this investigation. Carol Barrett shared the program with me, as well as a spirit of comradeship. Her support and friendship have meant a great deal to me these past years. I am very grateful to Cathy Sparks and Sharon Carson for doing such a superb job of typing and word processing.

I owe more than thanks to my family for putting up with all the domestic inconvenience necessitated by my work on this thesis. My sons, Paraj and Tushar have helped make this thesis a family project as they helped me with This, That, And, The, Other.

Words are inadequate to express my thanks to my husband, Vidyadhar S. Mandrekar, for helping me realize this thesis. Without his love, friendship and inspiration none of this would have been possible.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the century, approximately four percent of the United States population was over sixty five years of age. This proportion has grown to eleven percent at the present time (census 1980). Since the nineteen sixties, the elderly as a group have increased in actual numbers faster than the rest of the population (McCarthy, 1983). Within this elderly population, the over 85 segment or the oldest-elderly has increased three times faster than has the elderly group in general (NIA,1984). With better technology and techniques for prolonging of life, elderly are projected to increase in numbers as well as in proportions.

Following on the heels of much scientific progress in prolonging life there has been an ever increasing multidisciplinary focus on this stage of the life cycle (Woodruff & Birren, 1983). A review of literature in the area of gerontology makes it clear that there exists a wide array of knowledge spanning the various disciplines. The focus of such disciplines may be skewed to the biomedical or the socio-psychological aspects of aging, but there is a growing recognition that they are not mutually exclusive.

Approaching the investigation of aging from a multidisciplinary perspective (that is from a socio-psychological

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as well as physiological and environmental perspective), the present study hopes to contribute to the state of knowledge within social gerontology, with particular emphasis on the housing environment.

The importance of investigating housing environments of older persons cannot be minimized for various reasons not the least of which is the health and wellbeing of the individual. Issacs summarizes the relationship between housing environments and the elderly (Issacs in Goldenberg: 1981). Issacs said that "As a doctor in daily contact with the elderly I am convinced that the key to physical, mental and social health in old age lies in good housing, by which I mean the creation of a rich environment for the aged".

Aside from the benefits in good health that an individual may enjoy, the larger pay off would be reaped by society in ensuring the health and wellbeing of its members, young and old alike. The economics of the health benefits at a societal level are of course obvious. During the recent presidential election year and since, the economics of aging was and is still being debated at the national level. Health care costs are of particular concern for the elderly. There has been a momentum toward national health care cost containment through various means such as through eligibility for medicaid and the creation of Diagnostic Related Groupings (see glossary for definition). These are some of the solutions being considered. However, it is



widely recognized that in and of themselves they do not go far enough toward cost containment. The equitability of administering such programs is quite another issue.

Two of the major concerns that are uppermost in the minds of the elderly are income maintenance and health concerns. Both of these concerns can be addressed through better housing. For example; an individual elderly's housing choice ie. dwelling unit and neighborhood, has a far reaching effect on all aspects of his/her life. Often, there is a high correlation between the age of the residents and the age of dwelling units within a geographic area. Given this fact, it is easy to imagine the kinds of constraints both physical and economic that an aging dwelling unit and aging neighborhood places on aging individuals. These constraints inevitably affect the social dynamics of the individuals which are important not only for the psychological well being but also for his/her physiological well being.

How a person feels about him/herself depends on how he/she is integrated into the larger society. Integration implies subjective and objective processes of interconnectedness. So it follows that individuals within the network surrounding an individual are important resources and the maintenance of such a social web is in the interest of society. The social support derived by the individual from the network is considerable. It includes an exchange

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of both tangibles, such as goods and services and intangibles such as social and emotional supports. In fact, these social supports are what people turn to before relying on governmental agencies. It is therefore in the interest of society to find solutions to housing the elderly that will maximize the individual's potential for self reliance and an independent lifestyle, thus delaying the eventual reliance on public support. In this context the spatial distribution of the social support system (friends, family, organizations) is important to an individual's imbeddedness in society.

The age composition of the neighborhood housing environment is an important consideration of this investigation. Presently an elderly person living in localities with higher elderly proportions is more likely to receive services and resources specifically catered to his/her needs. In a sense then, public policy and therefore the allocation of funding tends to favor localities where the elderly proportions are high or greater in numbers compared to localities where elderly proportions are low. (Lawton: 1980).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION

Outlined below are some of the reasons why it seems most appropriate to investigate the age concentration of the housing environments in which the elderly live:

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- 1) Because there is a trend toward greater residential segregation or age homogeneity in residence among the elderly.
- 2) Because greater spatial homogeneity of the elderly means more dependency on fiscal and political cycles.
- 3) Because little research exists comparing elderly in housing environments of varying degrees of age concentrations.
- 4) Because very little research exists that addresses what effect the degree of age concentration of the housing environment has on interaction with family and friends and on individual elderly attitudes and beliefs.

Recent titles such as "Residential Segregation by Age" (Cowgill, 1978), Toward Spatial Homogeneity of Elderly Population (Kimmich & Gutowsky, 1983) and The Graying of Suburbia (Gutowski & Field, 1979) give evidence of a growing interest in the age concentration of elderly residential locations. In the past, the phenomenon of age segregation was noted mainly in center cities. Increasingly now, suburban areas have been experiencing a growth in terms of numbers of elderly, as well as percentages. The elderly are to be found in a variety of housing types in widely varying neighborhood settings. The degree of concentration of elderly in any particular neighborhood depends on its

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location (Lawton, 1980). The majority of elderly live in housing (single family detached units) in neighborhoods that accomodate different age groups. Approximately 90 percent are community based while five percent inhabit planned housing and another five percent live in institutional settings (Lawton, 1980).

The elderly are not migratory as a group and age concentrations of neighborhoods is largely due to the 'aging in place' factor. The majority of senior citizens enjoy an independent life style with a minimum of public service supports. However, with increasing age there tends to be a greater need for outside services and supports. This "need" is not always made known nor translated into public responses. Therefore, the informal support of friends in age concentrated neighborhoods is crucial to meeting the needs of the individuals. Lawton (1980) notes that "public policy regarding the equitable distribution of services and resources frequently ignores some of the more subtle issues relating to the varying concentrations of older people in different localities".

The relevance of aging in place at the local governmental level to fiscal and social responsibility is clear. Obviously, when there is a group of residents from a locality coming of age when its service needs are increasing, then there are greater dependencies on local economic and political cycles. This is true of all age

groups. The politics of age is important in the long run for the whole of society. Presently the elderly are a favored group, but as they increase in absolute numbers "there is going to be a less responsive political environment in which the aged are in jeopardy of losing their most favored social welfare status" (Golant, 1979). The question is: what long range effects does the age concentration of a neighborhood housing environment have on elderly individuals and conversely, what effects will the increasing numbers of aging citizens have on the tax paying citizens?

The issue about 'age-segregation vs. age-integration' or 'age homogeneity vs. age heterogeneity' of neighborhood housing environments as it applies to the elderly has been developed since the nineteen fifties (Gans, 1950). Studies that deal with the degree of age concentration of the neighborhood housing environments tend to utilize different techniques, different types of settings as well as subjects of varying capabilities. The existing body of literature provides many insights as it discusses the relative benefits of one or the other.

However, there are many methodological problems inherent in comparative studies, not the least of which is sampling. Thus, although it is generally accepted that age concentration of neighborhood housing environment affects the social process (Rosow, 1967) there is no conclusive agreement in favor of one age concentration over another.



Finally, even less is known about the effect of the degree of age concentration of neighborhood housing environments on individuals perception of self, family, neighborhoods and society. The question is, are there differences in attitudes among the elderly depending on the reality of their physical and social experiences?

### MAJOR CONCEPTS OF THIS INVESTIGATION

The following major concepts are provided below so as to facilitate an understanding of the concepts and eventually the logic of the conceptual framework of this study.

#### A CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AGING PROCESS

Although there has always been speculation on the nature of the course of life, the study of aging, (Gerontology) is a relatively new development of this century. The broad underlying assumption that can be agreed upon by all is that 'Aging' is a function of the passage of time. This fact implies that it is a progressive state, which is not reversable. It assumes that the phenomenon of aging occurs in all members within a species at an equivalent rate and finally it ends in the death of the organism.

Although this sounds like a physiological process, gerontological literature makes it clear that aging is more

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than merely a biological phenomenon. Along with biologically aging (which is easier to perceive with time), individuals are also aging socially and psychologically. Various studies have pointed to the fact that with the passage of time there is an overall decline in physical activity (Havighurst & Albrecht, 1953, Cumming & Henry, 1961). This decline is not solely attributed to the physiological process. Many other factors affect involvement in activity such as previous involvement, attitudes based on the appropriateness of sex, age, social roles and, of course, the individuals psychological/ personality makeup. Research suggests that there is a correlation between activity and mental and physical health of all people, especially with the elderly (Young & Ismail, 1976; Ostrow, 1980). The underlying assumption of many of the social theories on aging such as the Disengagement Theory (Cumming, 1963) and the Activity theory (Lemon, Bengtson & Peterson, 1972) is that physical activity, health and wellbeing, social and psychological participation are all inextricably related.

Biological, sociological and psychological process are interactive and interdependent. The biological rate of aging of an individual affects them socially which in turn affects them psychologically and vice-versa. The social-psychological factors can also affect the physical wellbeing of individuals. In other words the term 'wellness' as it

applies to people encompasses the totality of physiosocio and psychological health. In effect then, 'Aging' can be explained by examining the interrelationship between these three processes over time, which makes aging unique to each individual.

#### WEBSTERS DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENT

The discussion about aging has centered on the process of aging at the level of the organism or the individual units of society. However, a discussion about individuals or an aggregation of individuals would be meaningless without the environmental context within which they exist. The environment is the point of reference for all of human activity. Websters (1965) definition of the word 'environment' suggests that "it is that which environs or surrounds". It is also described as "the complex of climatic, edaphic and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival". Finally Environment is "the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community". Clearly these definitions are broad and all encompassing.

Studies in Human Ecology point to the wide range of approaches taken by geographers and sociologists under the title of Human Ecology. What they do have in common is that they are studying a human phenomenon in the context of some environment, whether it is explicitly or implicitly stated.



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It is perhaps easier to conceive of the effects of the physical environment on the human condition; however, the social and psychological environment also impact on health and ultimately on the aging process itself (Rowles, 1978).

As Lawton suggests in Ecology and Aging (in Pastalan & Carson, 1976) an ecological approach in studying the problems of the elderly is very relevant because elderly as a group are more sensitive to environmental variation. This fact he ascribes to what he calls the "environmental docility" hypothesis: the greater the degree of competence of the individual, the less proportion of variance in behaviour is due to the environment. On the other hand the less the competence of the individual (such as limitations in health, ego strength, status, cognitive skills etc.) the more the environmental press (Lawton & Simon, 1968). Because of the greater likelihood of older people having experienced reductions in competence, they are likely to be more sensitized to environmental factors.

#### DEFINITIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ENVIRONMENTS FOUND IN LITERATURE.

Several terms have been used in the housing literature referring to the age concentration of the neighborhood environments. Terms such as "age segregated or integrated", "age homogeneous vs. age heterogeneous settings", "community based vs. planned communities" have been used. These terms

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are not all equivalent and therefore a brief discussion of the differences is in order.

Generally an "age segregated" neighborhood housing environment implies that all people residing in the area (as defined) are of the same age group. It generally refers to a geographical distance between the aged group and the populace, in, this case based on age. Underlying this geographical distance is also implied a subjective social, psychological distance. Whereas the term "age integrated" implies elderly residing within a population of mixed ages. Sun City Arizona is an example of an age segregated housing environment as there is an age requirement for residing in the city.

Age homogeneous environments can refer to any area such as state, city, city center, city block, or building where a significantly large group of residents are of a similar age group. The establishment of naturally occurring residential examples of homogeneity are more difficult to find. Most often such age homogeneous environments are planned. Examples of age homogeneous environments are congregate settings that are to be found all across this country. There is also evidence of growing spatial homogeneity other than those that are planned (Kimmich & Gutowsky, 1983).

Community based elderly live on "independent sites" where the age makeup of the neighborhood varies. These independent sites could be single family dwelling units or



apartments. Not only do the environments in which the community based elderly live differ in terms of the age concentration of the neighborhood, but also the diversity of this group is considerable. The opposite of community based is generally referred to as residents of planned housing. Age groups in planned housing could and in some cases do vary; however often planned housing tends to be age-homogeneous.

#### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF 'NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ENVIRONMENT' AS USED IN THIS INVESTIGATION

The age concentration of the neighborhood housing environment as an independent variable has been utilized in many investigations. However there are certain problems inherent in sampling as was noted earlier. The elderly who live in planned communities are inherently different from those who are community based. For one thing, the average age of residents in planned housing tends to be older as compared to residents in the community at large. They are often attracted to congregate settings for the services provided there.

At this particular time it is necessary to introduce the terminology used in this thesis. The two comparative groups "Dispersed" and "Concentrated" will be referred to when analyzing the data rather than the terms described above. An important reason for introducing another set to

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the already complex jargon is that it more accurately reflects the age concentrations being investigated here. "Concentrated" was operationalized in this investigation as housing neighborhoods perceived to have a significant portion of elderly. The "Dispersed" group referred to those persons who lived in housing neighborhoods where the elderly were not a dominant segment of the populace. The respondents of this investigation were mostly community based residents however a smaller percent of them were residents of 'planned housing'. How these categories were chosen will be discussed in chapter three---Design of Study.

### THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework adopted for this research encompasses the study of Human Ecology which is the study of the social relationships within the context of the environment. This same conceptual framework was noted as an ecological study by Lawton in the book Spatial Behaviour of Older People (ed. Carson & Pastalan, 1970). Lawton suggests that "in studies of the effects on the individual of age segregation, even though the independent variable is a social characteristic and the dependent variable is an individual characteristic, the clear relationship of age segregation to an implicit spatial variable marks it as an ecological study". This investigation therefore is a human ecological study. This notion will be expanded further in Chapter II.

Lawton (ob. cit. 1970) has identified five components within the human ecosystem. He defined them as:

1. The Individual
2. The Physical Environment
3. The Personal Environment
4. The Supra-Personal Environment
5. The Social Environment.

The first two are necessary conditions for all living organisms while the other three are perhaps more specific to the human species. The term 'environment' has been discussed in some detail. The discussion about the characteristics of the aging individual has also been described. From the earlier discussion, the elderly can be described as having physiological needs as well as social and psychological needs. Having said this about the first two categories, it is necessary to clarify the remaining three, ie. the personal, supra-personal and the social environments.

The Personal Environment consists of persons who are intimately or tangentially involved in the lives of an individual. It is made up of family, friends, and acquaintances that affect the life of the individual elderly, in other words it is the "world of significant others". It is generally assumed that with increasing age and an accompanying decrease in competence there is a greater reliance on social supports. This fact points to the importance of the personal environment.

The Supra-Personal Environment consists of a group of spatially clustered individuals. The greater proximity allows the individuals to identify with the modal characteristics of the group. The greater the homogeneity along any variable that dominates within the group, the greater will be its effect on the individual. In other words, although beliefs and attitudes are arrived at by individuals, the process of arriving at them is influenced by many factors both internal and external. They are also influenced by past and present experiences. The assumption is that group characteristics, independent of personal characteristics affect the way an individual views her/himself and this fact affects the attitudes and beliefs she/he holds. For example, if the dominant experience within the group is one of diminishing health, an individual enjoying good health may downgrade his/her own, or be physically affected by the experiences of the group. Clearly, this points to the significance of spatial distribution of older people in the health and wellbeing of the individual elderly.

Finally, the Social Environment consists of social structures such as norms and social institutions. These norms and institutions exist independently of the individual, although the attitudes and beliefs an individual holds are important, they do not in themselves make up the social environment. Group attitudes and beliefs help make



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up the social environment and an aggregation of social environments helps make up the cultural environment. The value system within the social/cultural environment in turn affects the political, economic and social processes which regulate both, society and the individual.

Individual attitudes and beliefs are important in creating the social structures that affect all of society and ultimately the individuals within. The evidence of this may be seen in the electoral process whereby beliefs and attitudes may be directly translated into votes.

#### QUESTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK RELEVANT TO THIS INVESTIGATION

The interesting questions posed by the human ecological framework described above are:

1. What are the personal environments of elderly individuals?
  - a. Who are the 'significant others' in the lives of the elderly?
  - b. Does neighborhood housing environment affect social interaction?
  - c. Does neighborhood housing environment affect who one socializes with?
2. What suprapersonal environment surrounds an individual elderly?

- a. What modal characteristics of those who make up ones personal environment have an impact on the individual elderly?
  - b. Are these modal characteristics different for different individuals depending on the age characteristics of the neighborhood housing environment and of the persons who are significant to the individuals?
- 3. What is the social environment of elderly individuals?
  - a. Are the social institutions and norms unique to an individual, to groups, to the whole of the subgroup of the elderly?
  - b. Are attitudes and beliefs of individuals shared?
  - c. To what extent are they shared depending on the individuals housing environmental experience?





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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The intent of this chapter is to review literature and theories that are most pertinent to the logic of this research. In doing so, the first section will discuss the theoretical framework relevant to this investigation, the second will elaborate on various investigations that are of special interest to the current one and the final section will culminate in the study objectives and the statement of the problem.

#### HOUSING LITERATURE RELEVANT TO INVESTIGATION

What kind of neighborhood housing environment is most supportive of older persons? This question has been addressed by different investigators in different ways at various times. For example, some have investigated the relationship between the physical, structural features of the housing and its neighborhood to the wellbeing of the sample of elderly (Lawton & Kleebar, 1971). Another related area that has been investigated is the relationship between housing location or proximity of services to the wellbeing of the elderly (Noll, 1973; Regnier, 1975; Lawton, 1977).

The above studies dealt with the physical context of the neighborhood housing environment. Equally well



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researched is the social context of the environment as it relates to the well-being of the elderly. As has already been noted, sex, age, social class, composition of the neighborhood are all important factors in the well-being of individuals. Several studies have investigated the relationship between concentrations of the elderly as they relate to social interaction (Rosow, 1967; Rosenberg, 1970; Sherman, 1976). These studies point to the advantages of living in areas where there are higher proportions of elderly because persons in age concentrated environments tend to enjoy higher levels of social interaction than those who live among mixed age groups. Lawton and Nahemow (1979) have investigated the relationship of 'well-being' in the context of the age concentration of neighborhoods.

The concept of 'well-being' has been utilized in studies relating to both physical as well as the social context of neighborhoods. Chapman and Beaudet (1983) operationalized the concept and measured it as "satisfaction with the neighborhood and with life in general, by social contact with friends, relatives and neighbors and by activity levels". Clearly, what is implied is that wellbeing is a function of many interrelated variables such as: how active a person is or perceives him/her self to be, how a person feels about his/her neighborhood, and the person's self concept. A physiological relationship of well-being has not been specified by these studies but in

keeping with the earlier discussion in chapter I, well-being must ultimately imply physical health. An example of such a conceptual framework is to be found in a study by the Rand Corporation which investigated social well-being in the context of health for a major health insurance experiment (Donald & Ware, 1982).

### THEORIES RELEVANT TO THE INVESTIGATION

Aside from the concept of 'well-being', there seem to be various other concepts that have overlapped in the different areas of research. The two theories being considered as the underpinnings of this study are the Subculture Theory of Aging as proposed by Rose (in Kant & Manard, 1976) and the Activity Theory of Aging (in Kant & Manard, 1976). Aside from these two theories, the components of the ecosystem that were described by Lawton (ed. Carson & Pastalan 1970) and elaborated on in the preceding chapter, are also important as the underpinnings of this investigation. In this research 'ecosystem' is not a 'theory' but an approach or framework under which to classify information. Clearly, the concepts described by Lawton ie. Personal Environment, Supra-Personal Environment and Social Environment overlap with the concepts within subgroup theory. The precise nature of the overlapping concepts are described at the end of this chapter, after describing the Subculture and Activity theories of aging.



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The Subculture Theory of Aging and the Activity Theory of Aging are theories proposed almost three decades ago in the 1950's. Havighurst & Albrecht (1953) made the first explicit statement about the importance of the maintenance of social roles as a means to positive adjustment in old age which is known as the Activity Theory.

### ACTIVITY THEORY OF AGING

Since the 1950's the validity of the propositions of Activity Theory have been affirmed by many investigations; however, some studies have questioned it as well. This theory is often noted in gerontological literature, particularly in literature dealing with the housing environment. It lends itself well to application and is often reflected in legislation, housing policy and social service programs. Another of its strengths is that it is readily measurable and verifiable, although terms have been defined and operationalized variously in different studies.

Essentially, the Activity Theory (1953) states that there is a positive relationship between activity and satisfaction with life in general. It suggests that the social, psychological self is sustained and is given a chance to emerge through the interaction with others. This theory assumes that activity in general and interpersonal activity in particular are important vehicles for maintaining one's self concept. With the elderly who

increasingly face role losses such as death of spouse, retirement, loss of income, an activity orientation can provide the means to sustain an individuals sense of him/her self. There are various kinds of activities that are important to individuals, but not all types are equally supportive of role maintenance. Informal, interpersonal activity at a personal level is most conducive to maintenance of ones positive self-concept. Informal social activity is perhaps next best, while formal organizational type of activity has its advantages but is even less supportive of a positive self-concept. The least effective activity type is the one where an individual is involved by him/her self or solitary activity (Rosow, 1974).

The earlier mentioned relationship between activity and positive self-concept seem to be borne out by many cross sectional studies done cross-culturally under widely differing circumstances (Lemon, Bengtson & Peterson, 1972). Various demographic variables and social conditions seem to affect the strength of the relationship between activity and life satisfaction or self-concept. Health, retirement, marital status or role losses do affect this relationship as does economics.

In summary, what the Activity Theory seems to advocate is that for "optimal aging" the individual needs to be able to replace lost roles with activity thereby retaining a positive self concept. By the generally accepted definition



of what a theory is (Babbie, 1982) there are very few interrelated concepts of Activity Theory except for the specified relationship noted earlier.

The theory is based on an observation made of a cross section of the general population. It is based on a comparison of the elderly as a group with the younger population. Data suggests that with increase in age there is a decrease in activity levels. This phenomenon is assumed as a 'given' with few explanations. As a theory it may be limited but it proves its utility in investigating the role of the environments in social interaction and activity levels of older people.

#### THE SUBCULTURE THEORY OF AGING

The "Aged Subculture Theory" has had less attention than the "Activity Theory", however it seems to be generating some interest in recent literature. Briefly, the theory proposes that a "subculture develops within a category of the population of a society when its members interact significantly more with each other than with persons from other categories". This occurs under two sets of circumstances: 1) when members have a positive affinity for each other or 2) they feel they are excluded from interaction with other groups to some significant extent (Rose, in Kart & Maynard, 1976). The research suggests that for the aged, both of these factors are at work (to greater

or lesser extent), that in fact, the aged are a subculture having a set of meanings and values distinct from other groups. It recognizes that not all individuals affect the process and are affected by the subculture equally. Not all elderly are socialized within the subculture nor do all individuals affect the group process in the same way.

An article by McClelland (1982) integrating the two theories of Activity and (age) "Sub Culture" suggests that activity, self concept and life satisfaction are a function of membership in the subculture of the aged and therefore should be investigated from that point of view. The article goes on to propose a path model of adjustment to aging and includes four major variables. These are: 1) social activity, 2) social adequacy, 3) self-conception, and 4) life satisfaction. Its findings suggest that self-concept is strongly dependent on social activity in keeping with the Activity Theory framework. Also, the study points to these variables as significantly affecting life satisfaction. These results are "more applicable to frail and vulnerable elderly than to those with greater resources" (McClelland, 1982). Another major finding of the study was that the attitudes held by individuals toward other people significantly affected the dynamics of the adjustment model developed by the study. The same investigation found significant differences between those who preferred interaction with age peers as compared to those who did not.

The former were on the average, "less active, more lonely, less confident, less satisfied with life as well as more disadvantaged in terms of social status and health". This is by no means a cause-effect relationship, but it does point to the need for adopting a SubCulture Theory approach to the study of aging.

Future directions in aging proposed by McClelland (1982) deal with "better defining and mapping the extent of aging group consciousness among the elderly". The line of questioning proposed by McClelland (1982) for future investigations parallels the one being asked here:

1. How many other older people are present in the community (ie.age concentration of the neighborhood housing environment)?
2. Does age concentration of the neighborhood affect social interaction and to what extent is it confined within the 'subgroup'? Another way of stating it is to ask whether the 'personal environments' of individual elderly differ depending on the age composition of the housing environment?
3. What formal and informal practices have developed to facilitate interaction? What types of organizations are individuals more likely to be involved in?

4. Is there a development of a group consciousness which impacts on the individuals or (as Lawton proposed) is there a 'supra-personal environment (in Pastalan and Carson, 1970)?

LITERATURE RELATED TO THE AGE CONCENTRATION OF THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ENVIRONMENT AS IT AFFECTS SOCIAL LIFE

The development of social relationships has been of particular interest to social planners for some time. The earlier studies dealing with friendship patterns and social life at the community level did not specifically focus on the elderly (Gans, 1961). However, these being very relevant to social issues of the elderly, housing environments of the elderly have not escaped the scrutiny of investigators. It is clear that the site plan and the architectural design have some influence on the socialization processes of individuals. Such features as orientation of doors between neighbors, distances to neighbors (propinquity), traffic patterns between neighboring dwellings, and placement of community facilities are all important to social interaction. However, strategies to satisfy the necessary requirements for bringing people together do not necessarily ensure that social interaction will take place in all instances nor that social relationships will develop. In that sense there are limits to social engineering.

For friendship to develop it takes more than 'propinquity'. The characteristics of individuals is of equal or greater importance in friendship formation. People tend to socialize with others on the basis of similarities. This is no less true of the elderly. For social relationships to develop there has to be a certain amount of homogeneity in terms of backgrounds. There are many characteristics that influence and affect social relationships; such as similarities in socio-economic backgrounds of individuals, mutually shared values and interests, shared life-cycle experiences and, of course, age. (Gans, 1961). A combination of these characteristics is more important to socialization than homogeneity along any one variable. In other words age homogeneity is not a sufficient condition for developing intensive relationships. People do not socialize with others solely because they are all of the same age. The elderly as a group are an extremely diverse lot coming from varied socio-economic backgrounds. However, persons within a cohort are more likely to have experiences in common that are unique to them, increasing the likelihood of friendship between them. Such experiences as the depression, war, prohibition, or the dawning of the nuclear or computer age do not become the basis for friendships, but life events do have a lasting impact on age cohorts, which in turn affects socialization.

## LITERATURE RELEVANT TO THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESSES OF THE ELDERLY

SOCIAL INTERACTION Rosow (1967) has done a comprehensive study of the socialization processes of the elderly. His study investigated the effect of different residential age concentrations on social interaction and the related issue of integration within society. The research findings of his investigation presented in the book, SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE ELDERLY are relevant to the present study and as such are summarized here. From Rosow's investigation it would seem that there is a 'tipping point' at which socialization between the elderly is possible. When there are forty percent or more households with elderly residents in a given neighborhood, then it would seem to significantly increase the opportunity for interaction. He remarks that "at this point (40 percent) they become a visible minority and large enough to sustain a self sufficient social life" (Rosow, 1967).

Essentially, what is known about the elderly persons social process is that with the passage of time, the social sphere of the elderly is a contracting one. "They move and participate in a shrinking arena" (Rosow, 1967). There seem to be many interage differences between the young and old. For example: activity levels, belonging to and participating in social organizations, and also the number

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of friends they had when they were young is different than when they are old. Not only "do the old have fewer friends than the young" but there seems to be a reduction in affect or intensity of relationships with friendship groups (Dean, 1962). Such evidence of cross sectional studies is quite startling; however, it must be borne in mind that they are not intrinsically aging related per se. There are externalities that affect social processes as well. First of all, as individuals and as a group, the elderly are more likely to experience major role losses in terms of employment status, marital status and economic status, to name a few. This is also the time that individuals experience losses through the death of friends. It is, therefore, easy to imagine the compounding effects of such multiple role losses on social interaction. For example, the loss of employment through retirement is important, not only from an economic point of view (loss of income), but also because it creates a disruption in an individuals feelings of imbeddedness in society. A reduction in income may mean more constraints on the portion of the budget going towards entertainment and transportation expenses. This fact in turn may cause a retrenchment in social intercourse furthering the feelings of estrangement from society.)

Rosow's research also suggests that the elderly person's social interaction revolves around two groups. One is the family and the other is that of friends. Both groups



are clearly important, although they do not seem to play an identical role as a reference group in all circumstances. For instance, housing choice is often dictated by nearness to family members, particularly to children.] Rosow (1967) reports that a large percent of elderly live near their children. The distances between parents and children was even closer with evidence of illness in the parent generation. The role of the family at critical times (such as illness) is important in that it is the "preferred source of help at times of need" (Rosow, 1967). The individuals turned to the family and preferred them over friends and formal organizations and agencies. However, the day-to-day interaction was not confined to the family. In that regard, friends were the primary source of social exchange for the elderly.

As has already been noted, the elderly interact significantly more with each other than with other age groups. As persons age, increasingly many individuals become more locally dependent. In this regard, propinquity or nearness to family, friends and neighbors is an important factor in socially integrating the individual elderly. Therefore, residential concentration is an important consideration. Such variables as number of local friends one has and how 'active' an individual is are a function of varied factors. Residential density is one such factor as are marital status, sex of the individuals and socio-economic status.

In general, the areas of higher elderly concentration affords individuals a greater chance for socialization. Residential concentration affects the social interaction of the sexes differently. Women tend to be more responsive to residential concentration than are men and show an increase in social activity with higher residential concentration. Similarly, marital status is another factor important to social interaction. Married people as compared to singles and widows are less locally dependent for their socialization and, therefore, are less sensitive to the age concentration of the neighborhood housing environment.

#### LIFESTYLE DIFFERENCES AND PROXIMITY TO FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

Rosow (1967) found that the variance in social interaction could be attributed to socio-economic differences. In general middle class elderly tended to have more friends than did the working classes. In other words, the middle class elderly had friends from farther afield than did the working classes, who were more locally dependent for their socializing. Although the working classes were more locally dependent and drew most of their friends from close surroundings, the middle classes had more local friends than did the working classes. The middle classes are more vulnerable to role losses than are the working classes. This is so because the middle classes experience greater disruptions in their lifestyles due to

role losses than do the working classes. The actual lifestyles of different groups are less problematic than are the disturbances in those lifestyles and activities. Such changes can be devastating to individuals, thus the middle classes are more vulnerable.

A change in situation such as retirement, loss of spouse or decrease in physical capability affects all elderly to an extent. However, the extent to which it affects the lifestyles of individuals varies. Those who have a lifestyle which revolves around the local environment may experience less disruption in established patterns of socializing as compared to those who draw from a larger locale. Clearly, the loss of job or a change in health status will affect the lifestyle of individuals to a lesser or greater extent, depending on the distance of the socialization process to which the individual subscribes. Persons who have localized kinship, friendship networks, are less likely to experience great disruptions in lifestyles as compared to those whose personal environment is made up of individuals farther afield. Since the middle classes are less locally dependent for their socialization process, it follows that, they are more vulnerable to greater disruptions in lifestyle due to role losses.

The middle class elderly showed greater flexibility in terms of having friends from among other age groups.

"Independent of social class, the confinement of friendships within age groups is disproportionately greater among high density rather than low density residents who are less likely to look for alternatives, to seek and accept friends from a younger age group". (Rosow 1967).

#### EFFECT OF NEIGHBORHOOD AGE COMPOSITION ON PATTERNS OF INTERAGE CONTACT

Sherman (1976) investigated the effect of residential neighborhood compositions on patterns of contacts and sufficiency of contact. The study reports that there were indeed differences in the patterns of contact between residents of age segregated (similar age) and age integrated (multi-ages) housing. The age segregated group proved to have higher incidences of childlessness than did the integrated group. They were also more likely to live farther away from children than the integrated group, with the net effect that there was less interage socializing. However, when distance was held constant, there were no significant differences between the two groups in terms of visiting back and forth with children. This observation was somewhat different from Lawton's findings (1970). Lawton found that there was a decrease in the amount of face-to-face contact following a move from a dispersed community setting to planned housing.

Patterns of contact with friends and neighbors also differed. Residents of age segregated housing neighborhoods had more 'new' friends and were more socially active with age peers than were the age integrated residents as a group. They were also less likely to socialize with younger age groups, and therefore, had fewer friends younger than forty.

### FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS

Formal organizations are an important means of maintaining contact with others. With the passage of time, evidence points to an inevitable loosening of ties to formal organizations. This is perhaps axiomatic given the 'inevitable' decline in activity levels. Evidence suggests that a positive relationship exists between participation in voluntary associations and life satisfaction among the aged. However, this fact may be due not so much to cause and effect factors but to characteristics of participants and non-participants. Higher socio-economic status and better perception of one's own health was more characteristic of participants than of non-participants (Bull & Aucoin, 1976). There appear to be no studies addressing participation in different kinds of organizations ie. formal or informal organizations. It may well be that, membership in one or another is not equivalent in importance to the individual elderly.

INTEGRATION OF THE 'SUBCULTURE THEORY OF AGING'ANDSELECTED COMPONENTS OF THE HUMAN ECOSYSTEM

An attempt has been made to review literature that is relevant to the investigation at hand. The various interrelated and sometimes overlapping concepts have been explored, although it must be noted that the terminology has not been uniform through the various investigations. For instance, concepts such as 'personal' environment and 'supra-personal' and 'cultural' environment overlap with those found in the Subculture Theory of Aging. The Subculture Theory made note of the aggregate social phenomenon that elderly tend to socialize with age peers, whereas the Ecological concepts as defined by Lawton (in Pastalan and Carson, 1970) are more specific to the individuals social process.

Both the 'Subculture Theory' and the concept of 'personal environment' are based on the supposition that persons identify with the group with which they interact. One of the assumptions of the 'SubCulture' Theory is that persons within a subgroup interact significantly more with members within it than with members outside of it. Personal Environment on the other hand implicitly recognizes social, personal and perhaps sensory interaction with the group surrounding the individual. This group may be comprised of persons who are significant to the individual, as well as persons within an unspecified geographic

distance. Therefore, since propinquity is more relevant to the concept of 'Personal Environment', the implication is that individuals identify with persons who are important in one's life (perhaps age peers), and also the persons who share a specified area such as a neighborhood. In that regard, age composition of a neighborhood is an important variable. Personal Environment is viewed as those persons 'surrounding' the individual elderly. Persons surrounding an individual are those who share a physical space such as a neighborhood, as well as those persons with whom respondents are involved on a regular basis.

The 'Sub Culture' theory by its very definition implies identification with a group within the larger society, in this case with other elderly. The 'Supra-Personal' Environment does not limit identification with any particular age group. Perhaps it is a combination of the degree to which one subscribes to a subgroup of elderly peers and the context of one's neighborhood age composition.

Finally, The 'Social Environment' defined by Lawton (ob.cit. 1970) also has its parallel in the 'Sub-Culture' Theory of Aging. They both imply the 'Cultural' climate within which the elderly exist. Whereas the 'Subculture' theory specifies that all elderly to greater or lesser extent impact on a 'culture' (and to the same extent are affected by it), which is age specific, the 'social environment' is unique to the individual's experience and thus is not based on age.

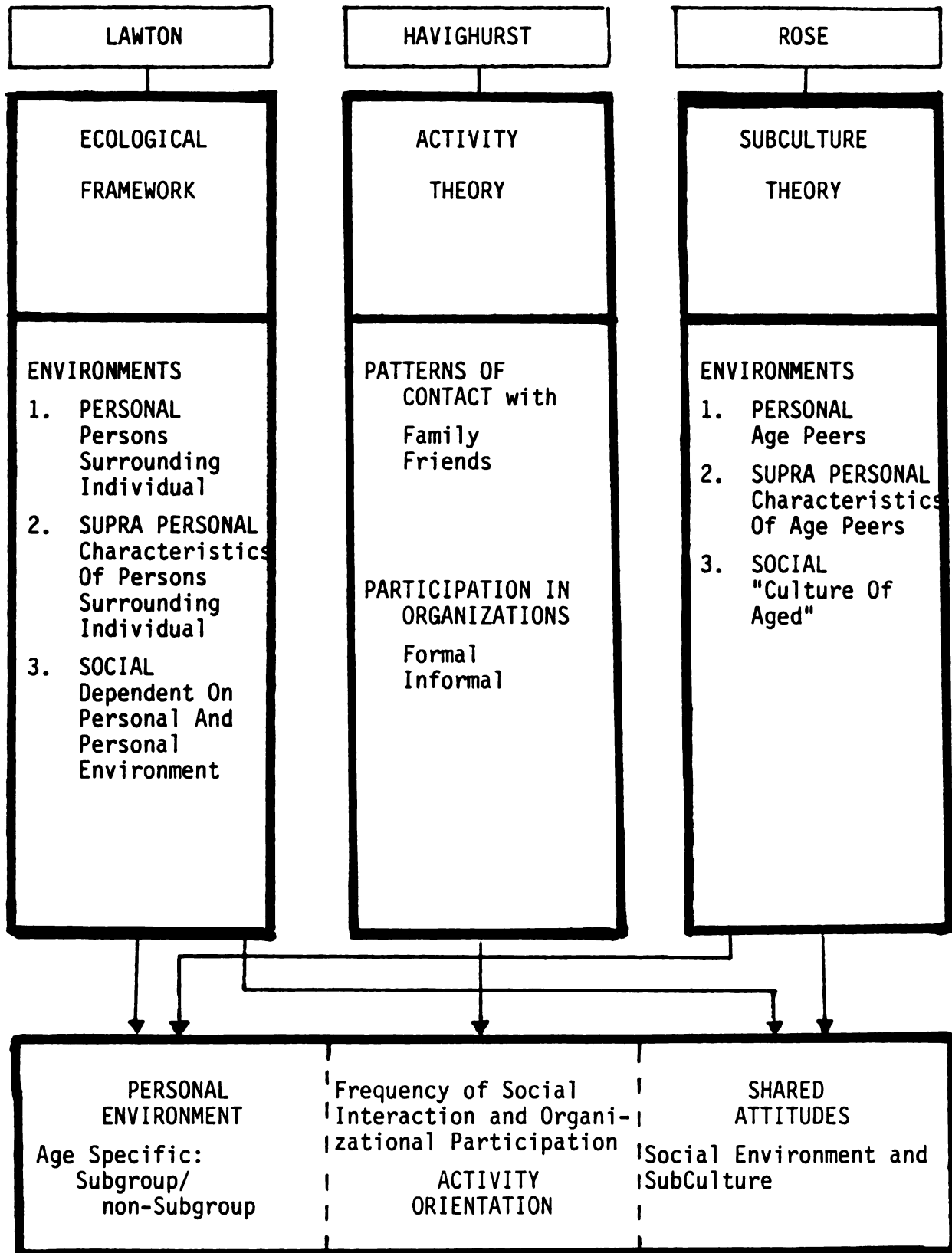
### THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concepts of the theoretical framework have been illustrated by a model which follows. Concepts found in the 'Activity Theory', 'Subculture Theory' and the 'Human Ecological Framework' were utilized as the underpinnings of this investigation. Some of the more important questions posed by the multiplicity of these over-lapping but distinctly different concepts are:

1. Does age concentration of neighborhood (housing environment) affect the overall make up of an individuals 'personal environment' ie. persons with whom they most interact?
2. In what housing environment (dispersed or concentrated) do elderly respondents report involvement with a sub-group of elderly peers.
3. What attitudes are shared within groups? To what extent is there a group consciousness?



FIGURE 1: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



## STUDY OBJECTIVES

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Given that this was an exploratory study, the general objective of this research was to be able to provide an insight into the parameters important in investigating social and attitudinal dynamics of elderly individuals, 60 years of age and over. More specifically, the objective was to be able to report the utility of two particular independent variables. One of these independent variables was the (perceived) age concentration of the housing environment (dispersed and concentrated). While the second independent variable of importance was the age of respondent. A summary of the dependent variables investigated follows:

1. Personal Environments. Addressed group differences in the make up of the 'world of significant others'.  
Subgroup interaction. The extent of socializing with others of the same age or with those younger or older.
2. Activity Orientation included phoning, visiting, belonging to organizations and attending meetings of formal organizations.

3. Shared Attitudes. The degree to which there are similarities and differences between and within groups in terms of shared attitudes and beliefs toward various subjects such as self, family, neighborhood and toward society.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The first specific objective was to be able to ascertain group differences depending on the perceived age concentration of neighborhood housing environments between 'dispersed' and 'concentrated' groups. The second objective was to make note of group differences, if any between the young-elderly and old-elderly from the two neighborhood housing environments (Dispersed and Concentrated). Of particular interest was the magnitude of those differences. The third and final objective was to propose some working hypotheses from the insights gained from this investigation. Essentially, the objective was to generate new ideas for future investigations and to clarify or modify the tools that were utilized in this investigation.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem of this research is to investigate the relationship between the perceived age composition of the housing environment, as it affects the dynamics of resident's social

processes and its overall effect on attitudes and beliefs about such topics as Self, Family, Neighborhood and Society.

In doing so this research will attempt to ascertain group differences (depending on the age concentration of housing environments) between 'dispersed' and 'concentrated' groups and between the young-elderly and old-elderly from those two groups.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF STUDY

This chapter describes the design of the research and the methodology utilized to collect and analyze the data. The discussion of this chapter will focus on: 1) development of the instrument, 2) sampling techniques and data collection procedures, and 3) data analysis procedures including the decision rules for data analysis.

#### CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was arrived at after some deliberation. There were various factors involved in the choice of the design. The most important considerations in dictating the design of this study were, of course, the age of the respondent and the housing context of the investigation. The sample size was important. Although it was not the dominating factor in the design decision, it was directly related to the sampling procedure adopted. The final consideration in the design of the study was the ability to maximize control over the interview process so as to ensure the inclusion of individuals with the characteristics under consideration.

As this is a preliminary study, it was felt that a personal interview survey design would maximize an understanding of the housing environments; dispersed and concentrated, being studied and the individuals within them. This particular design afforded a unique opportunity to come in personal contact with the respondents. Thus the experience gained provided a deeper insight into the responses elicited by the questionnaire.

As noted above, the age of the respondent was another important factor in the overall research design. By personally administering the questionnaires, some of the age related problems in responding to and returning of the questionnaires could be avoided. Thus by administering the questionnaires in person a higher rate of completion of questionnaires could be ensured. Of the one hundred and seven persons contacted by letter, only nineteen did not respond to the initial contact through the mail and could not be reached on the telephone. Of those individuals who were contacted by telephone, only six declined to participate. There were no instances in which the respondents did not want to reply to questions put to them. However, there were a few questions that were difficult to answer for some and were left incomplete.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT

The interview schedule that was administered was made up of 54 questions. It was grouped into seven sections and each of the sections contained several questions (see appendix A). These sections were not titled, however they informed the respondents about the context of the upcoming group of questions. The content of each section differed and served to help the respondents concentrate on various aspects. Each section helped to separate the context of the questioning and was confined within that context such as discussions about relatives inside the city or outside, about friends, the environment or about themselves.

The order in which the questions were asked was given some consideration. Questions about age, health and of a personal nature were buried in the body of the interview schedule. Most of the questions were devised as closed-ended and were designed so that the categories would be read out to the respondents. However, during the pretest of the instrument, it became clear that this approach was somewhat confusing for some, particularly when there were too many categories to choose from. In cases that posed a problem, the categories were used as guidelines for marking purposes rather than read to them. Questions two, three, seven, eight and 14 appearing on the questionnaire were accompanied by their respective categories (see appendix A).

However, these categories were not read to the respondents. The open-ended questions particularly questions 46 through 52 were taken from an earlier study (Shimonaka & Nakazato, 1980). The technique of the questioning required the provision of a stem, which was read to the respondent. These stem statements were then completed by the respondents (see appendix A).

Some questions were eliminated entirely upon pretesting. An example of the questions that were not read to respondents were 17, 26 and 30 (see appendix A). The open-ended questions were administered and any changes in affect or hesitency were noted along side the questions. The prepared interview schedule was tested on 13 individuals from different neighborhoods. Several were tested at a housing complex. The appropriate changes were made and administered by the researcher after a letter of introduction was sent and a phone call made to set up the appointment (see appendix C.).

### SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTING

This study utilized a 'snowball' sample technique. This technique has been described as a "method through which you develop an ever increasing set of sample observations" (Babbie, 1983). It is a non-probabilistic sample not



commonly utilized in survey research. The homogeneity or heterogeneity of a population is an important consideration in sample size (Backstrom & Cesar, 1981). In general, the more alike any given population is, along the dimensions being studied, the smaller the sample required. Conversely, a larger sample size is necessary when there is a great deal of variance in the general population.

By utilizing a 'snowball' sample, a greater degree of control could be ensured over the variables under consideration. The process itself was designed to provide the study with all future participants. Each interviewee was asked to provide the names of two friends, one of whom lived in a housing environment "where there are mostly persons of the same age group", and the other who lives in a neighborhood housing environment "where there are persons of different age groups". They were also told that we were interested in interviewing persons who were 60 years of age or over, in good health, who had not changed residence in the past three years, nor been widowed in the recent past three years.

The 'draftees' were chosen by individuals because they stood out from among their acquaintances on the basis of some special characteristic, not only on the specifications we provided to them. Some were singled out by respondents on the basis of longevity, or because they were

"interesting" and therefore worthy of interviewing. In essence, the respondents were a select group of people who fit the characteristics of age, health and length of residence and marital status.

It was felt that one of the advantages of using a 'snowball' sample would be the ability to draw upon individuals who would have similar socio-economic backgrounds. This, it was felt, would reduce the number of variables under consideration by holding an important variable constant and thereby ensuring a measure of equivalency. However, in this study, experience proved to be somewhat different from what was expected. First of all, not all respondents contributed to the sample frame equally. Names from one category were given, but not the other. In fact, this was more true of residents who lived in neighborhood housing environments with others of the same age group (concentrated). In general, they were less likely to know persons from other types of neighborhoods than the group that resided in neighborhoods of mixed ages (dispersed housing environments).

A total of 82 individuals were interviewed between November of 1983 and June of 1984. Of that number, three of the completed questionnaires were not included in the analysis for various reasons. The three questionnaires technically met the requirements of the rules, however,

there were other mitigating circumstances that would violate the original intention of those rules. For example, one of the individuals that had been interviewed fit all the qualifications such as being over sixty, in good health; however, it became evident that she was taking care of her husband who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. This was felt to affect the data and so this particular questionnaire was not subjected to analysis. Similarly, another questionnaire was dropped because the interview took too long to complete. The flow of the questions was interrupted many times and in fact the 'right' answers had to be picked out from a narration of life's events. The information was overwhelming in that particular case; therefore, it did not seem proper to include the case.

Initially, each person was sent a letter of introduction and some information about the study (see appendix A). The letter was followed up with a telephone call to set up the appointment for interviewing. This was done within one to two weeks of being sent a letter. About two attempts were made at different times of the day to get in touch with individuals. The majority of interviews were conducted during working hours nine to five. In some cases they took place in the evenings. Most of the interviews were done in the individual's homes, although a few preferred to be interviewed at a more neutral place, such as at the Union Building at the University or at the Tri-County Office on Aging.

The initial contacts were made through one of the area agencies, the East Lansing Older Peoples Programs. The time required for each interview varied between thirty minutes to a little more than one hour; however the majority of interviews took between forty five to fifty minutes. At the end of the interview there was often some informal socializing with the individuals.

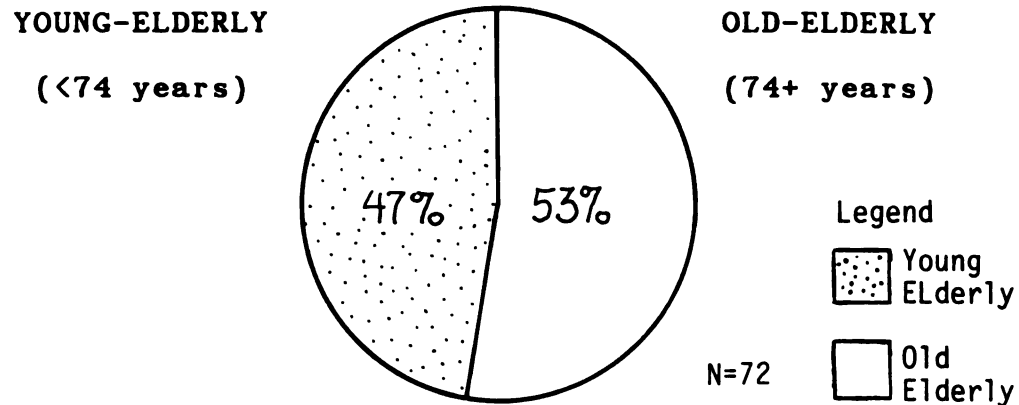
#### DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

As noted earlier, of the 82 persons interviewed, three cases were dropped prior to submission of data for analysis. After controlling for age, health, length of residence 72 cases fit the characteristics that were included as important to this investigation. The description that follows pertains to the 72 respondents who were similar in that they were all over 60 years of age, in good health, who had been residents of their respective housing for close to three years and had not been widowed in the recent past.

The age range found among the sample respondents was between 60 years and 97 years. Given this considerable range and because it was felt that individuals in the early sixties and seventies can not be appropriately compared with later ages, the data was evaluated based on the age categories 'young-old' (less than 74 years) and 'old-old' (74 years of age or over). Approximately 47 percent of the

respondents were younger than 74 years of age while 53 percent were 74 years of age or over (see figure 2 below).

Figure 2: The age characteristics of respondents in this study.



Information pertaining to these specific categories will be presented in greater detail at the end of the chapter. (refer to Table 1 in appendix B)

The majority of the sample were female. All attempts were made to include men in the sample. Whenever possible, husbands and wives were interviewed to accomodate for the under- representation of males. There were 11 couples interviewed, seperately whenever possible. Altogether, 26 percent of the total were male and 74 percent were female. There are various explanations for this phenomenon. The most obvious is that, in this age group there tend to be more women than men. Also, women have traditionally found themselves active in the domain of socializing, therefore

referrals tended to include more of them. Finally, when a person in an (age) concentrated setting was asked to provide names, they tended to refer to people within their neighborhood housing environment where males were under-represented.

However, interestingly enough, in this study there tended to be more males represented in the concentrated setting as compared to the dispersed settings. This may be explained by the fact that males in such settings commanded more attention than in dispersed settings. Therefore it is not a reflection of the actual sexual representation found in the settings. (refer to Table 2 in appendix B)

A larger percent of the respondents lived in single family dwelling units (almost 56 percent). The next most typical housing classification was a unit attached to three or more units (such as an apartment building). Almost 42 percent lived in an apartment building. Very few individuals classified their housing as different from the two noted above. Less than three percent said that they lived in housing which could be described as a duplex or a mobile home. The dispersed group was more likely to live in single family dwelling units as compared to the concentrated group. (refer to Table 3 in appendix B)

More than half (61 percent) of the respondents were sharing their living quarters with at least one other

person. Of those who shared their living quarters, a large percent said that they shared it with a spouse (88 percent). Sharing living space with children or unrelated persons was not a common practice among the respondents (refer to Table 4 in appendix B)

A majority of the respondents reported that the major wage earners of the family were high school graduates, and a substantial percent of this group had some experience at college. A larger portion of the concentrated group as compared to the dispersed group noted that the major wage earner had not gone beyond high school. On the other hand, the major wage earners from dispersed settings tended to have higher educational attainment. Eighty percent of the dispersed group as compared to 60 percent of the concentrated group had been to college and, in fact, were more likely to have had three or more years of college. (refer to Table 1 below)

Table 1      Comparison of educational backgrounds of the major wage earners by neighborhood group.

EDUCATION	DISPERSED	CONCENTRATED	% Difference
less than or equal to H.S.	21	39	18
One to four year of College	80	60	20
	39	33	N = 72

Note: The above table contains percentages rounded to the nearest integers.

Respondents noted that widely varied occupations were held by the major wage earners of their families. The occupations were grouped into five categories for this investigation and were labeled as 1) unskilled 2) semiskilled 3) highly skilled technical 4) business and 5) professional. A high correlation was found between the two variables of education and occupation ( $R = .7686$  at the  $P = .001$  level). The dispersed group was more likely to be in occupations which required technical skills. (refer to Table 5 in appendix B)

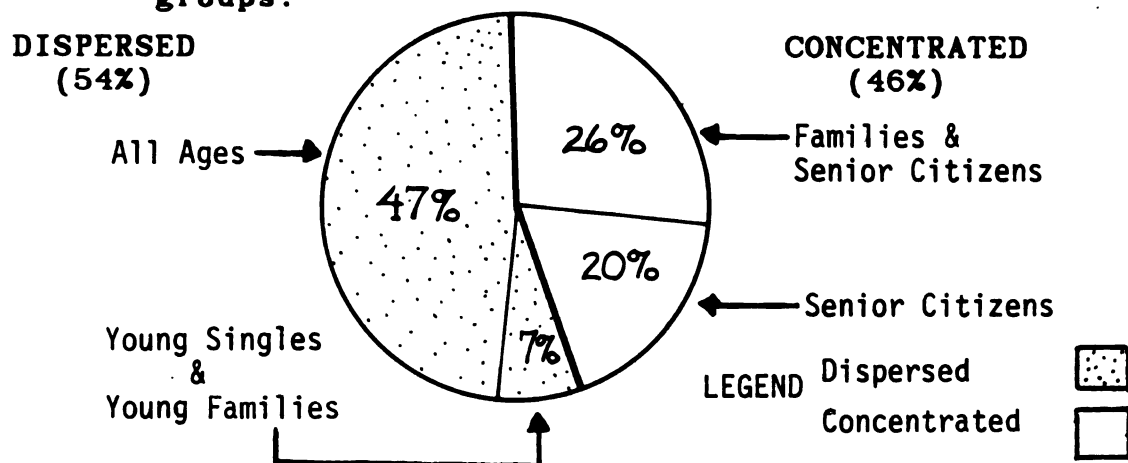
The age composition of the housing environment (concentrated/dispersed) is an important independent variable in this investigation. The study basically hinges on the two classifications devised, which were based on the perception of elderly age peers in the neighborhood housing environment. As discussed in chapter II, when there are higher concentrations of elderly households in a given neighborhood "they become a visible minority" (Rosov, 1967) and are perceived as such. Thus classifications were based on individual respondent's perception of the age composition in their neighborhood housing environment. The classifications were a direct result of question 29 in the questionnaire (see question 29 in appendix A). Respondents were asked to consider the question "What age groups would you say mostly live in your neighborhood or building complex?". They were read the following categories: a.



young singles b. young families c. families and senior citizens d. senior citizens and e. all age groups.

Figure 3 below shows 47 percent who said that 'all age groups' were represented in their neighborhood. Twenty-six percent said that 'families and senior citizens' mostly lived in their neighborhoods or building complexes. Twenty percent said that 'mostly senior citizens' constituted the residential make up of their neighborhood or building complex. Only seven percent lived in settings where there were mostly young singles or young families.

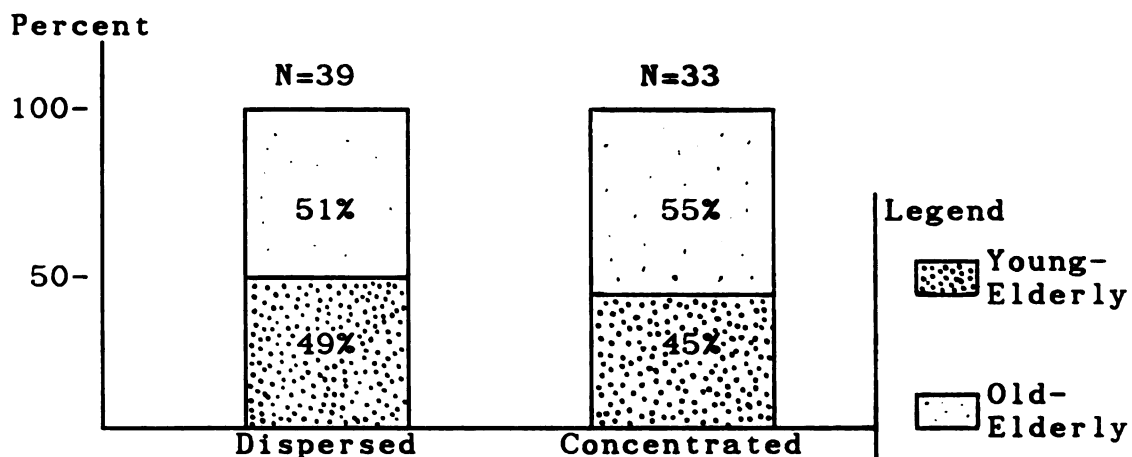
Figure 3: The perceived age composition of respondents neighborhoods as related to the two comparative groups.



Responses to the question were then grouped by the perception of the individual respondents. It was rationalized that if a significant number of respondents age peers were also residents of their housing complex or neighborhood, respondents would mention senior citizens in the context of the question asked. Forty-six percent of all the respondents mentioned senior citizens as being the prevalent group or a prevalent group among families.

Fifty-four percent, on the other hand, did not mention the elderly when asked about the age groups mostly residing in their neighborhoods. The former group was given the name 'concentrated' while the latter was called 'dispersed' (refer to Table 6 in appendix B). There were roughly equal number of young-elderly (<74 years of age) and old-elderly (74+ years of age) respondents within the Dispersed and Concentrated Neighborhood Housing Environments (Refer to Figure 4 below)

Figure 4: A comparison of the age characteristics of respondents from Dispersed and Concentrated Housing Environments.



#### DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

In order to analyze the data, the first order was to create a code book. The closed ended questions and the Likert scales were readily transferred into codes. Open

ended questions required a content analysis of each question. They were therefore, coded and further recoded by content. Some of the open ended questions such as questions four, six, eleven, twelve, thirteen and fifteen had to be regrouped in order to reduce the data to more manageable proportions (see appendix A). Having done this, each of the cases was recorded on code sheets and these were then transferred to punch cards and on to computer files.

A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for processing the data. An analysis of the data was limited to frequency count, contingency table analysis and some correlation analysis. Techniques that are more suited to statistical inferences were not utilized in this study. Such techniques were judged to be inappropriate given the non-probabilistic sampling technique (snow ball sample) utilized.

On the whole, percentages were compared and the magnitudes of differences between groups (ie. dispersed and concentrated), and within groups by age (young-old and old-old) were noted. Data were noted and described in chapter four, only when the magnitudes of differences were equal to or greater than 15 percent within and between groups. Differences were not discussed when less than 20 percent of the respondents reported the category. A comparison of these differences will be reported in chapter

four, with the aid of crosstabulations. As in chapter III, only the tables that are of interest to the the conclusion are highlighted by inclusion in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter the data will be analyzed and reported in three sections. The three sections are:

#### 1. Personal Environments

- a. It includes information on who and how many individuals among family and friends make up the social networks of respondents.
- b. It also includes a description of the characteristics of those named by respondents as the 'significant others' among their social networks.

#### 2. Activity Orientation

- a. It includes information on the frequency with which respondents contacted friends and relatives in person at the others homes and in their own homes over the previous month.
- b. Also included in this section is the involvement of respondents in various types of organizations, the number of organizations respondents report they belonged to, frequency of attending



meetings for such organized activities and the types of organizations respondents reported belonging to (formal and informal).

### 3. Shared Attitudes

- a. This section will investigate attitudes and beliefs of respondents toward various topics related to:
  - a. self
  - b. family
  - c. neighborhood
  - d. society
- b. This section makes note of shared attitudes and beliefs which may prove to indicate that the modal characteristics of those around the respondents (either the "significant others" around an individual or those individuals who share a physical space, such as in a dwelling unit or neighborhood housing environment) has an influence on these attitudes and beliefs.

In doing the analysis, the data were first analyzed by comparing the young-elderly of one housing environment with the old-elderly of the same housing environment. In other words, the young elderly (dispersed) were compared to the old-elderly (dispersed) group. Similarly, the young-elderly (concentrated) group were compared to old-elderly





(concentrated) group. The within group difference was then made note of in the accompanying tables.

Next, the young-elderly and old-elderly of one group was compared to the young-elderly and old-elderly of the other group. More explicitly, the young-elderly (dispersed) were compared to the young-elderly (concentrated), as were the old-elderly (dispersed) compared to the old-elderly (concentrated) group. The differences between age peers were noted as between group differences (also in the accompanying tables).

The data were reported in the accompanying tables and magnitudes of differences equal to or greater than 15 percent (within or between groups were made note of). It was recognized that although in some cases the magnitudes of differences were larger than the established 15 percent, some of these differences were perhaps less relevant than others. In that context, it is perhaps more important to look at response categories and make particular note of the percent of respondents in that category and then to also make note of the magnitudes of differences within and between the groups.

For example, in a hypothetical case where 80 percent of all respondents specified category X, and 20 percent of respondents specified category Y, the magnitudes of differences in category X would perhaps be more meaningful given the difference in the numbers (and percentages). This

is an exploratory study where the intent is to make note of differences within and between groups; therefore, most of the differences (magnitudes greater than 15 percent) will be discussed. The emphasis will be on categories reported by at least 50 percent of the respondents. The categories reported by more than 21 percent but less than 49 percent will be discussed with reserve and no discussion will take place when less than 20 percent of the respondents report a particular category. Magnitudes of differences greater than 15 percent will be outlined on the tables only when more than 20 percent of the respondents report that particular category.

For the purposes of this study, the young-elderly respondents were defined as being less than 74 years of age, while the old-elderly were equal to or more than 74 years of age. These definitions were based on the fact that there were roughly equal numbers of respondents below this age and over this age (N=34 and N=38). The age breakdown of 74 years is close to 75 years which is used to define 'young-old' and 'old-old' elsewhere (NIA 1984).

#### PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

Personal environments of respondents were operationalized as the individuals who were significant in the lives of the respondents. In that regard, the number of persons making up the networks of the individuals, the relationships and the ages of those who were important to the respondents were examined.

NUMBER OF RELATIVES AND FRIENDS RESPONDENTS REPORTED BEING  
CLOSE TO AND HAVING A REGULAR CONTACT WITH.

RELATIVES

Most of the respondents had relatives within 15 miles. In general, they reported having between one and 28 relatives within that distance. More than half (57 percent) of the respondents had between one and eight relatives within the specified distance. The old-elderly (concentrated) group was more likely to report having no relatives or more than nine relatives within the Lansing area as compared with the other three groups. (refer to Table 7 in appendix B)

Of the relatives who were within 15 miles of the respondents, approximately two-thirds (64 percent) reported being in contact (by phone or face to face) with one to seven or more relatives on a regular basis. There were no meaningful differences within or between the four groups in the numbers of relatives they reported being in contact with (by phone or face to face) on a regular basis. All of them seem to be in regular contact with similar numbers of relatives, with more of each group reporting to be in regular contact with between one and seven relatives. (refer to Table 8 in appendix B)

FRIENDS

Over all, most of the respondents knew between one and 60 persons "well enough to visit with in each others homes".



The old elderly (dispersed) were less likely than their age counterpart, the old-elderly (concentrated) group to report that they knew between 'one and 60 persons', however they were more likely as a group to report knowing 'more than 60' persons as compared to their age counterpart (the old-elderly-concentrated). (refer to Table 9 in appendix B)

Almost half of the respondents reported having regular contact (by phone and/or in person) with one to 12 persons; another 44 percent were in contact with more than 13 persons. The young-elderly (concentrated) were most likely to report being in regular contact with more than 13 persons. The old-elderly (concentrated) group were less likely than their younger counter part (young-elderly-concentrated) to report being in regular contact with more than 13 persons. (refer to Table 10 in appendix B)

#### SUMMARY OF DATA RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH WHOM RESPONDENTS WERE IN REGULAR CONTACT

In summary, it would seem that there were many similarities between the four groups (the young and old elderly from dispersed housing environments and the young and the old elderly from the concentrated housing environments). Basically, they had similar numbers of relatives and friends in Lansing and were in contact on a regular basis with similar numbers of both. The exceptions were the old-elderly (concentrated) group who had no relatives or more than nine relatives. This fact did not play a role in the frequency of contacting relatives, as they were no more nor less likely to report 'being in regular contact with more relatives than the other three groups.

The old-elderly (dispersed) group were more likely than the other groups to report knowing more than 60 person "well enough to vist with in each others homes". However,

the number of persons they contacted "on a regular basis" was not greater than the other groups, in fact the old-elderly (concentrated) were in regular contact with 'more than 13 persons'. This may be explained by the fact that the old-elderly (concentrated) group were more likely to report having friends in the same neighborhood as they drew friends locally, more than did the other groups.

#### DESCRIPTION OF RELATIVES AND FRIENDS WHO ARE MOST SIGNIFICANT TO RESPONDENTS

One of the important points under consideration was whether social interaction occurred with age peers or with persons younger or older than themselves and to what extent the groups differ in socializing with those younger.

#### RELATIVES MENTIONED FIRST

When respondents were asked to specify the relationships of the three relatives with whom they visited most often, children was reported more often. Seventy-six percent of all respondents reported the relationship of the first relative as that of their own children. There were no meaningful differences (differences greater than or equal to 15 percent) within and between groups. Their own children were named most often by respondents from each of the four groups (refer to Table 2 below).

#### RELATIVE MENTIONED SECOND

The relationship of the second relative reported was much the same as for relative mentioned first. Their own children were mentioned more often than any other relationships. (See Table 2 below)

**Table 2: Relationship of the three family members with whom respondents socialized most often in percentages.**

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>RELATIVE ONE %</b>	<b>RELATIVE TWO %</b>	<b>RELATIVE THREE %</b>
<b>No Relatives</b>	0	4	15
<b>Children/in-Law</b>	76	60	32
<b>Sibling/in-Law</b>	18	18	24
<b>Parents/in-Law</b>	4	4	6
<b>Grandchildren</b>	1	14	24
	<b>N=72</b>	<b>N=72</b>	<b>N=72</b>

**Footnote:** To compare the above group differences to those reported for relationship of relative mentioned first, see Table 11 in appendix B).

### **RELATIVES MENTIONED THIRD**

When asked about the relationship of the third relative with whom they socialized most often, responses were fairly evenly distributed between their own 1) children, 2) siblings, and 3) grandchildren. Table 3 below corresponds with the relationship of relative mentioned third. It is presented here because data differs with observations for relative mentioned first and second. Table 3 presented the with-in and between-group differences.

Table 3: Relationship of relative mentioned third by neighborhood group and by age group.

Relationship		DISPERSED		CONCENTRATED		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	Within	between		
	%	%	%	%	%	D	C	Y/O	O/O
No relatives	15	11	15	13	22	4	9	2	7
Children/inlaw	32	42	20	47	22	22	25	5	2
Siblings/inlaw	24	16	40	13	22	24	9	3	18
Parents/inlaw	6	11	0	7	6	11	1	4	6
Grandchildren	24	21	25	20	27	4	7	1	2
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: Reported as percentages.

Children/in laws were again mentioned by more respondents as the third relative with whom they socialized most often as compared to other relatives. Thirty-two percent of the respondents gave that response. Siblings and grandchildren were mentioned equally as often. Each was mentioned by 24 percent of the respondents (refer to Table 2 above). There were some interesting differences however within and between groups. Their own 'children' were mentioned by fewer older-elderly (of both housing groups) than by the young-elderly. In mentioning children the differences between the young-old and old-old (from within each of the two housing environments was 22 percent and 25 percent respectively). The old-elderly (dispersed) group were most likely to report a sibling as the third relative





with whom they socialized most often. (Refer to Table 3 above)

### FRIENDS

#### Age characteristics of friends mentioned first

When respondents were asked the ages of the three friends with whom they socialized, 72 percent reported the ages of friends as being over 60. Data supports earlier investigations, that social interaction occurs mostly with age peers. This was true for all four groups. On the whole, 50 percent or more of each of the four categories reported the ages of their friends to be between 61 years and 75 years. In general, the young-elderly (from both housings environments) were more likely to have younger friends (16 to 60 years), whereas the old-elderly (from both housing environments) were more likely to have friends older than 76 years of age. (Refer to Table 4 below)

Table 4: Age of friend mentioned first with whom the respondents visited most often by neighborhood group and age group.

Age of Friend	%	DISPERSED		CONCENTRATED		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	D	C	Y/O	O/O
16-60	28	37	15	33	28	22	5	4	13
61-75	61	63	65	67	50	2	17	4	15
76+	11	0	20	0	22	20	22	0	2
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

5

1

Sixty-five percent of the old-elderly (dispersed) group reported the ages of their friends as being between 61 and 75 years of age. 50 percent of the old-elderly (concentrated) group also gave that response. The magnitude of difference was 15 percent.

Data indicated that the older-elderly (dispersed) group had contact with the older age groups and were least likely to have friends younger than 60 years. The old-elderly (concentrated) group drew friends from somewhat a larger age spectrum. They were more likely to report having older friends as well as younger friends (the magnitude of difference was almost 15 percent). This observation is interesting given the fact that old-elderly (dispersed) respondents live in neighborhoods where the elderly are not significant in numbers while the old-elderly (concentrated) group live in neighborhoods where the age concentration is higher.

The ages of friends mentioned second and third were similar to the ages mentioned first and thus are not being presented here. (refer to Table 12 in appendix B).

#### SUMMARY OF DATA DESCRIBING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WITH WHOM THEY VISITED ON A REGULAR BASIS

On the whole, respondents from all four groups reported their children as the ones they were most in contact with among their relatives; however, when asked about the relationship of the relative mentioned third, the old-elderly (dispersed) group were less likely to mention children and more likely to mention siblings above all other relationships.



Social interaction of all four groups occurred with age peers; however the old-elderly (dispersed) group were less likely to report friends from among the younger age groups as compared to old-elderly (concentrated) group who drew friends from a larger spectrum of age groups.

As no information regarding ages for relatives was gathered, it is assumed that an age gradient is involved between the grandchildren, children, sibling and parent generations. With this assumption, the inescapable observation was that the old-elderly from the dispersed group seem to be involved (to a greater degree) with a "subgroup" of age peers both within the family and within the friendship circle.

### ACTIVITY ORIENTATION

Activity Orientation was described as the frequency with which respondents contacted relatives and friends and the extent to which respondents were involved in organizations.

### RELATIVES

#### Frequency of visiting relatives in person at each others homes

Respondents were asked "how often do you visit in person (at your home or theirs) any relatives with whom you have a regular contact". The question was not limited to relatives who lived in town. By and large respondents visited with relatives more often than once a month. Almost three quarters of the respondents said that they visited with relatives 'somewhat frequently', while another 26 percent reported that they did so infrequently). In other

words, they reported visiting with relatives as often as once a month or more (up to once a week). Basically, all the four groups personally visited with relatives, and there were no meaningful differences within and between groups in the frequency with which they visited with relatives.

(Table 5 follows)

Table 5: Frequency of personally visiting relatives in an out of town by neighborhood grouping and by age, in percentages.

Frequency of visiting	%	DISPERSED		CONCENTRATED		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	Within D	Between C	Y/O	O/O
Infreq	26	21	35	20	28	[14]	8	1	7
Somewhat	73	79	65	80	73	[14]	7	1	8
Very freq									
		19	20	15	18				N=72

Note: Infrequently = (less often than once a month but once a year) Somewhat freq = once a week to to once a month Very freq = (more than once a week to every day).

73 percent of all respondent reported personally visiting relatives 'somewhat frequently and very frequently'.





The number of times during the past month that relatives visited respondents in their home

More than half (58 percent) of the respondents reported that they had been visited by relatives between 'one and four' times during the month preceding the interview. Twenty-six percent of them reported having had no relatives visit in their own homes over the same period. Fifteen percent said that they had been visited by relatives more than five times over the period specified above.

Sixty-seven percent of the young-elderly (concentrated) group reported that they had relatives visit them in their homes, between one and four times, where as only 47 percent of the young-elderly (dispersed) group also reported that category. The young-elderly (dispersed) group were more likely to report having had relatives visit in their own home more than five times over the past month than the other three groups. (refer to Table 13 in appendix B)

FRIENDS

Frequency of personally visiting with friends (other than over the phone)

When respondents were asked about the frequency of visiting friends, approximately two thirds (67 percent) of them reported that they visited with friends 'very frequently' ie. every other day if not every day. There

were some rather interesting differences between the four groups in that a larger percent (85 percent) of the old-elderly (dispersed) group said that they 'very frequently' personally visited with friends as compared to the other groups. The magnitude of within group difference (between the young-elderly dispersed and old-elderly dispersed) and particularly between groups (old-elderly dispersed and old-elderly concentrated group) was large. (refer to Table 14 in appendix B)

The number of times respondents were visited by friends in their own homes during the past month

Half of the respondents reported that they had been visited by friends between one and four times over the previous month, while a third of them reported having had friends over to visit more than five times during the previous month. There were basically no meaningful differences in responses given by respondents from the four groups. Approximately equivalent percent of respondents reported that they had had relatives visit them in their own homes between 'zero times' to 'more than five times during the previous month. (Refer to Table 15 in appendix B)



## SUMMARY OF DATA RELATED TO FREQUENCY OF VISITING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

In summary, it would seem that most of the respondents were active in visiting relatives and friends. The largest group of respondents reported visiting with relatives 'somewhat frequently', while the largest group of respondents reported that they personally visited with friends 'very frequently'. This supports the observation that the day-to-day interaction of most of the respondents was with age peers and social exchange was primarily with friends rather than with family.

The four groups were fairly similar in the responses they gave to the frequency with which they visited relatives in each others homes. However, the young-elderly (dispersed) group tended to be most likely to report having relatives visit them more often in their own homes in the previous month.

In visiting with friends, the old-elderly (dispersed) group was the most active of all the other groups. A large percent of them reported visiting friends very frequently (every other day if not every day). They were somewhat (23 percent) more likely to give that response as compared to the other groups. However, they were not more likely to report having friends visit them (in the preceding month in their own homes) more often than the other groups.

## ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION

### Number of organizations to which respondents belonged

Belonging to organizations was very common among the respondents. Ninety-eight percent of them reported belonging to between one and 14 organizations. Only about two percent did not report belonging to any organizations of any kind.

On the whole, the young-elderly (dispersed and concentrated) groups tended to report belonging to fewer organizations (one to four) than did the old-elderly (dispersed and concentrated) who were more likely to report



belonging to more than five organizations (refer to Table 16 in appendix B). This observation is contrary to the discussion in chapter II where it was noted that with age there is a tendency toward reduced organizational participation. The data could be explained by the personal observation from the interviewing experience. Many of the respondents tended to claim membership in organizations over their life span rather than at the time of the interview. For example, they would name organizations and then would say that they did not attend meetings for it. Perhaps, the question was misunderstood by some respondents, but the fact that older members claimed membership in more organizations was in itself an interesting fact. Belonging to organizations seemed to be regarded highly among the respondents. It can be conjectured that this question did not really tap the information about actual membership in organizations but rather the attitudes toward belonging to such organizations (and perhaps attitudes towards activity) within the 'Subculture' of the elderly (Table 16 in appendix B).

#### Frequency of Organizational Participation

Although the older-elderly (both groups) claimed membership in more organizations than the young, there were no differences (greater than 12 percent) within and between the groups in terms of the frequency with which they



attended meetings for such organized activities (refer to Table 17 in appendix B).

Types of Organizations to which respondents belonged

Respondents belonged to both formal and informal types of organizations. The range of formal types of organizations was considerable. They belonged to hospital auxiliaries, gardening clubs, Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), profession-related organizations and church-related organizations.

By far, church sponsored organizations were mentioned first above all other types of organizations. Approximately three quarters percent of the respondents reported belonging to at least one. The concentrated group (young-elderly and old-elderly) were more likely than the dispersed group (young-elderly and old-elderly) to report belonging to a church-sponsored organization. The young-elderly (concentrated) group were more likely than their age peers (young-elderly dispersed) to report belonging to a church-sponsored organization, whereas the young-elderly dispersed group were more likely to report belonging to a larger range of organizations. (refer to Table 19 in appendix B)

The types of organizations reported second were (in rank order) social service related organizations (22 percent), church sponsored (18 percent), hobby-related (17



percent). Forty-three percent of the organizations mentioned second were labeled as 'other'. (refer to Table 18 in appendix B)

#### Belonging to Informal types of Organizations

By and large, informal types of organizations such as bridge clubs, coffee klatches were reported infrequently. Almost three quarters (74 percent) of the respondents did not report belonging to any 'informal' types of organizations. Of the 26 percent who reported belonging to informal groups, they were likely to report only one such organization. Over all, the dispersed group (young-elderly and old-elderly) were more likely to report belonging to such an informal type of organization than were the concentrated groups; however, there were no meaningful differences within and between the groups. Equivalent percent of each of the four groups reported belonging to an 'informal' type of organization (refer to Table 20 in appendix B).

#### SUMMARY OF SECTION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Belonging to organizations was very common among the respondents. The observation that older elderly reported belonging to more organizations is contrary to research findings (discussed earlier in chapter II), that with increasing age, membership and participation in organizations of various types is reduced.

Although, older-elderly respondents reported belonging to more organizations than did the young-elderly, they were not more likely to attend meetings for such organized activities. There were no meaningful differences between or within groups in the frequency of attending such meetings.

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Respondents reported belonging to organizations of various types. The concentrated group was more likely to report belonging to a church sponsored organization that was the dispersed group. This was true of the young-elderly (concentrated) group to a greater extent as they were most likely to name such an organization, while the young-elderly (dispersed) group were more likely to report belonging to a range of organizations not related to church.

Of the respondents (26 percent) who reported belonging to informal types of organizations, only one such informal type of organization was mentioned by them. The dispersed group was somewhat more likely to name an informal organization; however, the difference was less than the established 15 percent within and between groups.

### SHARED ATTITUDES

Shared attitudes were recorded (between and within the four groups) toward self, family, neighborhood and society. This was done by using two methods of questioning. One of the methods involved administering a Lickert Scale where a statement was read to the respondents and for each statement read they were asked if they 'strongly agreed', 'agreed', 'neither agreed or disagreed', 'disagreed', or 'strongly disagreed' with it. The other method elicited respondents own attitudes and beliefs. It involved giving the respondents the stem of a statement which was then completed in their own words.

### SELF

What attitudes and beliefs a person holds about his/her health, how 'important' one believes one is to others and how he/she interprets social order in this world are all



inextricably related. The section on 'Self' reports on group differences in attitudes toward one's own health, one's body, toward aging, importance of self to others, and one's perception of how others see the respondent.

"I consider my self to be healthy"

When respondents were read the statement "I consider my self to be healthy", most (96 percent) of the respondents either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement. The fact that respondents agreed that they were healthy reinforced one of the assumptions of the study, that the sample was, in fact, in good health. The groups differed as they endorsed the statement with differing emphasis on the statement. Some respondents 'strongly agreed' with the statement while others just 'agreed' with it. For example, the dispersed group (both young-elderly and old-elderly) 'agreed' with the statement while a greater percent of the concentrated group (young-elderly and old-elderly) 'strongly agreed' with it. A larger percent (67 percent) of the young-elderly (concentrated) endorsed the statement by 'strongly agreeing' with the statement (as compared to their age peers (the young elderly dispersed) as well as their older counterpart. In other words the (young-elderly-concentrated group) were most likely to 'strongly agree' that they 'consider them selves to be healthy. (Refer to Table 21 in appendix B)



"My body..."

When respondents were asked to complete the stem statement "My body...", responses were categorized in six ways. The two categories given by more than twenty percent of the respondents and therefore, are being discussed here were 'importance of body' and '(positive) physical condition of body.' On the whole, the concentrated group was more likely than the dispersed group (both young and old) to make positive statements about their body. Again, the young-elderly (concentrated) group was most likely to complete the stem statements with a positive response related to the physical conditions of their bodies than the other groups. Forty-seven percent of the young-elderly (concentrated) group said some thing positive about their body such as: "my body is healthy" or "is sound" (Refer to Table 22 in appendix B).

"I consider my self to be important to others"

Respondents were read the statement "I consider myself to be important to others". The majority of respondents (86 percent) 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the statement. Less than 20 percent were 'undecided' or 'disagreed' with the statement. All (100 percent) of the young-elderly (dispersed) group agreed with the statement while only 70 percent of the old-elderly (dispersed) group 'agreed' (a 30 percent within group difference). The young-elderly





(dispersed) group were not only more likely than their older counter part to agree, but they were more likely to do so when compared to their age peers (the young elderly concentrated group). (refer to Table 23 in appendix B).

"As I grow older..."

Respondents were asked to complete the stem statement "As I grow older...". Completed statements were coded in two different ways. The first required statements such as "get wiser", "appreciate family more", "more time to do my work" to be labeled as 'positive statements'. Statements such as "more aches and pains", "more limitations" to be labeled as 'negative statements' and statements such as "more aches and pains (smile)", "realize how important health is" to be labeled as 'neutral'. Responses that did not fit any of the categories were entered as 'other' (Table 24 in appendix B).

'Positive' and 'negative' endings such as those described above were given by more than 20 percent of the respondents. Nearly equivalent percent of each of the four groups completed the stems with positive statements. However, the old-elderly (concentrated) group were most likely to complete the stem "As I grow older..." with endings such as "more aches and pains" "more limitations". They were more likely than their younger counter-part (young-elderly- concentrated group) and age peers (old-



elderly-dispersed) to give such negative endings to the stems provided. (refer to Table 24 in appendix B).

"As I grow older..."

When responses to the stem statement "As I grow older..." were categorized by content, four categories were made note of and labeled. The two that are discussed here are: 1) Philosophy/adaptability and 2) physiology/health. Sixty percent of the statements (such as "As I grow older (I) get more tolerant", or "As I grow older (I) get wiser") were categorized as Philosophy/Adaptability; while 29 percent of the statements such as "watching for wrinkles", "more aches and pains" were labeled 'physiology/health'. More of the young-elderly (from both dispersed and concentrated) groups and the old-elderly (dispersed) group talked about growing older with sentiments related to adaptability/philosophy. The old-elderly (concentrated) group was least likely to talk about aging by referring to 'adaptability'. The old-elderly (concentrated) group were more likely to complete the stem statement about aging by talking about the physiological aspects of aging such as "wrinkles", "more aches and pains". Half of all the old-elderly (concentrated) group gave such stem completion statements, while only 15 percent of the old-elderly (dispersed) group did so. (Refer to Table 25 in appendix B).



"People think of me as..."

The final question relating to 'Self' asked the respondents about their perception of how others saw them. Respondents were asked to complete the stem "People think of me as...". Five categories were defined by the content of the statements. The two categories labeled 'doer' and 'kind and loving' were each mentioned by between 25 percent and 47 of the respondents. More people believed that others saw them as 'kind and loving' than as a 'doer'. The former was mentioned by 47 percent of the respondents while 25 percent mentioned the latter. Typical sentences in the former category were "(people think of me as) friendly and helpful", "community grandmother" and "good guy". The young-elderly (from both housing groups) were more likely than the old-elderly of either group to believe that others saw them as 'kind and loving'. Approximately three quarters of the young elderly (concentrated) group completed the stem with such endings. Only about half (47 percent) of the young-elderly (dispersed) group completed the sentence with statements such as "good guy", "friendly and helpful".

'Doers' were people who reported that others saw them as "dependable", "strong and self-sufficient", "competent" or "willing to take responsibility". The dispersed group (young and old) were more likely to believe that others saw them as 'doers'. The concentrated group was less likely to respond in that manner. (refer to Table 26 in appendix B).

### SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the statement "I Consider myself to be healthy". The dispersed group (young and old) endorsed the statement by agreeing with it while the concentrated group (young and old) were more likely to 'strongly agree' with it. The young-elderly (concentrated) group had the highest portion of respondents to 'strongly agree' with the statement about health.

When respondents were asked to complete the stem "My body..." A larger percent of the concentrated group (young and old) gave statements that reinforced the responses they gave about health. The concentrated group completed the stem statement about their body by describing it in 'positive' terms such as "is healthy" or "is sound". The young-elderly (concentrated) group was most likely to describe it in those terms as compared to the other groups

"As I grow older..." was analyzed in two ways. First by coding it as positive, neutral, and negative statements. The second was grouped by subject. There were no meaningful difference between the four groups in that equivalent percentages of each group gave 'positive' endings to the statements. However, the old-elderly (concentrated) group were more likely to complete the stems with 'negative' statements such as "more aches and pains", "more limitations".

Content was then coded by subject matter. Most of the respondents completed the stems "As I grow older..." with statements such as "(I) get wiser" or "(I get) more tolerant which were labeled as 'adaptability/philosophy'. The older elderly (concentrated) group was least likely to complete stems with such endings. On the other hand, the dispersed groups were less likely than the concentrated groups to complete the stems with statements related to physiology/health aspects of aging. The old-elderly (concentrated) group were most likely to complete stems with such endings.

When asked to complete the stem statement "People think of me as...", statements related to categories 'kind and loving' and 'doer' were each given by more than 20 percent of the respondents. The young elderly (dispersed and concentrated) groups believed that others thought of them as kind and loving'. They tended to complete the stems with statements such as "friendly and helpful", "community grandmother". Young-elderly (concentrated) group was the most likely to complete sentences with such statements. The dispersed groups (young and old elderly) reported that others thought of them as 'doers' and completed the statement "People think of me as..." "competent, "strong and self sufficient.

## FAMILY

A family is, first of all, an institution, within which there exists a mutually interacting system of personalities related by blood, marriage, descent, or adoption, performing the function of nurturant socialization (Morris and Winter, 1978). It has already been mentioned that for the elderly the family is an important reference group, especially at times of illness and personal emergencies (chapter II).

### "Compared with most families...."

Approximately two thirds (63 percent) of the respondents completed the statement "Compared with most families, mine...", with positive endings such as "is nice", "is great" or "is very understanding". About 29 percent gave 'neutral' endings to the stems such as "is average", "is normal" etc. More than 50 percent of each group gave such 'positive' endings to the statement about their families; however, the largest percent of old-elderly (concentrated) group reported 'positive' endings to the stem and were less 'neutral' about their families than were the other three groups. (see Table 27 in appendix B)

### "It is important to be near family, even if one is far from friends"

Respondents were asked if they 'strongly agreed', 'agreed', 'neither agreed nor disagreed', 'disagreed', or

'strongly disagreed' with the statement "It is important to be near family even if one is somewhat far from friends".

More than half of the respondents (56 percent) 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the statement. Twenty-eight percent 'strongly disagreed or disagreed' with the statement. In general the old elderly were more apt than the young-elderly to 'agree or strongly agree' that "it is important to live near family even if one is some what far from friends". Almost three quarters of old-elderly (concentrated) group 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the statement and were more likely (by more than 15 percent) than their younger counterpart (young-elderly concentrated) to do so. Only 32 percent of the young-elderly (dispersed) group agreed with the statement. There were no meaningful differences between the four groups as equivalent percentages of each group 'disagreed' with the statement. The magnitudes of differences were less than 15 percent (refer to table 28 in appendix B).

#### SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY

It would seem that almost two thirds of the respondents described their families with adjectives that were 'positive'. The next largest group completed the sentences with 'neutral' endings such as "is average" or "is no different". The old-elderly (concentrated) group was most likely to complete stems with positive endings and least likely to describe their family with neutral statements.

When importance of proximity to family was analyzed, proximity to family, (even though one may be far from friends) was important to a larger percent of the old-elderly (dispersed and concentrated) groups. It was important to most of the old-elderly (concentrated) group 72 percent of them agreed with the statement). On the other





hand, the young-elderly (dispersed) group had the lowest percent of respondents (32 percent) who agreed with the statement "It is important to be near family even if one is somewhat far from friends".

### NEIGHBORHOOD

The concept of 'neighborhood' is important to individuals. Whether an individual believes him/herself to be 'integrated' within their neighborhood, the attitudes a person held about the age composition of their neighborhood are all important elements of this section. An individual's definition may have coincided with 'proximate space' (such as a city block) or with the "distinguishing characteristics of that space" (Webster, 1963). Examples of "distinguishing characteristics of space" may have to do with:

- a) The physical characteristics of the region (such as an apartment complex or a development of single family dwelling units).
- b) The characteristics of persons within one's perceptual distance (age of residents might be an important distinguishing characteristic of space).

#### "I feel very much a part of my neighborhood"

The question respondents were asked to consider about the neighborhood was "I feel very much a part of my neighborhood". Approximately three quarters (71 percent) of them 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the statement. In

general, a larger percent of the young-elderly groups (from both housing environments) as compared to the old-elderly groups 'agreed or strongly agreed' that they felt very much a part of their neighborhoods. The young-elderly (concentrated) group were almost unanimous (93 percent) in their support of the statement; however, a little more than half of their older counterpart (old-elderly concentrated) agreed with the statement. (refer to Table 29 in appendix B).

"People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages"

Two statements (about desired age composition) were read to the respondents (refer to questions 41 and 44 in appendix A). The first statement read to the respondents was "People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages". The second statement was similar to the first and was read as "People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even though one is far from friends". Responses to these two statements differed. Eighty-five percent of the respondents 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the first statement. They felt that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages". However, agreement with this statement was not evenly shared by the four groups. The young-elderly (dispersed) group unanimously agreed with the

statement as did more than 85 percent of the young and old-elderly (concentrated) groups. The old-elderly (dispersed) group were least likely to 'agree'; however, 70 percent of them concurred with the statement. (refer to Table 6 and 7 which follow)

Table 6: Responses to the question "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages".

Response to statement	%	DISPERSED		CONCENTRATED		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
S.disagree, disagree	8	0	10	7	0	10	7	7	10
Undecided	7	0	10	7	11	20	4	7	9
S.agree, agree	85	100	70	86	89	30	3	14	19
		19	20	15	18				
					N=72				

Table 7: Responses to the statement "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages even though one is far from friends".

Response to statement	%	DISPERSED		CONCENTRATED		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
S.disagree, disagree	21	11	5	33	22	6	31	42	17
Undecided	15	32	5	7	17	27	10	25	12
S.agree, agree	64	58	90	40	61	32	21	18	29
		19	20	15	18				
					N=72				

People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of age groups, even though one is far from friends.

When the question was asked with a slightly different ending as compared to the former question, the responses were interesting. Whereas 85 percent of the respondents 'agreed, or strongly agreed' with the first statement related to desired age composition of neighborhood, only 64 percent of them agreed that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even though one is some what far from friends". The four groups were divided in their opinion about the second statement. On the whole, the old-elderly (dispersed and concentrated) groups tended to agree with it as compared to the young-elderly groups. Ninety percent of the old-elderly dispersed and 61 percent of the old-elderly concentrated group agreed with the statement while only 58 and 40 percent of the young-elder counterpart did so. The within group differences were greater than 15 percent. The old-elderly (dispersed) group almost unanimously (90 percent) agreed with the second version of the statement, indicating that living in neighborhoods close to where friends lived was not an important criterion for them. Less than 61 percent of each of the other three groups (young-elderly dispersed; young and old-elderly concentrated) also agreed with the statement. The magnitudes within and between housing environment groups were greater than 15 percent (refer to Table 7 above).



Only 21 percent of the respondents 'disagreed' with the statement "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even though one is some what far from friends". Overall, a larger proportion of the concentrated group 'disagreed' with the statement. Approximately half (53 percent) of the young-elderly (concentrated) group disagreed with the statement while only a fifth (23 percent of their older counterpart (old-elderly concentrated) also disagreed.

On the whole, the concentrated group was more likely to disagree with the second statement. A larger proportion of the young-elderly (concentrated) group as compared to their age peers 'disagreed' with the statement. Clearly, to this group proximity to friends was more important than being in a neighborhood where there is a mixture of ages. The old-elderly (concentrated) group to a lesser extent than their younger counterpart 'disagreed' with the statement. (refer to Table 7 above).

#### SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD NEIGHBORHOODS

On the whole, three quarters of the respondents 'agreed or strongly agreed' with the statement "I feel very much a part of my neighborhood". The young-elderly (of both housing groups) were more likely to agree with the statement as compared to the older elderly group as a whole. The young-elderly (concentrated) group were almost unanimous (93 percent) in agreement with the statement; however, agreement was 50 percent among their older counterparts (old-elderly concentrated group). Most of the respondents (85 percent) agreed that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages". The young-elderly (dispersed) group unanimously (100 percent) agreed with the statement and were joined in agreement by more than

80 percent of the young-elderly (concentrated) and old-elderly (concentrated) groups. The old-elderly (dispersed) group was the exception. Less than three quarters (70 percent) of this group agreed that "People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages" It must be noted that this group, the old-elderly (dispersed), did in fact live in neighborhoods which were recognized by them to have a mixture of age groups.

The last question related to neighborhoods, also dealt with the age composition of neighborhoods. A smaller percent of respondents (64 percent) agreed with the statement "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even though one is far from friends", as compared to the former statement. A larger proportion of the older-elderly (dispersed and concentrated) groups were less likely to 'agree'. The Old-elderly (dispersed) group who were least likely to agree, that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, were most likely to agree that they should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even if one is somewhat far from people of one's own age.

A little over 20 percent of respondents 'disagreed' with the statement that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages, even though one is somewhat far from friends". More than half (53 percent) of the young-elderly (concentrated) group agreed with the statement. They were more likely however, than the other three groups to disagree with the statement.

## SOCIETY

The attitudes a person holds about 'society' are in a sense directed toward a faceless undefined entity. These attitudes are based on one's own ongoing life experiences and in that regard, one's attitudes about Self, Family, and Neighborhood are important to how one views 'Society'.

### "Society is good to older people"

Almost three quarters (72 percent) of the respondents agreed that "Society is good to older people". The old-elderly (concentrated) group were unanimous in their



agreement with this statement. They were more likely than their younger counterpart (young-elderly concentrated group) and their age peers (old-elderly dispersed group) to agree with the statement as given. (refer to Table 30 in appendix B)

"To me the world looks..."

The second stem statement in this section asked respondents about their evaluation of the world. They were read the stem statement "To me the world looks...". Slightly less than half (46 percent) of the respondents completed the statements with 'negative' endings such as "in turmoil", "a dangerous place", or "scary". Approximately one third (36 percent) of all respondents ended the statements with 'positive' endings such as "beautiful, wonderful", "rose colored", and "sunny".

On the whole, a larger percent of the concentrated group (both young and old) as compared to the dispersed group gave negative endings to the stem "To me the world looks...". Age was an important factor among respondents from the dispersed housing environment. A larger percent (45 percent) of the old-elderly (dispersed) group ended the stem "to me the world looks..." with negative endings, whereas only 26 percent of their younger counterpart did so. Almost two-thirds of the young-elderly (concentrated) group reported that the world looked to them in negative terms such as "a dangerous place", "in turmoil" and "scary".

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Thirty-four percent more respondents from the young-elderly (concentrated group) completed the stems with negative endings as compared to their age peers (young-elderly dispersed).

A larger percent of the dispersed (both young and old) group completed the stems with positive endings such as the ones described above. Positive endings were given by more than half (58 percent) of the young-elderly (dispersed) group. A larger percent of them ended the stems with positive adjectives when compared to the other three groups (the within and particularly the between group differences were note-worthy). There was a 38 percent difference between the young-elderly age peers from the two housing environments), and a within group difference of 23 percent between the young-elderly and old-elderly from the dispersed housing environment. (Refer to Table 31 in appendix B)

"I hope I never....."

The content of the responses were related to dependency and/or to social situations. As these responses are related to society in some sense, they are being included in this section.

Approximately, half (49 percent) of the respondents completed the sentences with statements related to 'dependency'. Statements such as "be disabled", "come to the point where I can't take care of my self", "have to depend on my children" were typical sentiments and were

labeled as 'dependent'. Twenty-one percent of the respondents completed the sentences with sentiments that were related to social situations and were therefore labeled as 'social'. They completed the sentence "I hope I never...", with statements such as: "make any one angry" or "become garulous and troublesome".

On the whole, respondents from the dispersed group were more likely to complete the statements with endings related to dependency in some way; however, there were no meaningful differences between individual groups in the responses given. Equivalent percentages of each of the four groups completed the stem "I hope I never" with endings that were categorized as 'dependent' or 'social'. In rank order, each of the four groups completed the statements with the hope that they did not have to be 'dependent' nor 'troublesome' to others in any way. (Refer to Table 32 in appendix B)

#### SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIETY

Most (72 percent) of the respondents agreed that society is good to older people". The old-elderly (concentrated) group was almost unanimous in their agreement of the above statement. A larger percent of them 'agreed' with the statement as compared to the other three groups.

When respondents were asked to complete the sentence, "To me the world looks...", responses were coded as 'positive', 'neutral' and 'negative'. Negative stem endings were given by a larger percent of the respondents while positive stem endings were given by a smaller percent of them. A larger percent of the respondents (young-elderly and old-elderly) from the concentrated housing environments described the world in negative terms while more of the

dispersed group completed the stems with positive endings. Age was an important factor with the dispersed group. More older-elderly respondents from the dispersed group as compared to their younger counterpart ended the sentence with negative descriptions of the state of the world. The young-elderly (dispersed) group were most likely to be positive about "the world".

Finally, the stem endings to the statements "I hope I never..." were analyzed. The content suggests that 'dependency' and 'social' aspects were of concern to the respondents. These concerns were shared by all four groups as there were no meaningful differences noted between them. The sentiments verbalized by the respondents were that they would not have to be dependent on others nor be troublesome to others.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS OF STUDY

Conclusions drawn from this investigations will be discussed in this chapter, followed by the implications of these findings for future research. Several themes have emerged through this study and the concepts are interwoven within it. These themes were presented and summarized in the preceding chapter and are as follows:

1. Personal Environment
  - a. "significant others"
  - b. description of significant others
2. Activity Orientation
  - a. interaction with family and friends
  - b. membership in organizations
3. Shared Attitudes Toward
  - a. Self
  - b. Family
  - c. Neighborhood
  - d. Society/world.

### LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The summary of data and the conclusions drawn from this study were based on a non-probabilistic sampling technique

and, therefore, it is necessary to make note of the fact that findings from this study can not be extended and generalized to the larger elderly population.

Another caveat that is important to note at this juncture is that educational and occupational differences existed between the respondents from dispersed and concentrated housing environments. These differences were not controlled to the extent desired, thus differences noted in this investigation may be attributed to socio-economic backgrounds of the groups. Future studies will need to hold such differences constant.

#### MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF STUDY

One of the objectives of this study was to provide an insight into the parameters important in social and attitudinal dynamics of elderly individuals. The two independent variables that were the focus of this investigation have already been specified as:

1. Perceived housing concentration and
2. Age of respondent

The first inescapable conclusion that was drawn from this investigation was that (perceived) age concentration of the neighborhood (housing environment) was an important variable related to the social processes of individuals. This was concluded on the basis of the fact that although

the dispersed and concentrated groups were similar in many respects, the differences outnumbered the similarities. Overall there were many more instances where the groups were meaningfully different than they were similar.

Similarities and differences that were found in the context of 'Personal Environments' of respondents from dispersed and concentrated neighborhood housing environments, are discussed to illustrate the point that the two groups (though not totally different from each other) differed in many important ways. For instance, when respondents were asked about the relationship of the relatives with whom they were in regular contact, all four groups reported their own children first, above any other relationship. However, the old-elderly (dispersed) group were more likely, when compared to the other groups to report a sibling/in-law as the third relative with whom they were in regular contact.

The fact that respondents from dispersed and concentrated neighborhood housing environments were similar in reporting the number of times they were visited by friends over the past month, but differed in the reporting of being visited by relatives over the same period illustrates the important ways in which the 'Activity Orientation' of groups differed. For example, there were no meaningful differences between groups in the number of times



respondents reported having friends visit in their own homes over the past month; however, there were differences when groups were compared on the basis of the number of times they had reported having relatives visit over in the same period.

Chapter IV is replete with examples of more differences than similarities in 'Shared Attitudes' toward Self, Family, Neighborhood and Society. The one exception has to do with the open ended statement "I hope I never...". There were no meaningful differences between the two neighborhood housing environment groups in the responses they gave to the statement. The two groups were equally likely to complete the stem by talking about 'dependency' and about 'social situations' such as being "troublesome" or a "bother".

Other than the fact that the differences out-numbered similarities, another basis for the conclusion that was drawn has to do with the magnitude of differences between the dispersed and the concentrated groups. Differences were even more striking when shared attitudes were analyzed.

Clearly, age was an important variable in social dynamics. Having studied a cross section of ages, it may well be that the differences noted in chapter IV were due to aging of individuals. However tempting as it may be to assume these differences as being due to aging, it may be prudent to keep in mind that they may be attributed to a

co-hort effect in light of the fact that analysis was based on a cross-section of elderly. In essence, the differences noted between the young-elderly and the old-elderly from each housing environment are probably due to aging of individuals; however, this is being concluded with some caution.

Literature documents the observation that social intercourse is a function of aging. It was suggested in chapter II that as individuals age, they are involved in a 'shrinking' social sphere. Based on these data, however, there was insufficient support for the thesis that older-elderly individuals participate in a "shrinking social sphere". Results of the data analysis show that the older-elderly groups reported that they were in regular contact with equally as many persons as the young-elderly groups. In fact, the old-elderly (concentrated) groups reported being in contact on a regular basis with more friends than did their younger counterpart.

The "shrinking social world" analogy is also not true when applied to social interaction with families. All the four groups reported being in "regular contact" with similar numbers of relatives. There were also no differences (greater than 15 percent) between the groups in the frequency with which they reported visiting relatives in person at each others homes. The one exception to this



finding was that the young-elderly (dispersed) group were more likely to report having relatives visit them (in their own homes) more times over the preceding month than did their older-elderly counterpart.

The older-elderly respondents reported that they belonged to more organizations than did the young-elderly. They also reported that they attended meetings for such organized activities as often as did the younger-elderly. If self-report of participation in social intercourse is indicative of actual rates of participation, then it could be assumed that healthy older-elderly groups are equally as "active" as are the young-elderly.

To conclude that respondents from the two housing groups differed, and that age was an important variable (along the lines described earlier and discussed above) one has only to refer to the magnitudes of differences within groups. In essence, what was noted in this investigation was that, there may be cause to believe that there are innate 'lifestyle' differences between the young and old from dispersed and concentrated neighborhood housing environments. While it is true that these differences do not constitute a measure of differing 'life styles' per se, they are important aspects of 'lifestyle' (See glossary for definition).

## CONCLUSION ABOUT SUBGROUP INTERACTION BASED ON ANALYSIS OF DATA

The "Sub Culture Theory" of aging suggests that for various reasons, social interaction among the elderly occurs within the 'subgroup' of age peers. The degree to which any individual participates in such a subgroup and is affected by it varies and is unique to individuals. Data confirmed the thesis that the elderly interact significantly more with their own age groups than with other age groups. However, one of the findings of this investigation was that the old-elderly (dispersed) group was more likely (when compared to the other groups) to report interaction with a 'sub-group' of age peers, both from within the family and outside of it. The old-elderly dispersed group were less likely to report having friends who were younger than 60 years of age and more likely to report a 'sibling' as the third relative with whom they visited most often. One of the contributions of this investigation is in forwarding the hypothesis that old-elderly individuals living in dispersed neighborhood housing environments are more likely to interact with a 'sub group' of elderly peers as compared to the other groups examined. This finding is different from the finding of Rosow who reported that "confinement of friendships within age groups is disproportionately greater among high density rather than low density residents" (see Chapter II).

### SHARED ATTITUDES AND GROUP CONCIOUSNESS

It was suggested that the "modal characteristics" of persons around an individual affect a person's evaluation of him/her self and also affects his/her attitude toward family, neighborhood, and society. Clearly, there were attitudinal differences between the dispersed and concentrated housing groups. Examples of these differences have been noted through out chapter IV and therefore will not be discussed in detail here; however, some examples are used here to illustrate the points being made.

The dispersed group (young-old and old-old) agreed with the concentrated group that they were healthy. However the dispersed group endorsed the statement with less emphasis than did the concentrated group. Also, the dispersed group differed from the concentrated in their attitude toward their own bodies. The concentrated groups were more likely to describe their bodies in positive terms as compared to the dispersed groups. On the basis of these findings one might conclude that respondents who lived in neighborhoods which were perceived by them to have higher elderly concentrations were more 'positive' about their health and their body as compared to those who lived in environments where there were lower elderly concentrations.

Paradoxically, attitudes toward aging were not compatible with the positive attitudes reported by the

concentrated groups toward health and body. The dispersed and the concentrated groups differed in their attitudes toward aging. Whereas, the dispersed groups were more likely to talk about aging in terms of 'adaptability' and 'philosophy', the concentrated groups were more concerned with the 'physiological' and 'health' aspects of aging. The fact that the concentrated group emphasized the physical side of aging may be related to the 'aging characteristics of residents surrounding the individual respondents. Another difference was that the old-elderly (concentrated) group were more negative about aging than were the other groups. This was true despite the fact that they talked about their bodies and their health in more positive terms.

Other attitudinal differences between the dispersed and concentrated groups were related to society and the world. The concentrated group as compared to the dispersed group completed the stem "to me the world looks..." with negative endings. They were more likely to see the world as "a dangerous place" or "a scary place". The dispersed group on the other hand were less likely to see the world in those terms.

The dispersed groups saw themselves as 'doers' more often than did the concentrated group who thought of themselves as 'kind and loving. In other words, the dispersed group was somewhat more likely to report that others saw

them as activists, not necessarily in the political sense of the word but rather as people who were stewards of their own lives. The concentrated group believed that others thought of them in more passive terms such as 'kind and loving'. The real question is, do respondents agree with the image they believe others have of them, and are there in fact, differences between groups in the degree to which they take responsibility for themselves? Although becoming 'dependent' was a general concern of all elderly, the dispersed group was more concerned about it.

#### SPECIFIC HYPOTHESES ARISING FROM THIS INVESTIGATION

A brief summary of some specific hypotheses arising from this investigation are given below. This is by no means an exhaustive list of hypotheses that one could come up with from the data provided.

1. Life Styles of young-elderly and old-elderly individuals from Dispersed and Concentrated neighborhood housing environments differ.
2. Life Styles change as a function of age of respondent.
3. Elderly place a high value on 'Activity' and thus aging healthy elderly individuals do not necessarily experience the phenomenon of a "shrinking social sphere" of activity.



4. Old-Elderly individuals from dispersed neighborhood housing environments are most involved with a subgroup of elderly peers.
5. Healthy individuals in age concentrated neighborhood housing environments evaluate health, and body, in positive terms. The hypothesis is that it is not the age concentration of the neighborhood, per se, that is important in perception of one's health, but rather the actual health status in combination with the supra-personal characteristics of the environment. In essence, an individual who is unwell in an aging environment would be more likely to downgrade his/her health status than a person who was environed by different age groups where morbidity was not a part of the social psyche of the individuals.

While several differences in attitudes between the two groups (dispersed and concentrated) have been illustrated, it is not possible nor is it the intent of this study to conclude that these differences are due to the identification of individuals with the "modal characteristics" of the dominant group in the neighborhood housing environment, or to persons with whom respondents are most in contact.

These modal characteristics have been axiomatically accepted as part of the conceptual and theoretical framework. This study has been an attempt to establish the areas in which differences arise and to explore future directions. Some of the extentions for future studies are suggested below.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

Describing the areas where differences exist between groups and within groups, is one of the contributions of this investigation. The natural extention of this type of reasoning is to establish why such differences exist between groups.

One reason for the existence of those differences is speculated as age of respondent (a major variable in this study). Indeed, there seem to be differences between the young-elderly and old-elderly within each of the housing environments. Given the data, it can probably be assumed that attitudes and beliefs are dynamic and that they undergo changes over time as the individual and his/her environment change. Future studies might incorporate a research design which would look at the competencies of the individuals and the demands placed upon the aging individual by the environment in which he/she lives. Any future investigations in this direction may be better served by a design that incorporates a longitudinal approach. (Lawton, 1980).

From this study, it can be seen that the dispersed group was much more likely to see themselves as 'independent' and as 'doers', they were also more likely to talk about 'adaptability and about "taking an active role in ones own physical condition". The question arising out of these observations is: how do attitudes and beliefs mitigate the 'demand characteristics' of environments in light of declining competencies of aging individual elderly? This would be an important direction for future research.

Another direction which offers a promise for further investigation is in the area of 'beliefs' and 'attitudes' and the interaction between the two. In furthering an understanding in this area, techniques utilized in field research may be more appropriate. This is so, more particularly because field research methods can simultaneously combine their focus on a range of activities as well as relationships and meanings attached to such activities and relationships as well as 'beliefs', all within the context of the settings (Babbie, 1983).

The importance of understanding the 'social environment' and 'culture' shared by the elderly may be important elements in truly understanding attitudes and beliefs that elderly individuals hold towards the various subjects that were part of this study. The existence of a 'culture' specific to the elderly is still an intuitive proposition. By personally conducting the interviews there

was much evidence of the value individual respondents placed on "activity". Perhaps, 'activity' is part of the general belief system of all elderly. The fact that older-elderly respondents reported that they belonged to more organizations than the young elderly and that they reported being equally as active in attending meetings for such organized activities may well be explained as the value elderly place on being active (not necessarily on their actual activity).

#### OTHER DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

Other questions arising out of this investigation that might prove to be of interest for future research are summarized below: Attitudes toward neighborhood age composition and desired residential distance from family is discussed first as perhaps being worthy of further investigation. Clearly, attitudes noted in this investigation toward neighborhood age composition and toward desired proximity to relatives were curious. The conclusion one might draw from the responses to the two statements about age composition of neighborhoods is that:

- 1) The old-elderly (dispersed) group were not necessarily drawn to neighborhoods of mixed age groups, (even though they lived in such neighborhood);
- 2) However, they were even less likely to be drawn to neighborhoods where there

were people of "their own age" (although they seem to socialize with a sub-group of age peers). On the contrary, the other three groups reported that "people should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of ages".

Explanations for the differing attitudes are not obvious from this investigation; however, it is speculated that perhaps interpretation of 'neighborhoods' was defined variously by the four groups. Some may have interpreted it as 'proximate space' such as a city block, or as the distinguishing characteristics of that space (ie. architectural characteristics or the human characteristics).

Also noted earlier was that the young-elderly (dispersed) group was the most likely group to be in frequent personal contact with their families, particularly with their children. Although this was the case, they were the most likely group to be undecided about the importance of being near family (even if one is far from friends) and were least likely as a group to agree with the statement, suggesting that it was less important for the group to be near family than to be near friends. Again, reasons for attitudinal differences between groups are not clear but could be investigated in future research.

Yet another direction which might be investigated has to do with the old-elderly from dispersed housing environments. Clearly, the old-elderly (dispersed) group

were very active in socializing (particularly with friends and less with the family). They saw themselves as very active in church-related religious and social activities, and in social service oriented organizations. They also talked about 'adaptability' and believed that others saw them as 'doers'. Yet they were the least likely of the groups to agree that they were important to others. The questions that need to be investigated are: 1. Do the old-elderly from dispersed housing environments feel more estranged from society than do the other groups? 2. What specific variables contribute to the belief that one is or is not important to society?

One might address at some later time, the observation that young-elderly and old-elderly experiences differ in terms of the socializing patterns of each group within the dispersed and concentrated group. If it can be assumed that differences between groups are the result of the aging process and that with aging, individuals change not only physiologically but socially, then it may be possible to note the degree of change in lifestyles that residents of dispersed and concentrated housing environment undergo. Changes in lifestyle (as was noted earlier) are more important to overall wellbeing of individuals than is the lifestyle itself (see Chapter II, page 26). For example, the young-elderly from dispersed housing environments were

found to be very socially active with their families, yet the old-elderly from the same housing environmental group were least likely to be similarly occupied with their families. On the other hand, the old-elderly (dispersed) were found to be more socially occupied with their age peers. The questions that need to be asked are: 1) What absolute changes in lifestyle are brought about due to aging? 2) How are these changes perceived and what accommodations made for them? 3) What effect does it have on the 'well-being' of the elderly?

In concluding this investigation, it would be meaningful to quote from one of the respondents who, when asked to complete the stem statement "People think of me as...", replied: "people think of me as strong and independent....(hesitation)...they don't know that I am getting old". This statement was made by a lady over 74 years of age from the dispersed housing environment.

The point being raised here is that 'housing environment' is a symbol. It has long been recognized that one's house is much more than a physical structure, "it is the symbol of status, of social acceptance, the way in which the individual perceives him/herself and is perceived by others" (Hudson Guild, 1960).

Symbols being what they are; (abstractions), are important in communication with others. Thus, "housing

environments" convey to oneself and to others what one believes and wishes others to believe of oneself. Perhaps, future research might investigate whether neighborhood housing concentration symbolizes the aging of individuals within and thus acts as a catalyst for social interaction with family and friends. As is speculated here, perhaps the concentrated housing environments hold out a symbol to family and friends to make an effort to keep in touch with aging relatives and friends within. This may in turn reinforce the perception of self as 'kind and loving'. Whereas 'dispersed housing environments' offer no such symbols as magnets for familial interaction, thus individuals from such environments rely even more on a 'sub-group' of elderly peers. Perhaps, this also reinforces the perception of self as 'doers' or as activists. This might also help explain the attitudinal differences toward 'dependency', 'adaptability' and the other variables that were a part of this investigation. At this point, these are only speculations, worthy of future investigations.



## GLOSSARY

Aging in place	The phenomenon noted by geographers that the distribution of elderly in space is due to persons living and growing old in the same place, not due to migration factors.
Significant others	Persons with whom respondents interact on a regular basis.
Diagnostic related groupings (D.R.G.)	They are classification scheme, categorizing all medical reasons for hospital admissions into 467 categories. It is based on the body system involved, degree of complication and possibly the age of patient. It establishes allowed length of stay and is used for billing purposes.
Competence	<p>The various "supports an individual harnesses in order to negotiate the environment are an individuals competences.</p> <p>Competencies are of two sources:</p> <p>External - Economic (income, gifts, insurances) Social (friends &amp; family) Institutional (church, government, employment)</p> <p>Internal - Innate qualities of individuals physical, social and psychological health and well-being, ego-strength.</p>
Demand Characteristics (of environment)	<p>Attributes of the environment which an individual has to negotiate. Demand characteristics are many, such as:</p> <p>Physical - topography of land, condition of housing or neighborhood.</p> <p>Social, Psychological - Social and psychological climate of an environment.</p>
Environmental Press	The requirements an environment places due to its demand characteristics upon an individual, which he/she must negotiate.
Life Style	The term has been conceptualized variously by Social Scientists. Life Styles are the result of such forces as culture, values, resources, symbols, license and sanction. Life Style has also been operationalized in terms of allocation of resources which include: time, finances, materials, emotions and energy. Different lifestyles are identified by some combination of attitudes, mannerisms, and more importantly, activity and consumption patterns.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**



Note to interviewer: please fill in the appropriate boxes. ☐ M ☐ F

Classify the dwelling unit.

- ☐ Single Family. Unattached.
- ☐ Mobile Home
- ☐ Duplex
- ☐ Dwelling unit attached to more than 2 units (such as an apartment, townhouse).
- ☐ Other (specify)

This section pertains to where you live in relation to where most of your relatives live.

1. Most of my close relatives live

- ☐ in other countries.
- ☐ in this country but other states.
- ☐ in this state but other cities.
- ☐ ~~outside~~ this city --  
(Lansing, East Lansing, Meridian, Okemos, Haslett, Holt).

- ☐ inside this city -- Lansing, E. Lams, Meridian, Okemos, Haslett, Holt

2. How often would you say you socialize (face to face) with those relatives who live outside the greater Lansing Metropolitan Area?

- ☐ Every day or every other day.
- ☐ More than once a week, but not every other day.
- ☐ About once a week.
- ☐ Every other week.
- ☐ About once a month.
- ☐ Several times a year.
- ☐ Once a year.
- ☐ Don't visit face to face with relatives outside the Lansing Metropolitan Area.

3. How often would you say you talk on the phone with those relatives who live outside the Lansing Metropolitan Area?

- ☐ Several times a week.
- ☐ Once a week.
- ☐ More than once a month.
- ☐ Once a month.
- ☐ Several times a year.
- ☐ Once a year.
- ☐ Don't talk on telephone with relatives outside the Lansing Metropolitan Area.

This section pertains to relatives who live within the Lansing Metropolitan Area (Holt, Lansing, East Lansing, Meridian, Okemos, Haslett).

4. How many relatives other than those that you may be sharing your home with, live within 15 miles?

0	
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Skip to question number 8

5. How many relatives other than those that you may be sharing your home with, live within a quarter of a mile? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many of these relatives who live in the Lansing Metropolitan Area do you talk to on the phone or face to face on a regular basis? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How often do you talk with any of these same relatives by telephone?

- ☐ Every day or every other day.
- ☐ More than once a week, but not every other day.
- ☐ About once a week.
- ☐ Once every other week.
- ☐ About once a month.
- ☐ Several times a year.
- ☐ Once a year.
- ☐ Don't talk on telephone.

8. How often do you visit in person (at your home or theirs) any relatives with whom you have a regular contact?

- ☐ More than once a week.
- ☐ Once a week.
- ☐ Once a month.
- ☐ More than once a month but less than once a year.
- ☐ Once a year or less.

9. During the past month about how often have you had relatives visit in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

- 10a Of the three relatives with whom you visit most often, what is their relationship to you?

	Children Nieces/Nephews	Brothers (in-laws) Sisters (in-laws)	Parents (in-laws)	Other	
Relative #1					
Relative #2					
Relative #3					

- 10b. where do these relatives with whom you visit most often live?

This section pertains to your friends and acquaintances who live within the Lansing Metropolitan Area.

- ☒ A other County
- ☒ B in County/other
- ☒ C in st/other city
- ☒ D outside city - not
- ☒ E in city

11. Approximately how many people do you know in this town, other than the relatives you noted earlier? \_\_\_\_\_
12. About how many of these same persons do you know well enough to visit with in their homes or yours? \_\_\_\_\_



13. How many of these persons do you talk to on the telephone or face to face on a regular basis? \_\_\_\_\_

14. How often do you visit with friends other than on the telephone?

☐ Almost every day.

☐ More than once a week but less than every day.

☐ Once a week.

☐ More than once a week but less than once a month.

☐ About once a month.

☐ About once a year.

15. During the past month about how often have you had friends over to you home? \_\_\_\_\_

16. Where do these persons with whom you visit most often live in relationship to your residential unit?

☐ Same housing Complex or neighborhood.

☐ Outside of housing Complex or neighborhood.

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

17. How often do you visit with friends? (Not by telephone)

☐ Almost every day.

☐ More than once a week but less than every day.

☐ Once a week.

☐ More than once a week but less than once a month.

☐ About once a month.

☐ About once a year.

18. How would you best describe the ages of the friends with whom you socialize most often?

	0 - 15	16 - 30	31 - 45	46 - 60	61 - 75	76 - 90	91 +
Friend #1							
Friend #2							
Friend #3							

19. Do you belong to any organizations, churches or attend clubs, classes, Friendship Circles (Card playing group)

☐ No

☐ Yes

20. How many? \_\_\_\_\_

21. In order of importance, name the organizations to which you belong.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

22. How often do you attend any meetings for such organized activities?

☐ More than once a week.

☐ Once a week.

☐ More than once a month, but not every week.

☐ Once a month.

☐ Once a year.

23. Are any of the organized activities held in your neighborhood or apartment complex?

☐ No

☐ Yes

24. Describe activity \_\_\_\_\_

25. Approximately how far away would you say you are from the nearest Senior Citizen Center?

☐ On same block.

☐ Within 1/4 of a mile.

☐ More than 1/4 of a mile but less than 1 mile.

☐ Between 1 - 2 miles.

☐ More than 2 miles.

☐ Don't know.

26. Over a years time, about how often do you get together with friends, like going out together or visiting in each others homes?

☐ Every day.

☐ 2 or 3 times a week.

☐ About once a week.

☐ 2 or 3 times a month.

☐ About once a month.

☐ 5 or 10 times a year.

☐ Less than 5 times a year.

27. How active would you say you are in the following kinds of activities:

Would you say very active, fairly active or not very active.

	Very Active	Fairly Active	Not Very Active
a. Church centered religious activity	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
b. Church center social activity	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
c. Politics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
d. Social clubs	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
e. Classes	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
f. Sports as a participant	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
g. Sports as a spectator	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
h. Senior Citizen Center	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
i. Neighboring (visit with friends and relatives)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

This section pertains to your environment.

28. How long have you lived at this address?

- ☐ Six months or less.
- ☐ More than six months but less than one year.
- ☐ One year and over but less than three years.
- ☐ Three years or more.

29. What age groups would you say mostly live in your neighborhood or building complex (7 doors on either side of your front door?)

- ☐ Young singles.
- ☐ Young families.
- ☐ Families and Senior Citizens.
- ☐ Senior Citizens.
- ☐ All age groups.

30. Do you have cooking facilities in your residential unit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

31. Do you live alone or do you share your living quarters?

- ☐ Live alone.
- ☐ Share quarters.

32. Who do you share your living quarters with?

- ☐ Spouce
- ☐ Children: how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Grand Children: how many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Relatives \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Unrelated persons \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Pets

33. What are the total number of persons who share the quarters with you? \_\_\_\_\_

Now I would like to know something about you.

34. What was the year of your birth? \_\_\_\_\_
35. How many days have you been sick to the point of being unable to carry on your regular activities during the last four weeks?

- ☐ No days.
- ☐ 1 - 3 days.
- ☐ 4 - 7 days.
- ☐ 8 - 14 days.
- ☐ More than 15 days.

36. How many years of formal education did the major wage earner of the family complete?

- ☐ 0 - 11 years.
- ☐ High school graduate.
- ☐ 1 - 2 years of college.
- ☐ 3 - 4 years of college.
- ☐ Over 4 years.

37. What is/was the main occupation of the major wage earner?
- \_\_\_\_\_

Now I am going to read to you some statements. For each statement tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
38. I feel very much a part of my neighborhood	[4]	[3]	[2]	[1]	[0]
	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
39. I consider myself to be healthy	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
40. The young are often inconsiderate of Senior Citizens	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
41. People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
42. I consider myself to be important to others	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
43. Society is good to older people	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
44. People should live in neighborhoods where there is a mixture of all ages even though one is some what far from people of ones own age	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
45. It is important to be near family even if one is some what far from friends	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

TO INTERVIEWER: Along with completing the statement, please note  
in margin provided any comments or pauses.

In this part of the questionnaire we would like to learn something about how people feel about different matters. We have started the sentences for you, would you please complete them. Please indicate in a few words whatever comes to your mind first.

46. Compared with most families, mine \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

47. To me friendly relations \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

48. My body \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

49. As I grow older \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

50. To me the world looks \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

51. I hope I never \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

52. People think of me as \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



53. What kinds of problems do you experience, living in the neighborhood or the housing complex that you occupy.

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54. What would you say are the positive features of living in the neighborhood or housing complex that you occupy.

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**APPENDIX B**  
**TABLES**

Table 1: Comparative age differences between residents from the dispersed and concentrated neighborhood groups.

Age	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %	Difference %
Young-Old (<74)	53	49	45	4
Old-Old (74>)	47	51	55	4
		39	33	N=72

Note: Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

Table 2: Comparative sex differences between residents from the dispersed and concentrated neighborhood groups.

Sex	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %	Difference %
Male	26	23	30	7
Female	74	77	70	7
		39	33	N=72

Note: Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

Table 3: Comparative residential differences between respondents from dispersed and concentrated neighborhood groups (classification of dwelling units).

Dwelling Classification	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %	Difference %
Single Family	56	63	48	15
Mobile Home or Duplex	2	3	2	1
3 units or more	42	34	50	16
		39	33	N=72

Note: Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

**Table 4: Comparative differences between dispersed and concentrated groups in terms of persons respondents shared dwelling quarters with.**

Share Quarters	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %	Differences %
Spouse	88	44	33	10
Children	8	56	66	10
Unrelated	4	0	0	0
		39	33	N=72

**Table 5: Occupational comparisons of respondents from dispersed and concentrated neighborhood groups.**

Occupation	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %	Differences %
Unskilled	22	18	27	9
Semi Skilled	22	23	21	2
Technically Skilled	29	31	27	4
Business	5	5	6	1
Profession	20	23	18	5
		39	33	N=72

**Note:** Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

Table 6: Perceived age groups in the dispersed and concentrated neighborhoods.

Age Groups	%	Dispersed %	Concentrated %
Young Singles	2	5	0
Young Families	5	7	0
Families and Senior Citizens	24	0	64
Senior Citizens	20	0	36
All age groups	49	87	0
	39	33	N=72

Note: Percentages rounded to nearest integers.

Table 7: The number of relatives respondents had within fifteen miles, by neighborhood group and age group.

Number of rel.	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Differences			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D C	Between Y/O O/O		
None	32	32	30	27	39	2 12	5 9		
1-8	57	63	60	60	44	3 16	3 16		
9-28	11	5	10	13	17	5 4	8 7		
		19	20	15	18	= 72			

**Table 8: The number of relatives (within city) with whom respondents talked on the phone or face to face on a regular basis by neighborhood group and age group.**

Number of Rel.	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Differences			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within		Between	
						D	C	Y/O	O/O
0	36	32	40	33	39	8	6	1	1
1-6	57	63	60	54	50	3	4	9	10
7+	7	5	0	13	11	5	2	8	11
		19	20	15	18	= 72			

**Note:** Tables noted as percentages.  
Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

**Table 9: Number of persons respondents knew well enough to visit with in each others homes by neighborhood groups and age groups.**

Number Contacted	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Differences			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within		Between	
						D	C	Y/O	O/O
None	3	0	5	0	6	5	6	0	1
1 -60	78	79	65	87	83	14	4	8	18
61+	20	21	30	13	11	9	2	8	19
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

**Note:** Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

Table 10: The number of persons respondents had a regular contact with on the phone or face to face by neighborhood group and age group.

Number Contacted	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference		Difference	
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D C		Between Y/O O/O	
None	5	0	5	0	11	5	11	0	6
1-12	51	53	60	40	50	7	10	[13]	10
13+	44	48	35	60	39	[13]	[21]	12	4
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: Percentages rounded to nearest integer.

Table 11: Relationship of relative mentioned first with whom respondents visited most often by neighborhood group and age group.

Relationship of Rel.	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference		Difference	
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D C		Between Y/O O/O	
Children/ in-Law	76	68	80	73	83	12	10	5	3
Sibling/ in-Law	18	26	20	13	11	6	2	[13]	9
Parents/ in-Law	4	5	0	13	0	5	13	8	0
Grand- children	1	0	0	0	6	0	6	0	6
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 12: Ages of friends mentioned first, second and third with whom respondents socialized most often in percentages.

Ages of Friends	Friend One	Friend Two	Friend Three	Average
16-60	28	21	26	25
61-75	61	64	60	62
76+	11	15	14	13
	N = 72	N = 72	N = 72	

Note: Reported as percentages. Average ages of friends derived from ages of all three friends.

Table 13: The number of times respondents had relatives visit in their homes over the past month by neighborhood group and age group.

Number of visits	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
0	26	26	35	20	22	9	2	6	[13]
1-4	58	47	60	67	61	[13]	6	[20]	1
5+	15	26	5	14	17	21	3	12	12
		19	20	15	18	N=72			



Table 14: Frequency of personally visiting with friends by neighborhood group and age group.

Frequency of visits	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Infreq.	7	0	5	7	17	5	10	7	11
Somewhat Freq.	26	37	10	27	33	27	6	10	23
Very Freq.	67	63	85	66	50	23	16	3	35
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: Infreq = less frequently than once a month,  
 Somewhat Freq = once a month to once a week,  
 Very Freq = every other day if not every day.

Table 15: The number of times respondents had friends over to visit in their homes during the past month by neighborhood group and age group.

Number of visits	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
0	17	16	20	13	17	4	4	3	3
1-4	50	53	45	53	50	8	3	0	5
5-16	26	26	30	27	22	4	5	1	8
17+	7	5	5	7	11	0	4	2	6
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 16: Number of organizations to which respondents belong by neighborhood group and age group.

Number Org.	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Differences			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D C		Between Y/O O/O	
0	2	0	0	7	0	0	7	7	0
1-4	53	68	35	67	44	33	23	1	9
5+	45	32	65	27	56	33	29	5	9
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 17: Frequency of attending meetings for organized activities by neighborhood group and age group.

Frequency of attendance	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D C		Between Y/O O/O	
No response	2	0	0	7	0	0	7	7	0
Not often	14	11	20	7	17	9	10	4	3
Somewhat Often	40	47	35	40	39	12	1	7	4
Very often	44	42	45	47	44	3	3	5	1
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: Not often = once a month or less.  
 Somewhat often = once a week or two to three times a month.  
 Very often = every day/every other day but less than once a week.

Table 18: Types of organizations mentioned second, to which respondents belong by neighborhood group and by age group.

Type of Organization	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Social Service	22	11	35	20	22	24	2	9	2
Church Related	18	16	15	20	22	1	2	4	7
Hobby Related	17	16	15	28	11	1	17	12	4
All others	43	57	35	32	46	22	14	25	11

Table 19: Type of organization mentioned first by respondents as the ones they belong to by neighborhood group and by age group.

Type of Organization	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Church related	71	58	70	80	78	12	2	22	8
Professional	6	5	5	7	6	0	1	2	1
Hobbies	7	11	10	7	0	1	7	4	10
All others	16	26	15	7	17	11	10	19	2
		19	20		15	18		N=72	

Table 20: The number of informal organizations named by neighborhood groups and age groups.

Number	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
0	74	68	70	73	83	2	10	5	13
1	26	32	30	27	17	2	10	5	13
		19	20	27	18			N=72	

Table 21: Responses to the statement "I consider myself to be healthy", by neighborhood group and age group.

Response to statement	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Undecided	4	5	5	7	0	0	7	2	5
Agree	46	53	55	27	44	2	17	23	11
S. agree	50	42	40	67	56	2	11	25	16
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 22: Responses to the statement "my body..." by neighborhood group and by age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Impt. of body.	22	21	15	27	28	6	1	6	13
Physical cond (positive)	21	11	15	47	17	4	30	36	2
Physical cond (neutral)	15	16	20	7	17	4	10	9	3
Physical cond (negative)	18	26	15	13	17	11	4	13	2
Active role	10	16	10	0	11	6	11	16	1
Other	14	10	25	7	11	4	14	14	4
		19	20	15	18	= 72			

Note: [Importance of body] "my body is important to me", "I take pride in my body",  
 [Physical condition of body (positive)] "is healthy", "is sound"  
 [Physical condition of body (neutral)] "is average", "is OK".  
 [Physical condition of body (negative)] "is deteriorating" "has had it",  
 [Active role in physical condition] "is kept up with a program of diet and exercise", "is the whole thing to me, I love it, nourish it, take care of it".  
 [Other] "..... (no response), "and spirit".

Table 23: Responses to the statement "I consider myself to be important to others", by neighborhood group and by age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Disagree	4	0	10	7	0	10	7	7	10
Undecided	10	0	20	7	11	20	4	7	9
Strongly agree & agree	86	100	70	86	89	30	3	14	19
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 24: Responses to the statement "As I grow older..." by neighborhood group and by age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Percent Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	D	C	Y/O	O/O
Positive	39	37	40	40	39	3	1	3	1
Neutral	11	16	5	20	6	11	14	4	1
Negative	21	11	15	13	44	4	31	2	29
Other	29	37	40	27	11	3	16	10	29
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [positive] "get wiser", "appreciate family more",  
 "more time to do my work"  
 [negative] "more aches and pains", "don't like  
 getting older, more limitations",  
 [neutral] "realize how important health is",  
 "more aches and pains, (smile)".  
 [other] no response.

Table 25: Responses to the statement "As I grow older....," analyzed by subject matter, by neighborhood group and age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74	74+	<74	74+	Within		Between	
		%	%	%	%	D	C	Y/O	O/O
Philosophy									
Adaptability	60	58	75	60	44	17	16	2	13
Physiology									
Health	29	16	15	33	50	1	17	17	35
Social	4	11	0	7	0	11	7	4	0
Other	8	16	10	0	6	6	6	16	4
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [Adaptability/philosophy] "get more tolerant",  
 "my values change", "get wiser",  
 [Physiological/health related] "more and more  
 thankful for health", "more aches and pains",  
 "I am watching for wrinkles all the time"  
 [Social aspects] "appreciate family more", "keep  
 active"  
 [Other] "Why so much crime is being committed",  
 "no difference"

Table 26: Responses to the statement "People think of me as...", by neighborhood group and age group.

Content Categories	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Differences			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Doers	25	32	35	7	22	3	15	25	13
Kind and loving	47	47	30	73	39	17	34	26	9
Independent	7	11	10	0	6	1	6	11	4
Frail & delicate	4	5	10	0	0	5	0	5	10
Other	18	5	15	20	34	10	14	15	19
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [doers] "dependable", "willing to take responsibility", "competent", "strong and self sufficient"  
 [kind and loving] "friendly and helpful", "good guy", "community grandmother"  
 [independent] "aloof", "different from average" "indifferent"  
 [frail and delicate] "frail", "sweet old lady", "not counted seriously"  
 [other] no response.



**Table 27: Responses to the open ended question "Compared to most families, mine..." by neighborhood group and age group.**

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Percent Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	D	C	Y/O	O/O
Positive	63	58	55	67	72	3	5	9	17
Neutral	29	37	35	33	11	2	22	4	24
Negative	5	0	10	0	11	10	11	0	1
Other	3	5	0	0	6	5	6	5	6
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [Positive] "very understanding", "great", "nice".  
 [Neutral] "average", "normal", "stable", etc..  
 [Negative] is distant..(pause", "get along.. (hesitation)".  
 [Other] "is small" or "no family to compare with".

**Table 28: Responses to the statement "It is important to be near family even if one is somewhat far from friends", by neighborhood group and age group.**

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Percent Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	Within C	Between Y/O	Between Y/O
S. agree & agree	56	32	65	53	72	33	19	21	7
Undecided	17	42	10	13	0	32	13	29	10
S. disagree & disagree	28	26	25	33	28	1	5	7	3
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

**Table 29: Responses to the statement "I feel very much a part of my neighborhood", by neighborhood group and age group.**

Response to statement	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	Within C	Between Y/O	Between O/O
S. Agree & Agree	71	79	60	93	55	19	38	14	5
Undecided	15	16	10	7	28	6	21	9	18
S. Disagree & Disagree	14	5	30	0	17	25	17	5	13
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

**Table 30: Responses to the question "Society is good to older people", by neighborhood group and age group.**

Response to statement	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	Within C	Between Y/O	Between O/O
S. disagree	11	11	15	20	0	4	20	9	15
Undecided	17	26	20	13	6	6	7	13	14
S. agree agree	72	63	65	67	94	2	27	4	29
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Table 31: Responses to the statement "To me the world looks...", by neighborhood group and age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Negative	46	26	45	60	55	19	5	34	10
Neutral	14	11	15	13	17	4	4	2	2
Positive	36	58	35	20	28	23	8	38	7
Other	4	5	5	7	0	0	7	2	5
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [Negative] "in turmoil", "a dangerous place", or "scary"  
 [Neutral] "troubled, but not beyond redemption, . "confused", "a bit uncertain".  
 [Positive] "sunny world", "beautiful, wonderful", "rose colored"  
 [Other] (no response), "I don't know".

Table 32: Responses to the statement "I hope I never" by neighborhood group and age group.

Response	%	Dispersed		Concentrated		Group Difference			
		<74 %	74+ %	<74 %	74+ %	Within D	C	Between Y/O	O/O
Social	21	21	15	20	28	6	8	1	13
Dependent	49	58	50	47	39	8	8	11	11
Life/death	13	5	27	27	17	22	10	22	10
Others	18	16	30	7	17	14	10	9	13
		19	20	15	18	N=72			

Note: [Social] "make any one angry", "become garulous and troublesome".  
 [Dependent] "be disabled and dependent", "can't take care of self", "have to depend on children".  
 [Life/death] "die by myself", "die with boot straps", "kept alive if I can't keep up".  
 [Other] no response.

**APPENDIX C**  
**LETTER SENT TO RESPONDENTS**

Dear

I would like to introduce myself. I am Veena Mandrekar, a Masters student in the Department of Human Environment and Design, College of Human Ecology at Michigan State University.

I am presently conducting research for my Master's thesis, and would like to invite you to consider participation. The Master's thesis is designed to study how, where people live affects them and how they socialize with friends and relatives.

I would very much like to have an interview with you. Mr./Mrs. suggested that you might enjoy this experience and be able to provide me with valuable information.

The interview will take about 45 minutes. All information collected will be held in STRICTEST confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Being a part of this study is, of course, your choice--there is no penalty for refusing to participate. It is also your option to terminate the interview at any time once it is underway and further, it is your right to refuse to answer any questions. It is my intent to ask questions which will be interesting to you and easy for you to answer.

Your coopertation and willingness to participate in my Master's research is very important to me. Therefore, I will telephone you to set up an appointment for a time that is most convenient to you as well as to answer any questions you might have. My thesis advisor, Dr. Bonnie Morrison, will also be willing to answer any questions. Her telephone number is 353-3717.

Thank you for seriously considering my request.

Sincerely,

Veena Mandrekar

**APPENDIX D**  
**APPROVAL LETTER FROM**  
**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH**  
**INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING  
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)  
238 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
(517) 355-2186

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

December 5, 1983

Dr. Bonnie Maas Morrison  
Human Environment and Design

Dear Dr. Morrison:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "A Comparison of Homogeneous and  
Heterogenous Environments as they Affect Social  
Interaction and Attitudes Toward Neighborhood, Society  
and Aging of the Elderly" to be conducted by  
Veena Mandrekar

---

I am pleased to advise that because of the nature of the proposed research, it was eligible for expedited review. This process has been completed, the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected, and your project is therefore approved.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to December 5, 1984.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Henry E. Bredeck  
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Mandrekar

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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