

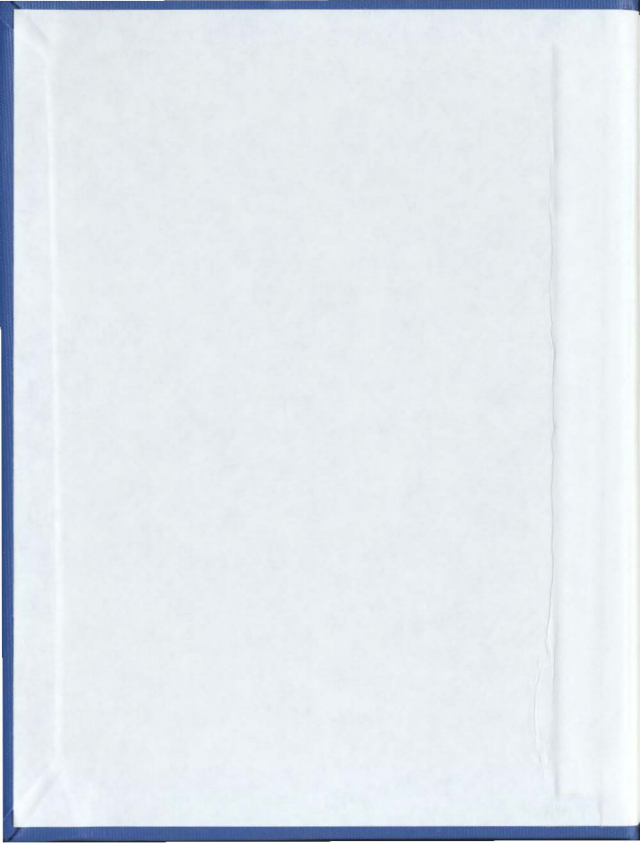
PATRICK MANOR: A CASE STUDY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND SUBJECTIVE LIFE SATISFACTION

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GERALD J. WHITE



PATRICK MANOR: A CASE STUDY
OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUBJECTIVE LIFE SATISFACTION

by

© Gerald J. White, B.A. (Honours)

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis was to explore how living in an age-segregated complex affected the life satisfaction of its residents. Specifically, I examined those physical and social factors in a senior citizens' complex which increased or decreased subjective life satisfaction. The decline in physical health and the loss of relatives and friends increases the importance of special housing for seniors.

Using a case study and symbolic interactionist approach, I interviewed and observed over twenty seniors in Patrick Manor over a four-year period and found that many of the residents were satisfied with their lives. Much of this contentment could be attributed to their physical environment which provided a sense of worth, security, and friendship. The residents of Patrick Manor were allowed to choose from the varied activities which took place at the complex, or to continue a lifestyle that was oriented towards the everyday activities outside of the complex.

In the course of my research I discovered a number of adaptations by residents which were based on attachment to the complex. Each adaptation type used the complex in varying degrees. This adaptation ranged from using the complex as a

dormitory with only infrequent interaction with other residents, to one in which the resident was almost completely immersed within the microcosm of the complex.

The case study provided a means of understanding ways in which seniors manipulate their environments to achieve life satisfaction. Through their eyes we can determine whether those housing environments intended to ensure a good quality of life actually accomplish their purposes.

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I have many people to thank for helping me complete this thesis. The person who deserves the most credit is my wife, Ellen. Without her encouragement, ideas, and editorial comments I would not have come this far. She was always there when I needed that extra support and it is to her that I dedicate this thesis.

My father was also an inspiration in completing this thesis. It is for him that I have named the seniors' complex where my interviews and observations took place. I only wish he were here so that I could thank him for his support in the early years of my education.

Special thanks must go to my supervisor, Dr. Larry Felt, who was instrumental in my completing this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis was to explore how physical setting and social environment affected the life satisfaction experienced by seniors living at Patrick Manor. The social environment consisted of all those formal and informal interactions which took place in the physical setting. While on the surface the social environment appeared static, people moved in and out of this setting on a daily basis. Each new resident introduced experiences, symbols, and potential resources into the Manor. Each resident, old and new, had the capability of exerting an impact on other residents. Some chose to isolate themselves from the community, while others became involved in all of the activities that were carried out in the complex. This range in levels and types of interactions had an effect on the subjective life satisfaction of the residents.

Upon entering the complex, residents begin an ongoing orientation that will continue until they leave. For those non-city dwellers, such adjustment includes locating good

shopping centres, hospitals, and churches, as well as adjusting to their neighbours. Those from the city have to become accustomed to a new neighbourhood as well as to living with others. Some seniors find that if they feel sick or need help they have only to knock on the wall and help will arrive in minutes. For many, this provides a sense of security. The open lounges provide residents with a place where new friends and supports can be developed. While some residents see the lounges as a gathering place for idle gossip, others find that such close proximity decreases their sense of privacy, while still others welcome the intimate sense of community that it creates.

Very little is documented about the impact that their environment has on the subjective life satisfaction of seniors. Yet the need to study these formulaic environments where seniors reside is increasing due to the aging of Newfoundland and Canada's population.

The Effects and Consequences of a Greying Population

As the number of people in the over-65 category increases in proportion to other age groups, aging in Canada is becoming a major concern. Today seniors across Canada account for 10 percent of the population; their numbers are expected to reach

13 percent by the year 2000, and to 25 percent in the year 2030 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, [CMHC], 1989). This increasing number of seniors will have important implications for housing planners and policy makers of the future.

The increasing number of senior citizens in Canadian society is due to a drop in the birth rate and medical advances which have extended the life span. In addition, the post-World War Two baby-boom generation is now approaching the age of 50. Seniors will become a larger percentage of the population into the early years of the next century.

Not only are more people reaching the age of 65 today, they are living longer. Therefore, we can expect to see more people reaching 80 and 90 years of age in the future. It is the 80 and over age group who are the fastest growing cohort and who will be most dependent on housing designed to take into account their declining health and social networks (Sayegh, 1987).

Among the elderly, females also live longer than males. This statistic indicates that women are more likely to experience widowhood, and thus live alone. Females are also more likely to live in rented and age-segregated complexes

(Canadian Council on Social Development [CCSD], 1973; Connidis and Rempel, 1983).

As people age they experience different social and physical problems. In many cases adjustments to these problems have to be made as the person undergoes significant changes in physical health, retirement, and family and friendship structures. Declining health is evident in eyesight, hearing, brain functioning, mobility, and reflexes. Such health changes may lead to a decrease in activity and potentially to isolation from friends, family, and group activities. However, not all seniors are affected in the same way, and many remain as active as before.

As a person ages, then, social crises assume a new significance. One's social network begins to wane with the onset of retirement; loss also occurs through the death of friends and relatives.

Physical decline signifies the inability of seniors to perform the same physical activities as in former times, such as mowing the lawn or shovelling snow. In order for the person to be able to stay at home, such tasks now must be delegated. Equally important to the senior is his or her adaptation to changes in social status. Retirement brings with it changing social roles, reduced income, and a general

devaluation of status. While at one time this process mainly affected men, women are now increasingly affected by the same circumstance. For those who have seen the workplace as a major determinant in building an identity, retirement can become a major trigger for depression.

Housing and Social Change

Housing environment becomes particularly critical in helping seniors cope with the changes associated with aging. Retirement means that the senior spends more time in the home, which now becomes the centre of daily life (Donegani, 1987). Looking after a large home can become increasingly difficult as motor skills decline. This increasing emphasis on the home has been labelled the "shrinking life-space." At a recent conference on housing, two participants argued that as seniors stay home much of the time, good quality, accessible housing is an important factor in their overall "quality of life" (CMHC, 1989:11).

While the seniors of the future will be relatively healthier, their increasing numbers, especially among the 75-plus age group, have many planners believing that the best way to help maintain independence and social "health" is through providing different housing options.

Attempts are being made to increase the housing options for a seniors' population which is heterogeneous in terms of health and wealth. These options range from housing choices that will allow the senior to remain at home (emergency response systems), near their families (garden suites), to choices which allow seniors to live with their peers (retirement communities) (Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation [NLHC], 1990). A guiding assumption behind the construction of these new housing options is that they help to improve the quality of life of those affected by such housing policies.

While housing options for seniors have been increasing at an unprecedented rate, little research has been completed in Canada on the effects of these types of housing on the seniors' quality of life (CCSD, 1973; Rutman and Freedman, 1988; Beesley, 1989). Because of the lack of research on available housing, there is little evidence that these environments affect the seniors living in them. This has led the National Advisory Council on Aging to call for a monitoring of new housing for seniors to determine whether available options are establishing the possibility of a good quality of life (National Advisory Council on Aging [NACA], 1989).

As the number of seniors has increased over the years, the role of housing has expanded from providing shelter to accommodating various social needs. Early emphasis on housing policy and research has focused on those seniors located in homes for the aged and nursing homes. After the initial emphasis on building nursing homes, much of the debate has centred on the effects of these housing models. The research revealed that this type of housing did not fit the best interests of seniors. It was discovered by researchers that living in nursing homes contributed to a loss of autonomy, abrupt loss of participation in the community, increased dependency on others, as well as a loss of dignity (Ontario Association of Homes for the Aged, 1984).

Efforts are now being made to create housing for the elderly that enhances their quality of life through counteracting problems inherent in the earlier homes for the aged (often described as "ghettos for the elderly"). In the 1980s and 1990s, the function of such housing is to provide environments where the elderly can interact with family members and other residents, feel safe, and make new friends.

While there have been some contradictions on the benefits of age-segregated seniors' housing, findings have shown that these complexes have achieved the primary goals of such housing. The positive effects of living in age-segregated

environments include more friends and greater interaction with them, higher levels of satisfaction and well-being, greater mobility within the neighbourhood, a greater sense of security, a higher level of morale, easier access to needed services or facilities, and quieter surroundings (McPherson, 1983; Streib, Folts, Hilker, 1984; Baker, 1988). Negative effects of these environments include the promotion of physical and social boundaries, a failure to foster social interaction if not structured properly may in fact discourage interaction among neighbors if common areas are not included in the design of the housing, and residents may be isolated from important services (McPherson, 1983).

The aim of housing policy in the 1990s is to ensure that the overall life satisfaction of seniors is enhanced. Policies are designed to encourage independent living and interaction with others in the community according to individual ability and the maintenance of dignity. Each design is supposed to cater to a heterogeneous population.

If housing is properly designed, it can help increase a person's life satisfaction through the provision of an environment where independence is encouraged and social interaction fostered (Lawton, 1989).

Relevance of Subjective Life Satisfaction

For many years governments have tried to improve the quality of life for people. This effort has included legislation designed to make the workplace safer, and to improve access to education and health care. The belief in objective indicators of quality of life began to be questioned during the early 1970s. As a result, research on social indicators now includes subjective well-being and happiness (Felt and Sinclair, 1991).

Much has been written on the relationship between income, health and other objective measures, and life satisfaction (Diener, 1994; Kozma et al., 1991). Loss of a spouse, unexpected relocation of residence, retirement and subjective declines in health also have a negative impact on a person's life satisfaction (Roadberg, 1985; Rutman and Freedman, 1988; O'Bryant and Morgan, 1989).

Early research on homes for the aged has shown that the environment in which a senior is placed can have a negative impact on his or her life satisfaction. More recent research has demonstrated that when housing design takes into account the level of its residents' independence, the environment can delay the seniors' entry into nursing home facilities and thus lead to higher levels of life satisfaction (Malozemoff et al.,

1978). The primary research presented in this thesis examines how one specific housing environment designed for seniors helped them lead more satisfying lives despite their many physical and social losses.

For the purpose of this thesis, life satisfaction is defined as conscious global judgements of one's life (Diener, 1994). Diener (1994) also indicates that one's life satisfaction might change as life circumstances change dramatically.

Once the data were collected, efforts centred on the way the residents responded to the open-ended questions as well as what others said about the respondents. These questions were put forward in the interview and during the group meetings. The conclusions on life satisfaction are based on the five components of life satisfaction proposed by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961): 1. **zest** - having energy to participate in several areas of life, liking to do things, and being enthusiastic; 2. **resolution and fortitude** - not giving up, taking the good with the bad and making the most of it, and accepting responsibility for one's personal life; 3. **congruence between desired and achieved goals** - feeling that one has accomplished what one has wanted to do; 4. **positive self-concept** - thinking of oneself as a person of worth; and

5. mood tone - showing happiness, optimism, and pleasure with life.

A Case Study of Patrick Manor

Although past research on subjective life satisfaction conveys a diversity of findings, some generalizations may be made. "Perceived physical health" is the factor which explains the greatest amount of personal satisfaction (Kozma et al., 1991); other important factors include marital status (Roadberg, 1985), and housing, especially that pertinent to personal safety (McPherson, 1983). Although social contact has not been established as an important contributor to overall well-being, quality of contact has an impact on how a person feels from day to day (Ward et al., 1988). Age is not a significant direct factor in the study of quality of life (Kozma et al., 1991). However, Diener et al. (1993) have found that a direct relationship exists between income and quality of life.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the impact of living in an age-segregated complex in one class of institution in the Atlantic provinces. Research was dedicated to a case study of a senior citizens' complex composed of a predominantly female population. During the study, emphasis

was placed on responses to an unstructured questionnaire format, while observation of the respondent's interaction with other residents in the complex was also considered. Observations were made during nightly gatherings, as well as at formal and informal meetings within the complex. When feasible, I interviewed relatives and friends of those individuals studied. Qualitative analysis aided the collection of information, while at the same time allowed for changes over time in the attitudes and opinions of those under study. The thesis focused on five patterns of achieving high levels of subjective life satisfaction. Specifically, I explored those adjustments which were made during residency and the ways in which the physical and social environment combined to increase or decrease one's life satisfaction. These last two determinants are considered important in dealing with losses associated with growing older and in gaining life satisfaction (Rutman and Freedman, 1988). The methodology focused on a symbolic interactionist approach which is used to analyze an individual's past history as well as present attitudes and feelings. Residents have their own values, attitudes and social roles which affect their thoughts and views on issues of privacy, familial contact, housing, and proper public social behaviour. These beliefs, combined with the effects of the physical environment, create a sense of satisfaction with one's life.

There are 152 apartments in the complex with 150 female and 35 male residents. While most of the residents are widows, there are several married couples. The living units are self-contained except for laundry facilities which are located on the ground floor. The complex houses an on-site convenience store and beauty salon, and each floor is accessible by elevator and stairs.

Physical setting has an impact on the way seniors assess the quality of their lives. Whereas some view a security lock on the main door as providing security from outside forces, others perceive it as contributing to a sense of institutionalization. Having a convenience store in the building has the advantage of avoiding the need to venture out into adverse weather, and provides a sense of independence. Meeting spaces and an entertainment area provide places where residents could enhance their social networks by meeting new and old friends. Adjoining apartments foster close friendships and a feeling of security. For some residents, however, the physical setting has negative effects. The belief is that privacy decreases as one's coming and going, due to building arrangements, are too open to public viewing. Some residents feel the need to change their habits in order to meet the expectations of other residents who would monitor their daily activities. Small apartments make it difficult to

entertain family or friends in great numbers, or allow the residents to retain many of their cherished belongings.

The physical structure can and often does affect the relationships which occur in the complex. Friendships developed between residents who frequently passed each other in the hallway of a particular floor. A strategically located common room attracted residents from other wings in the building. Residents from all floors met in a common meeting room run by a resident council. Relationships developed around the building mailboxes where residents met daily. Side exits were often used to avoid possible conflict with other residents.

Contributions of this Thesis

This thesis makes three contributions to the literature on aging. First, its focus is on a group of elderly who retain a measure of good health. Golant (1984) argues that too often we concentrate on the deviant cases at the expense of those who are healthy. There is a need to ask questions about the physically and mentally competent. Second, little research on well-being of seniors in Canada has been conducted using a qualitative method. This research will augment quantitative research on subjective life satisfaction as it

allows the participants to define quality of life as it is created on a day-to-day basis. In-depth questions and participant observations over a period of time provide a clearer picture of the role of day-to-day activities and the environment in the manner in which seniors assess their quality of life. Finally, unlike other analyses of seniors in age-segregated settings, this case study examines seniors in an environment in which no staff members are directly engaged in a support capacity and without a central dining place where people come together during the day. This complex provides healthy seniors with as much independence as possible.

Summary

After moving into Patrick Manor, residents chose different ways of engaging in the life of the complex. Each resident adopted activities and friends meaningful to their personal desires. They were able to create worlds which were similar to their past experiences. The need to study such environments is steadily increasing as the mean age of our population reaches its senior years. While the 1990s senior is reasonably healthy, it is still necessary to consider a decrease in health as well as the loss of social support which can decrease his or her levels of life satisfaction.

After retirement seniors spend more time in the home and as a result, their environment takes on greater importance. Environments which disregard decreases in health and loss of social supports will have a negative impact on the life satisfaction of its senior citizens.

This case study explores how living in one type of seniors' housing had an impact upon the level of subjective life satisfaction among its residents and emphasizes the senior as a creator of life satisfaction. The following chapter examines scholarly literature on life satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews current scholarly literature on life satisfaction including the limitations of research and factors related to life satisfaction, and presents an argument for the use of symbolic interaction when exploring the subjective life satisfaction of seniors.

Studies on life satisfaction and seniors are common in the area of gerontology (Chamberlain, 1985; McNeil et al., 1984; Wood, Mathews, Norris, 1992), focusing particularly on personal characteristics and social support. While a number of theories have been advanced on how different environments affect life satisfaction, most of the housing studies have focused on life satisfaction among seniors living in nursing homes, or institutions that provide professional staff to assist the senior (Gubrium, 1975; Stephens, 1976; Ross, 1977;

Hochschild, 1978; Teski, 1981). Little attention has been accorded the well elderly, especially those who reside in age-segregated seniors' apartment complexes in Canada.

While these gaps exist, current literature can provide keys to why some seniors are more likely to be satisfied with their lives than others. Therefore, it can be used to spotlight the factors that are more important to seniors in establishing the desired level of life satisfaction.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction has captured considerable attention in the literature on aging. While the concept has been around since the early 1970s, it has been variously defined (Larson, 1978; Gubrium and Lynott, 1985; Roadberg, 1985). However, most researchers agree that life satisfaction is a sense of life fulfilment and that lives are proceeding as planned. Life satisfaction has also been referred to as morale, adjustment, enjoyment, quality of life, and as subjective, psychological, or perceived well-being (Roadberg, 1985).

There are two measures of assessing life satisfaction: global and multidimensional measures. Global measures evaluate the immediate emotions of the respondent; for

example, asking him or her to rate current life situations, and then to elaborate on that rating. The multidimensional constructs are more common and include the Life Satisfaction Index devised by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961), Centre Morale Scale (Lawton, 1975), Srole's Anomia Scale (Srole, 1956), and Scales of Happiness (Kozma and Stones, 1980). Depending upon the measurement instrument, subjective and objective measures of quality of life are included in the assessment of multidimensional constructs.

Factors Related to Life Satisfaction

Over the past 30 years, many factors have aided in determining why certain seniors are more satisfied with their lives. Kozma et al. (1991), in their major review of factors related to well-being, have broken these predictors into six areas: subjective satisfactions, demographic characteristics, activity involvement, stressful life events, environmental factors, and personality factors. The following review concentrates heavily on the work of Kozma et al. (1991) as well as more recent inquiries, particularly those pertaining to case studies.

Subjective satisfactions: Larson (1978), in his thirty-year study, found that health is strongly related to subjective

well-being. While most of these studies were conducted in America, research completed in Canada has confirmed that health is a strong predictor among both native and non-native seniors (Blandford and Chappell, 1990). Roadberg (1985) also found that the health of seniors is related to life satisfaction.

It has been established that subjective health is a better predictor of well-being than objective measures. Kozma et al. (1991) provide three reasons for this finding: subjective health measures have additional components not shared by objective health measures; subjective measures may involve comparisons with one's peers; and being satisfied with one's health may be a measure of mental as well as physical health.

As with health, subjective assessments of housing satisfaction prove to be better predictors of perceived well-being than objective indicators. Kozma et al. (1991) conclude that housing satisfaction is a more important indicator of well-being for those residing in institutions than those living outside a structured environment.

In current research income, as a factor in well-being, shows dissimilar findings. While income is considered important among American seniors, it is not as vital to

Canadians a disparity which can be attributed to the differences in the method of measurement of well-being (McDonald and Wanner, 1990). However, Kozma et al. (1991) also postulate that the level of a person's income is not the strongest predictor of well-being, but that satisfaction with income is deemed more important. They claim that the reason for these findings is that the individual may be comparing him or herself with others. This comparison is referred to as the "relative deprivation theory." Recent research by Diener (1994) proposes a direct link between income and well-being, both within and between people living in various countries.

Studies examining the relationship between marital status and life satisfaction have provided differing findings. While Roadberg (1985) suggests that marital status is related to life satisfaction, Blandford and Chappell (1990) infer that it is related to loneliness. These and other findings have led Kozma et al. (1991) to conclude that marital status indirectly affects well-being and influences other predictors such as social activity. However, Kozma et al. (1991) did find that marital satisfaction is a major source of variance in well-being among seniors.

Demographic factors: Gender has not been found to be a strong factor in relation to life satisfaction of seniors. Roadberg (1985) indicates that there is little difference in the

perceptions of life satisfaction between males and females. Rather the differences could be discerned in the measurement of life satisfaction. Other researchers have made similar findings (Larson, 1978; Blandford and Chappell, 1990); in other instances, gender has been found to interact with health and income (Kozma et al., 1991).

According to Kozma et al. (1991), age is not a major predictor of well-being, but it may be more significant as an interactive agent. As with age, education combines with other factors to influence life satisfaction. Higher education means more income, which in turn leads to diverse housing choices and to higher satisfaction levels.

Activity involvement: Social interaction has been seen as an important factor in predicting life satisfaction. However, Kozma et al. (1991) suggest that it is as consequential as other subjective measures and indicate that both formal and informal activities have an impact on well-being. Their review of the literature suggests that friends rather than family members may play a more significant role in positive feelings of well-being' a finding that was also advanced by Antonucci (1985). An explanation for this finding is in the types of activities that involve friends and family. Friends are more valued for their help since it is not expected, while

family members are supposed to offer support (Antonucci, 1990).

Stressful events: As people age, they encounter an increasing amount of daily pressures and stressful events. In addition to coping with the death of a spouse or relative, the elderly also have to contend with a fixed income which is not matching rising inflation. While some of these stresses can be overcome with the help of social support (Kozma et al., 1991), as predictors these burdens can explain up to 19 percent of the variance in well-being.

Environmental factors: From community size to dwelling type, environment has been variously defined in the literature, the most common of which is the rural/urban dichotomy. These studies show that community size is not a dependable predictor of well-being, although those living in rural areas have lower levels of education, fewer services, and poorer housing in comparison to their urban counterparts (Kozma et al., 1991). Community size indirectly influences one's sense of well-being as those in smaller areas are more likely to be integrated into the community and consequently have higher levels of well-being.

Age-segregation is a positive factor in predicting well-being (McPherson, 1983). When the elderly can no longer

remain in their homes, they prefer to live with their peers. Seniors are more satisfied with their peers because they share similar values, social standards, and life experiences (Lawton et al., 1984; Kozma et al., 1991). McPherson (1983) infers that greater interaction with neighbours, a sense of security, more likelihood of assistance among neighbours, fewer negative stereotypes about aging, easier access to needed services and quieter surroundings also contribute to positive well-being. Like other predictors of well-being, Kozma et al. (1991) conclude that objective indicators of environment are not as good predictors of well-being as subjective ones. These findings, however, may be more related to age-segregated buildings rather than neighbourhoods.

Ward et al. (1988:198) found that age concentration in the neighbourhood is not related to subjective well-being. They hypothesize that "neighbourhood age concentration may represent insufficiently large concentrations of age peers compared with the more complete segregation of retirement communities". A number of quantitative and qualitative studies endorse the findings that age-segregated complexes and communities, when design takes into account their special characteristics, provide residents with higher levels of life satisfaction (Carp, 1966; Teaff et al., 1978; Carp 1987; Beesley, 1989).

A number of theoretical perspectives have been posited which attempt to explain how well-being is affected by environment (Lawton et al., 1982; Golant, 1984). The approach of Lawton et al. (1982) best suggests that the more demands placed on the individual, the lower the sense of well-being. If the environment does not provide the right resources, an individual's sense of well-being will diminish.

Personality factors: Personality factors including self-esteem, locus of control, extroversion and neuroticism have also been associated with well-being. Extroversion has been proposed as an important predictor of happiness. However, Argyle and Martin (1991) conclude that this association may be doubtful as participants in these studies are more likely to choose enjoyable activities, exhibit more positive non-verbal signals, and talk about pleasant things than non-participants.

In summary, one of the major findings to come out of this research on life satisfaction is that subjective predictors have more influence on life satisfaction than objective measures. Subjective predictors help provide some explanations for higher levels of fulfilment among persons living in age-segregated complexes compared to those living in age-integrated surroundings.

Limitations of Research on Life Satisfaction

Despite the research conducted on well-being in the elderly, much of this research has been plagued by conceptual problems (Larson, 1978; Gubrium and Lynott, 1985; Stull, 1987); life satisfaction, happiness, perceived well-being, and affect have been used interchangeably, which causes much confusion with definition. Despite these problems, a number of valid points can be made about the methods employed in the study of quality of life, particularly as it pertains to seniors. Most studies assessing the life satisfaction of seniors have been conducted in the United States, with sample sizes ranging from under one hundred to over three thousand subjects. The majority of these studies are cross-sectional and longitudinal quantitative surveys which have examined subjective well-being. While they make an important contribution, these studies are unable to assess the effect of day-to-day activities on the subject's response.

Few studies on well-being look directly at life satisfaction from a qualitative perspective. A number of ethnographic studies which have shed light on life inside seniors' housing address certain aspects of life satisfaction (Gubrium, 1975; Stephens, 1976; Ross, 1977; Hochschild, 1978; Teski, 1981). In view of the findings of Kozma et al. (1991) that subjective predictors are more powerful than objective

indicators in explaining life satisfaction, it is important that such a case study of a seniors' complex be conducted.

Each type of well-being construct has its strengths and weaknesses. One major limitation of multidimensional constructs is that they fail to inspect those day-to-day events which have an impact on a person's quality of life (Roadberg, 1985). Larson (1978) concludes that this lack of emphasis on the day-to-day is a gap in the literature, yet since his review little has been done to close this void in terms of more study, especially in Canada. Further support for using a qualitative perspective when looking at life satisfaction is provided by Wood and Johnson (1989:406), who they conclude that "We cannot do without qualitative research if our intention is to capture the quality of human experience, and this must be our goal if we are interested in the quality of life of older people or any other group".

Qualitative research, however, can provide a fresh look at subjective life satisfaction, a construct, which is constantly being assessed and reassessed. Such research can be used to gain an increased understanding of the ideas, feelings, motives, and beliefs behind what people think and do. It is more flexible than quantitative methods in that it allows the researcher to seek out the meanings and interpretations that people give to events, objects, other

people and situations in their environments. Finally, in the qualitative approach emphasis is placed on the person; this allows the researcher the opportunity to collect richer information on the influences in the person's life in his or her particular environment (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Stainback and Stainback, 1991).

Satisfaction as Symbolic Interaction

Despite the fact that several studies have shown that seniors in age-segregated complexes consistently score higher on a number of dimensions of life satisfaction, little research has been done to judge how environment leads to this (McPherson, 1983). Much of the blame must rest with a lack of direct emphasis on the study of this satisfaction, particularly in the form of qualitative research.

The theoretical approach used in this thesis was symbolic interaction, an approach that captures those patterns of adjustment which are a consequence of the day-to-day interaction of the residents of Patrick Manor. It may well be as McPherson (1983:300) suggests, that satisfaction and well-being in age-segregated complexes are derived from "a sense of identity or community created when interaction and interdependence among the residents evolve, when emphasis is

on personal relations and not status, when leadership skills are available and utilized effectively, and when shared values, symbols, and norms take priority in the lifestyles of residents". This theoretical approach will help assess the validity of that claim.

Symbolic interaction is crucial, in light of the finding of Kozma et al. (1991), in that many of the strongest predictors of well-being are subjective measures. When arriving at a sense of life satisfaction, such findings show the importance of socializing and making personal assessments. The seniors of Patrick Manor are living in a complex where they can constantly compare their situations. This helps explain how seniors in this building construct a sense of life satisfaction which develops out of their past, present and future expectations, as a result of the social relationships they have developed.

Summary

Studies on the life satisfaction of seniors are common in literature dealing with gerontology. Many of the studies which have looked at life satisfaction, housing environments, and seniors have been conducted in nursing homes. When looking at life satisfaction, global measures and multidimensional measures have been used.

Six different factors which have been examined in relation to life satisfaction include subjective satisfactions, demographic characteristics, activity involvement, stressful life events, environmental factors, and personality factors. Of these, subjective satisfactions provide the greatest explanation for life satisfaction. While considerable research has been conducted using a longitudinal design, much of the research remains cross-sectional. Yet one of the most noticeable limitations in research on life satisfaction is a lack of emphasis on qualitative research methods.

Symbolic interaction is one approach which can be used to examine the relationship between seniors and subjective life satisfaction. Its emphasis on the individual and his or her interactions with others can indicate how that individual creates different levels of life satisfaction on a day-to-day basis. The interactionist approach is important in light of the fact that subjective measures help explain most of the variations in well-being. The following chapter examines how symbolic interaction can be used to assess the impact of environment on subjective life satisfaction.

CHAPTER 3

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AND SUBJECTIVE LIFE SATISFACTION

Introduction

With its emphasis on the individual as creator of his or her own experience, symbolic interaction gives an important perspective on life satisfaction. The individual is able to exert reflexive interpretation over what is encountered in daily interaction. As an active participant in the environment, the individual is able to take others into account, acting, perceiving, interpreting, and then acting again (Charon, 1979). When a person enters a situation, he or she brings different symbols to interpret that situation. As a consequence of being able to act and react upon personalities and situations, the individual can create conditions more conducive to a higher level of subjective life satisfaction. Symbolic interaction has six important concepts which can aid interpretation of individuals who achieve high levels of satisfaction in situations which may not always seem congenial. These concepts include symbols, the self,

definitions of situations, social worlds, socialization, and roles. This chapter examines these concepts.

Symbols: Symbols, a central concept of symbolic interaction (Charon, 1979), are seen as the foundation of everyday life, with learned and shared meanings. Emphasis on the surrounding symbols differs, and the interpretation changes as an individual interacts with others and discusses opinions of these symbols. There are three types of symbols: objects consist of items such as trees, furniture or houses; activities involve deeds such as roles; and language can embrace such concepts as ideologies or personal satisfactions.

According to Ritzer (1988), three aspects of symbols can have an impact on one's sense of life satisfaction: 1. symbols can greatly increase the ability to solve various problems; 2. the use of symbols allows the actor to transcend time, space, and even their own persons, and to live in the past or see what it will be like to live in the future; 3. symbols allow people to avoid being enslaved by their environment.

The individual can either impart with symbols or add new ones. However, if important symbols have to be given up due to a move or ill health, the loss can have an impact on a person's life satisfaction. Moving away from one's home after

many years will change a person's symbols; if the move is not accepted, it can have a negative impact on life satisfaction (Rutman and Freedman, 1988). Significant items of furniture or mementos are relinquished and familiar settings are replaced by new places to shop or worship. Over-emphasis on household symbols can have a detrimental effect on the individual's level of life satisfaction if it is an intricate part of his or her identity. It can also symbolize the loss of one's independence. Mr. White, a resident of Patrick Manor, illustrates this negative impact: he did not dislike the complex, but as he had invested so many symbols in his old home, he was not satisfied with his life at this point at Patrick Manor.

Self: The self arises out of interaction, which defines and refines it as more encounters occur. While much of the self is formed early in life, it continues to change as a person confronts different situations. Mead (1934) sees the self as having the capacity to observe, respond to, and direct one's behaviour; the individual can evaluate, blame, encourage, and despair about oneself (Lauer and Handel, 1977). Many of the residents of Patrick Manor felt in good health since they often compare themselves with those who are hospitalized. It was not uncommon to hear such comments as "my health is not as bad as Mrs. so and so's, who is in hospital."

For Cooley (1902), the self is how individuals perceive that others imagine us. Thus when confronted with situations which are not to one's liking, the self can change to a less negative one. Movement into a new environment such as Patrick Manor forces residents to encounter others in the hallway when checking mail or purchasing groceries at the convenience store. Casual conversations surrounding the topics of ill health and death lead the individual to dwell on his or her mortality.

The self is also important in the way individuals define themselves: "How I view myself, how I define myself, the judgements I have of myself, are all highly dependent on the social definitions I encounter throughout my life" (Charon, 1979:64). One woman, who identified her sense of self with her weight, wanted to know who had said that she had gained four pounds. She had just returned from a Weight Watchers meeting and found that she had actually lost weight. The other women in the lounge area were quick to say how good she looked; their comments gave her much pleasure.

Although a new resident of Patrick Manor has a developed self, it is likely that this self will change over time. The self is fragile, socially constructed and maintained through interaction. It is possible that negative situations will cause the new resident to see all seniors in the Manor as bad,

inquisitive, or in ill health. This will be the case if these interactions are the only examples encountered.

Definition of situations: The definition of any situation is how the individual perceives it: "The individual's response in any particular situation is a function of how he or she defines the situation rather than how the situation is objectively presented to him or her (Lauer and Handel, 1977: 84-85). How a person defines a situation can have an impact on the way he or she feels. While objectively a person may feel lonely in comparison with others, he or she need only equate him or herself with others who are childless, or those who have children who do not visit. Definition of the situation is seen as the most important part of the interaction process. As the situation is fluid, the way a person defines a situation may change over time, depending on the result of the last encounter (Lauer and Handel, 1977). Life in Patrick Manor is one where many life situations can be encountered in just one day.

Social worlds: Reference groups provide individuals with the initial basis for defining situations. People can create and recreate autobiographies so as to make a good story; they can adjust aspirations and focus on what has been accomplished; they can compare themselves to other old people who they perceive as worse off than they are or to a negative

stereotype of old people in general; and they can interpret their losses in such a way that they are not really perceived as losses (Charon, 1979). Reference groups share or identify with similar perspectives. Each social world has a series of perspectives formed through interaction with others. An individual may have many social worlds, such as bridge clubs, church membership, or a senior's club, which are created through communication (Unruh, 1983).

As a person ages, he or she abandons some social worlds and adds others through retirement, illness, or widowhood. Being able to maintain social worlds has an important impact on subjective life satisfaction. When important social worlds are lost, the person loses a part of his or her identity (Unruh, 1983).

Socialization: Socialization begins early in life, continues until death, and can be defined as "those processes whereby newcomers learn to participate effectively in social groups" (Lauer and Handel, 1977:54). In consequence of interaction, people are socialized through communication. People learn how to live in groups by absorbing its rules and roles in an interaction process in which the individual acquires the shared meanings of the group (Lauer and Handel, 1977). Once these shared meanings are learned, patterns of behaviour become consistent with the group: "In a new home one has to

establish new patterns of living, new contacts, and to get used to new places and people. This represents the kind of upheaval in both material and symbolic terms that was often abhorrent to participants" (Sixsmith, 1990:189).

For those moving into Patrick Manor, the socialization process helps them acclimatize and overcome many of those fears associated with moving in. Some of the agents who could facilitate this process include the building superintendent, the president of the seniors' club, or the person down the hall.

Roles: Changes in roles have an impact on life satisfaction. When a senior moves into a housing complex, one of the most important roles that is relinquished is that of the homeowner, the mistress or master of one's world. For those who have invested years in their own home, problems will transpire if and when he or she is forced to leave it.

Summary

In symbolic interaction, the individual is an active participant in the creation of his or her social world. The individual is able to construct and reconstruct situations which are compatible with his or her wants and needs.

Symbolic interaction has six concepts which can be used to aid in understanding how individuals can arrive at high levels of satisfaction even though not all situations may be to their liking. The concepts of symbols, self, definitions of situations, social worlds, socialization, and roles all aid in the understanding of why and how individuals, particularly those living in Patrick Manor, are able to lead relatively satisfying lives. The following chapter provides a description of the methodology and social history of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY/SOCIAL HISTORY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the research at Patrick Manor was conducted. I begin with a description of research methodology and then proceed to a rationale for conducting research in an age-segregated seniors' apartment complex. Included in the following sections will be a description of the sampling process and the problems encountered with this type of research. In this thesis I chose to conduct a case study of an age-segregated seniors' complex. I studied the life of a group of female and male seniors and explored how living in such an environment affected their levels of subjective life satisfaction. Specifically, observations and in-depth interviews were used to describe the worlds created from individual experiences, as well as how the environment was modified to suit the needs of these seniors.

Problem and Site

My original thesis proposal was to study fear of crime among seniors; it became apparent from the eight interviews I had completed up to that point that some level of fear was universal. With the help of a colleague, I then set up one more interview with a senior living in "Patrick Manor."¹ My intention was to interview this senior, and then to talk to some of her friends in the common area of the lobby where they met nightly. After the interview, my informant and I proceeded to the common room. The residents, all women with the exception of one male, responded to my questions on their daily activities. While the issue of fear of crime was discussed, it became apparent that there were many other significant areas of their lives. Some of these seniors dealt with their fear of crime by pairing up when they went out during the day or night. It was evident that these people were leading very fulfilling lives, due, in part, to the physical environment in which they lived. They all enjoyed nightly meetings, talked of organized gatherings, of getting out and shopping with other complex residents, and visiting the sick in the hospitals. Although there was a sense of community, individual differences were evident. Not all seniors enjoyed cards, many were outgoing, some were

¹Patrick Manor is a fictitious name. The names of all those who participated in the study have been changed to provide confidentiality.

religious, some talked about their children or of aiding the sick residents. By the end of the interview, the heterogeneous group had doubled in size. The women included former homemakers, teachers, university professors, and those who had worked in other settings; each brought unique experiences to the group.

Each nightly meeting was a time to find out about other community members, discuss birthdays, events, and the latest news in the outside world. It was also a time to find out who was sick and who was getting out of the hospital. There was a sense that the quality of their lives was enhanced by living in this complex. However, this could only be verified through more interviews with the complex's other residents.

The activities in this complex were in stark contrast to those in the age-integrated building in which I had lived. There the seniors only came out to collect their mail or do their laundry. Several lived on my floor but were rarely seen. This could have been due to the lack of social rooms where seniors could congregate. The seniors in my building appeared isolated and lonely in comparison to those seniors I came to know through my interviews and observations at Patrick Manor. It was at this point that I refocused my thesis topic to a study which examined the physical setting, social

environment, and subjective life satisfaction of an age-segregated seniors' complex.

The residents of this complex come from a range of financial backgrounds. Some pay rent in keeping with their income, while others can support the full rental cost with savings and pensions. As with many other complexes for seniors in the city, there is a long waiting list to get into Patrick Manor. During my study there was talk of people getting in without having to wait, "but you have to know someone," as they say. For many this is a guarded secret.

Unlike many of the other complexes studied (known as congregate housing in the United States and sheltered housing in Great Britain), Patrick Manor does not have a common dining area. Residents interact with one another in lounges located on each floor, which do not have televisions. There is a recreation room located in the basement, where darts, bingos, dances, club meetings, and other formal activities take place.

Why a Case Study of a Seniors' Apartment Complex?

Environment is a significant factor in the quality of life experienced by seniors (McPherson, 1983; Lawton, 1989). However, one type of housing has been overlooked in the

literature on quality of life: the senior citizens' apartment complex. In many ways, it should be considered the perfect form of housing for seniors as residents are provided with all the privacy and independence afforded by a house without the concomitant maintenance and upkeep. This style of housing is increasing at a rapid pace, yet very little is known about its effect on life satisfaction; it is increasingly associated with being older, alone and female (Connidis and Rempel, 1983). These seniors, however, are relatively healthy and ignored by most studies on the elderly. In addition, there is a need to determine how the healthy elderly, as well as the deviant elderly, make their way through life. Figure 1 demonstrates those factors which can affect a person's subjective life satisfaction and are used as a model to focus the analysis in chapters six and seven.

Objective and Data Collection Strategy

My main goal was to find out how the worlds created by living in Patrick Manor increased the life satisfactions of this group of seniors. What adaptive strategies were these people using to deal with their physical and social losses? This meant entering the world of the seniors, observing their habits, and conversing with them. The initial set of

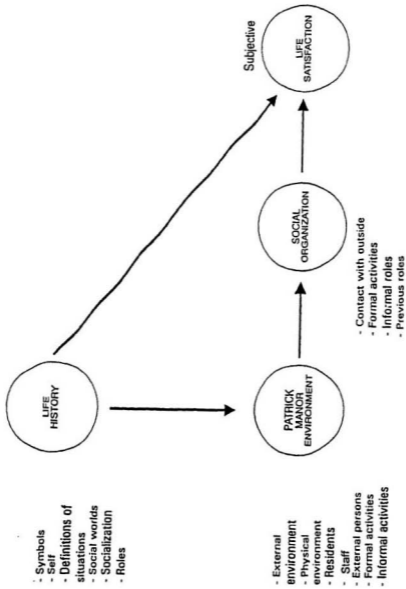


Figure 1: Model of Subjective Life Satisfaction

interviews were easy to complete and the seniors were willing for me to make a return visit. Three early interviews substantiated this view; it was over a year later before the next series of interviews were completed. A third set of interviews were completed as a random sample.

The interviews and observations were one to three hours in length. All but one initial interview was recorded. Observation notes were completed as soon as possible after a meeting. Initially the questions were drawn from the literature; however, further questions for inquiry emerged as the interviews took place (see Appendix for a summary of questions). Information that was gathered from friends and relatives of the participants was also used. Such a method has been found to be useful when exploring how people become satisfied with life (Diener, 1994).

As indicated in chapter three, symbolic interaction was used as a guiding theory as its emphasis on everyday reality made it the most useful of all theoretical approaches. This approach, so crucial in discerning those adaptive strategies used by seniors, was important especially in view of the belief that the major predictors of well-being are subjective assessments of income, housing, health, and marital satisfaction (Kozma et al., 1991). This interactionist approach assisted in focusing on those adaptations which the

respondents used to aid in adjusting to significant lifestyle changes, and to arrive at a desired level of subjective life satisfaction. These changes may have included the loss of a spouse, moving from a long cherished home, or declining health. It became clear from the interviews that the physical (housing) environment was a crucial factor in helping the residents deal with problems associated with aging.

Sampling Process

Initially a snowball sampling technique was used to obtain respondents. Such a method is effective when dealing with seniors since many are unwilling to talk to strangers. In fact, one of the reasons some of the respondents had moved into such a building was to avoid strangers coming to their doors. The snowball technique was helpful when contact was made with one senior as not only was she able to discuss some of the questions with the person who referred me, but more importantly she could discern that I was not a threat. This method, however, did have drawbacks. While men were included in the observations and discussed by the women in the survey, none of the female respondents suggested a male whom I could interview. However, I was able to question Mr. White and observe his activities, and as such he is included in one of the case studies in chapter seven.

During the second stage of my research, I used a random sampling method to obtain more interviews. Notices were placed on the complex's bulletin board and elevator indicating that I would be sending out letters requesting interviews. Other interested parties were asked to contact me by telephone if they wanted to participate. However, none responded. Fifty apartments were selected at random, in which there were 45 requests for interviews with the residents; due to illness, refusal, death, or because they had been in the initial group, five of the selected apartments were excluded.

After I completed initial interviews, the informants were asked if they knew of anyone else who might be interested in answering questions. I then asked if I could call back in a few days. Initially, two persons denied my request to call back or give other names. However, a few days later, I was in contact with one of these persons who provided me with another name who, in turn, provided me with a second name. During both the initial and second phases of the interviews, times were set up according to the informants' preference, so that each respondent would know when I was going to be in the building.

Obtaining respondents in the second phase of interviews was difficult. Only two indicated that they wished to be interviewed. Attempts to telephone residents resulted in 11

interviews. A total of 13 interviews were conducted in this phase. The follow-up calls made it apparent that most seniors wanted to be left alone. Information gathered from these interviews confirmed the use of adaptive strategies that the snowball respondents had provided.

The Sample

Two group discussions were held during the interviewing process, involving over ten residents in each group interview. However, much of the analyses come from the 23 persons who agreed to the interviews. Table 1 provides a profile of the informants who came from the city in which the interviews took place as well as rural areas of the province. Before moving into Patrick Manor most of the respondents had worked for some time during their lifetime. All except two had been married, while eight were still married; ages ranged from 65 to 90; and residency in the complex ranged from two years to 17 years. One interesting detail was that two of the informants moved to Patrick Manor from other age-segregated complexes because they felt that their former environments did not provide sufficient opportunities to meet other seniors and to remain active.

The random sample participants were somewhat different from the first group in terms of health, gender, and length of

Table 1: Breakdown of Selected Characteristics by Sample Type

Snowball sample (N=10)				
Perceived health	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
	50%	40%	10%	-
Gender	Males	Females		
	10%	90%		
Average age of sample	76			
Marital status	Married	Widowed	Other	
	20%	70%	10%	
Average time in complex	5.8 yrs			
Random sample (N=13)				
Perceived health	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
	6%	69%	8%	15%
Gender	Male	Female		
	23%	77%		
Average age of sample	79			
Marital status	Married	Widowed	Other	
	46%	38%	15%	
Average time in complex	11.8 yrs			
Combined sample (N=23)				
Perceived health	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor
	26%	57%	9%	9%
Gender	Male	Female		
	17%	83%		
Average age of sample	76			
Marital status	Married	Widowed	Other	
	35%	52%	13%	
Average time in complex	9.2 yrs			

residence in the building. This group appeared to be in poorer health, included males, and most had been in the building for more than ten years. Both samples, however, were similar in their levels of subjective life satisfaction and how they used the environment.

Many efforts were made to interview people in all 45 apartments. First a notice was posted in the building indicating that I would be going around doing my research. The landlord was also informed of my presence and the purpose of the study. Letters were sent out to those who were picked randomly from a list of names given to me by the manager. The original efforts resulted in a further six interviews. Further follow-up telephone calls resulted in seven more interviews but the rest declined to be interviewed.

Since people residing in the remaining 32 apartments declined to be interviewed, I can only speculate as to why, especially in light of the success of the snowball sample. First, as these people are living in a security building, they wanted to keep strangers out. They may have been afraid of the unknown. A number of people who wished not to be interviewed did not mind talking over the telephone. When seniors knew me through another senior they were willing to speak to me. Thus seniors declining to be interviewed may have wished to be left alone.

Those interviewed using both methods had lived in the complex for long periods of time. However, in talking to the manager and others living in the building, it was found that turnover rates were low. Few people moved in and left after a short period of time in the building; the most common reason for leaving the building was illness and death.

The results of the thesis are based on observations and interviews with the respondents which took place over a four-year period. I also had the opportunity to interview friends and relatives of Patrick Manor residents; their views were compared with those of the informants.

Problems Encountered

At times, not belonging to the peer group proved difficult in being a full participating group member. Not all those approached were willing to respond to questions about life at Patrick Manor, particularly those in the random sample phase. In addition, not all respondents were comfortable with being taped, although they were informed that everything would be held in the strictest confidence. They feared that their responses would be disclosed to the other seniors of the building, and voiced concerns that, "you know what seniors can be like." As the interviews proceeded, rapport with each

person was established. Unlike other case studies, there was no professional staff in the complex to help seniors with group activities. The seniors' club and various other groups were responsible for setting up many of the day-to-day activities. This meant that there was no role in which I could interact with the residents in a support capacity.

Summary

The case study approach was used to explore how living in one type of seniors' housing had an impact on life satisfaction. Observations and in-depth interviews were used to examine ways in which seniors arrived at their level of life satisfaction. After exploring their fear of crime, the richness of the environment and the cheerfulness of the residents refocused my thesis topic to an examination of environment and life satisfaction.

Two approaches were used to gather informants for the case study. Initially a snowball sampling technique was used to assemble ten respondents. During the second stage, 50 apartments were randomly selected from a list provided by the building manager. Requests were made for interviews based on the number of people residing in each apartment. After omitting those already surveyed, ill, refused to be

interviewed, or had died, a further 13 interviews were conducted. The heterogeneity of the group interviewed was reflected in their age, gender, number of children, length of residency, and location in the complex.

Most of the seniors approached were quite willing to be interviewed, although some were uncomfortable being taped. But, as the interviewer, it was difficult to become fully immersed in a group where I was neither 65 nor female. Integration was also difficult as many of the activities were set up by the seniors themselves. Despite this, I was able to enter their world and form a picture of the many activities and interactions that they used to adapt to changing circumstances. The following chapter provides a detailed description of the research setting, and the encounters which affect the daily feelings of the senior.

CHAPTER 5

THE RESEARCH SETTING

Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to furnish a description of Patrick Manor's environment beginning with the external environment and devoting the remainder of the chapter to the physical environment, the residents, and the formal and informal activities available to them.

On the outside, Patrick Manor looks like any other apartment building. There is little evidence that its residents are predominantly female and over the age of 65. Patrick Manor, with plenty of space around the building, appears to be a quiet place where few activities take place. After spending time there, one becomes aware that Patrick Manor is a community. The activities are varied and, as some

residents have stated, "you don't ever have to leave this place because there are so many conveniences and things to do." Manor residents do not seem ghettoized; rather they appear to be fully integrated into the "outside" community.

The External Environment

The research setting for this case study is a seniors' apartment complex located in the Atlantic provinces. The building was constructed approximately 18 years ago, and is located in an area surrounded by residential and commercial buildings. Except for the visible sign of seniors entering and leaving the building, it would be difficult to identify the building as an age-segregated housing complex. The complex is located on a hill (see Figure 2). For a number of seniors this is seen as a problem, especially for those with heart conditions. It is located near the downtown area, close to a bank, a main bus route, a large grocery store, two hospitals, as well as a drugstore. There is ample parking space for both residents and visitors. During the summer, picnic tables are placed in the back, barbecues are available, and residents can walk around the complex grounds and roads in the area.

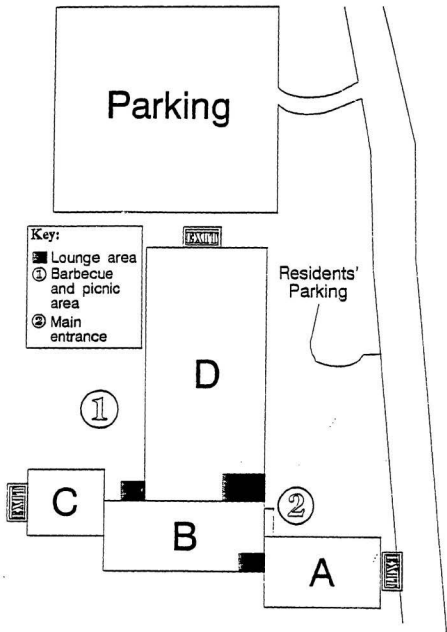


Figure 2: Site of Patrick Manor

The Physical Setting

Patrick Manor has 152 apartments, of which 30 are two-bedroom apartments allocated on the basis of desire rather than specifically given to married couples. Once a person is allocated an apartment, he or she is not allowed to move to another apartment within the complex. Each apartment has a kitchenette, living room, a bathroom, one or two bedrooms, and storage room. The one-bedroom apartments are not large, and are usually filled with treasured possessions from the occupants' former home. Evident in each are family photos, and on the walls and over the chairs and sofas are crafts that they have made during their spare time.

There are six exits from the building, three of which are fire escapes. The main exit has a locked door, with an intercom and video system (see Figures 3 and 4). There are two signs on the main exit door, one indicating that the premises are protected by Operation Identification, and the other prohibiting soliciting. Some exits allow residents to come and go without having to pass through the main lobbies, and to avoid unwanted encounters with other residents.

With the exception of the ground floor, each floor has a large lounge (see Figures 3 and 4) located over the main entrance area, where a large window provides plenty of light

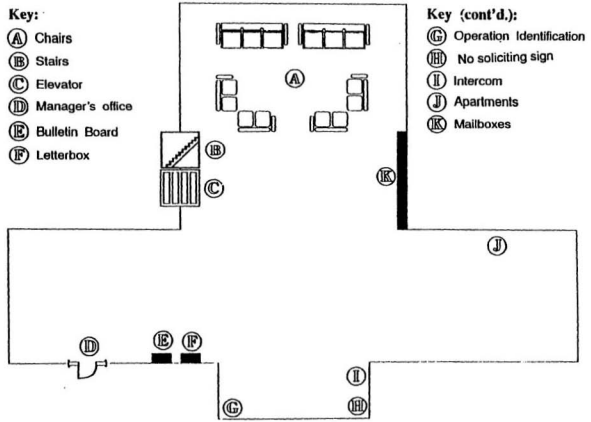


Figure 3: Main Entrance and Lobby of Patrick Manor

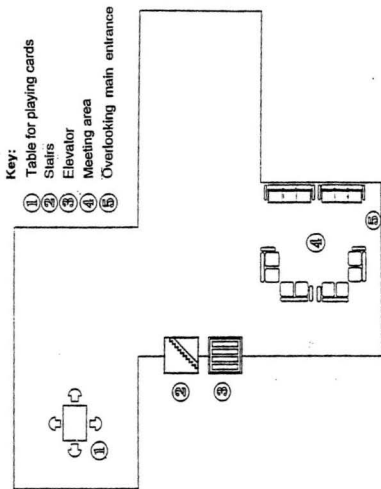


Figure 4: Third Floor Lobby in Patrick Manor

during the day. There are no televisions. Seating in the area consists of soft chairs and one sofa. Also located in several of the lobby areas are tables and chairs where some of the residents play cards. The lounge area on the first floor is not as aesthetically pleasing as those on the other floors and it does not have room for tables and chairs. In this area, there are mailboxes, a bulletin board, an elevator with many notices on its walls, and a small convenience store.

Services in the building include a small convenience store, a hair salon, and more importantly a games room in the basement has dart boards, a pool table, and other games for residents. A number of formal and informal activities take place in the games room, providing an opportunity to make and maintain friendships. Each resident has a key to this room (see Figure 5). Laundry facilities are also located in the building; garbage can be dropped off inside the building; and parcels can be mailed from the building through the convenience store.

The Residents

Originally people under the age of 60 could apply for residency in Patrick Manor. It would appear now, however, that only people over the age of 60 are requesting apartments. The residents come from varying financial backgrounds; some

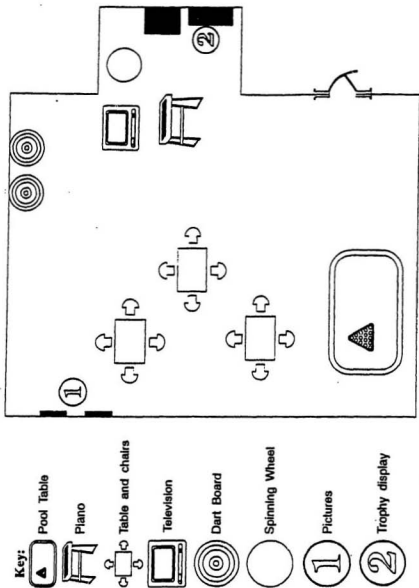


Figure 5: Recreation Room in Patrick Manor

pay the full rent, while others pay a rent geared to their available income. Access to an apartment is made through application, although there is a waiting list. Some residents waited up to two years before they were accepted into the complex. At the time of the last series of interviews, 85 percent of the residents were female, many of whom were widowed; the males were mostly married. The majority of residents were in relatively good health.

The Staff

The building staff are few in number but provide necessary services to maintain the condition of the building. The superintendent oversees the entire building, is responsible for the day-to-day upkeep of the complex and ensures that the rent is collected and necessary repairs are made to the apartments. The remaining building staff are also involved in the daily upkeep of the building, including cleaning the main areas, and providing minor maintenance.

External Persons

A number of service providers come into the building to help those residents in need of assistance. Some residents

need the services of a nurse, Meals on Wheels delivers food, and several drugstores deliver prescription drugs.

Formal Activities

The building has a Seniors' Club which holds various activities including birthday parties for those over 80, weekly bingo games, card games, pot luck suppers, bus outings, dart games, recycling activities, sales of goods for the various seniors' and religious groups. Religious groups provide church services for those who are unable to get out; other groups representing seniors offer exercise classes. All activities are advertised by word of mouth, and by formal notice on bulletin boards in the main lobby and elevator. During specific occasions such as Valentine's Day and Christmas, special events are planned. During elections political groups also come into the building and vie for the residents' votes.

Informal Activities

The residents of Patrick Manor engage in a number of unplanned activities. While many informal events take place within the complex, access to the outside usually occurs

during informal activities. The most common activity that occurs within the complex is the conversations which take place in the lobby areas. Card games are also played in the lobby areas, as well as resident's apartments. Residents shop together at malls or the grocery stores, go to bingo games at outside locations, to restaurants with friends and family, visit friends, prepare meals for those in the building who are sick, and still others get involved with volunteer work.

Summary

Patrick Manor has many characteristics that make it well suited to the needs of its residents. The immediate external environment is rich with the services of a bank, a grocery store, hospitals, a drug store, and it is located on a main bus route. The internal physical environment is also rich with conveniences such as unfurnished apartments, large lounge areas, a convenience store, postal services, beauty salon, and a games room. Full-time staff members provide maintenance and upkeep of the apartments and public areas.

Many of the residents who were interviewed were quick to point out that the setting offered so many services that they did not have to go out, "not even for a postage stamp." Although activities were provided by outside community groups,

because residents of Patrick Manor arranged many building activities, they were mistresses and masters in their own home.

The structure of the complex permits residents to remain independent and active. It allows them to chose their own activities, while at the same time providing them with opportunities to leave the building to see friends and family and participate in activities within the neighbourhood and the city. Chapter six examines how the physical setting creates a social organization which, in turn, has important consequences for the residents' life satisfaction.

CHAPTER 6

PATRICK MANOR: COMMUNITY RE-CREATION

Introduction

This chapter explores the various ways in which the residents of Patrick Manor use their physical and social environments. Specifically, it examines the ways seniors modify their environment. The ability to recreate and modify their environment is an important factor for seniors in the development of higher levels of life satisfaction.

Housing environment is a significant component in helping seniors achieve high levels of well-being (Carp, 1966; Lawton and Cohen, 1974). Reverse mortgages, winter shovelling programs, housing maintenance programs, and home care programs are designed to help seniors remain independent and socially integrated within the community. By providing seniors with familiar environments in which they retain control of their lives for as long as possible, these policy initiatives aid in

the maintenance of life satisfaction. Despite these efforts, a substantial number of seniors, predominantly females, decide to move into age-segregated housing. Many of them do not want or cannot afford to live by themselves. In addition, they value their independence and do not wish to live with their children.

The decision to move out of familiar surroundings is not arrived at lightly. The social costs associated with moving into a new environment include having to make new friends, find new places to shop, become familiar with new transportation routes, and in some cases having to leave behind relatives as well as personal belongings which have been accumulated over a lifetime (Golant, 1984; Atchley, 1987; Kamptner, 1989).

Current housing policy has been designed to help seniors overcome problems associated with residential moves. It has been suggested by Rosow (1967) that "the greater the disruption of previous life styles, activities and relationships, the greater the risk of personal demoralization since readaption is required from them at an age when their adaptive capacities are diminished" (qtd. in Kahana, 1974: 202). Housing policy is designed to ensure that every effort is made to allow seniors to remain independent in light of declining physical health and social resources.

Housing designs are supposed to help alleviate disruptions caused by declining health and increasing social losses by providing environments which encourage increased interaction with others, as well as helping seniors maintain their independence through the provision of various environmental designs and services. Lawton sums up the aim of these policies: "The goal has been to provide environments that are congruent with the needs and capabilities of the older user, under the hypothesis that the congruence will, in turn, be associated with a favourable outcome in terms of psychological well-being" (1989:135).

This chapter is an analysis of how the environment of Patrick Manor increased the level of subjective life satisfaction of its resident seniors. Its purpose is to examine the impact on females and males of living in an age-segregated complex in one type of housing complex in the Atlantic provinces. I explored those adjustments which were made during residents' stay at the complex and how the physical environment and social interaction helped them arrive at a personal level of life satisfaction.

The study of environment and social interaction is important since, "loss of control over one's home or community environment can pose serious problems for maintaining self-image. So long as people remain in a

familiar environment, skills and knowledge developed in the past can often compensate for decrements in functioning" (Atchley, 1991:109). However, seniors make the decision to leave their former environments.

Self-image is linked to one's feelings about oneself. Those who feel happy and outgoing will be considered satisfied with their lives. This self-image is constantly being challenged and is always in a process of changing. It is emergent and fragile, since each day brings with it new challenges. The residents in Patrick Manor were able to exert control over their self-image by seeking out and participating in those types of interactions which appealed to their way of thinking. This is important as "how the individual copes depends on the resulting reconstruction, socially and individually, that takes place and the resources on which the individual has to draw (meaning here, the multiplicity of perspectives on which the person can draw, and past experiences with similar events or changes in perspectives)" (Chappell and Orbach, 1986:96).

Because of its emphasis on the individual as an actor, the theory of symbolic interaction is used to determine how the residents of Patrick Manor have managed to develop high levels of life satisfaction. In this approach the individual is seen as a maker of his or her own history and always in the

process of recreating the self. It "shows that as human beings we are not passive creatures absorbing and reacting to what happens around us and in us, but rather are always involved in interpreting, constructing, and reconstructing what happens" (Breytspraak, 1984:47). An environment which inhibits the individual's ability to reconstruct that sense of self will lead to lower levels of satisfaction. However, not all individuals are alike, and various areas of their former lives may need reconstruction in this new environment in order for them to be satisfied with life, especially as social and physical losses make it difficult to exert control over their lives.

Each of the following sections represents an area which can be considered crucial to maintaining one's sense of self. If too much of the self is invested in each or any of these areas, and the self cannot be reconciled in the new environment, then one would expect that one's life satisfaction will be lowered. For the person who has too great an attachment to the family home, the bond may prove to be devastating. This may especially be the case when an individual moves into an environment where a new sense of home cannot be reconstructed. The same may be said for the person who values family life and is unable to carry out the same functions in the new environment.

Moving on: Leaving Behind a Lifetime of Memories

Each of the respondents had made the decision to move into Patrick Manor. For them, the adaptation to growing older meant entering a new phase. As they could no longer live in their old environments, this move represented an accommodation to the aging process. Such a process is an important step in one's ability to remain active and independent, and for a positive sense of self (Atchley, 1987).

It became clear from the interviews that there were four major reasons for moving into Patrick Manor. First, many of the respondents did not want to live alone, especially after the death of a spouse. Second, while other residents might have considered the option to live alone, they felt they were financially unable to cope with the upkeep of their own homes in order to live by themselves. Third, while some did not want to live alone, they also did not want to live with their children. Finally, among those who were married, declining health made it difficult to physically maintain their older houses.

Mrs. Black, for instance, found it difficult to think about her old neighbourhood:

I stayed in our home for three years, but I was utterly miserable. I was alone and I was never alone in my life.

So it was a difficult adjustment. I have never gone back to that street and neighbours have got to come see me I can't go back there. It brings back too many sad memories, not that the memories of the house or our lives together was bad but it brings back a lot of memories that I am trying to lay aside, not forget, because I don't want to forget, because we didn't have a family it was just the two of us, because if Tom went across the street I went with him.

Much of Mrs. Black's sense of self and identity was invested in her relationship with her husband and home. When she became a widow she lost what was most important to her sense of self - her husband. She felt she could no longer live at home because she associated living there with her deceased husband. For Mrs. Black, moving into an age-segregated complex was an attempt to find new friends. Her first move into a seniors' complex was not successful. Patrick Manor, on the other hand, offered her a way to make new friends, to develop a helping network as a substitute for her husband, and to create a new life. This was particularly important since Mrs. Black did not have any children and only had a few relatives in the area. Her friend, Mrs. White, was a person with whom Mrs. Black could do some of the same activities that she did with her husband; in a sense, Mrs. White became a proxy husband.

For others, choosing to move into Patrick Manor was dependent on several reasons. Being alone with little money forced some seniors to leave their old and familiar

environments. For many, the most significant factor was not having the income to support themselves. As Mrs. Silver noted:

We were renting there. And then when my husband died, he passed away there a year ago June past. It was lonely there and it was hard for me to keep it going by myself. It was much more expensive than it is here. Oh, very expensive because the heat was just about two hundred, and I had to pay the light and I was on my own. But right here now, it's not the same, you pay your rent, and the heat and the light and the cable are included in the rent here. So all you have to do is pay your own phone bill. So you know exactly what your bills are for the month.

Mrs. Silver had invested a life time in her marriage and children. For her, moving into Patrick Manor was an attempt to ward off the loneliness that accompanied the loss of her husband, as well as allowing her to maintain her independence.

Similarly, Mrs. Yellow did not want to live alone nor did she want to live with her daughter; as she explained:

Well the way it was when my husband died, I was only getting the one salary and I wasn't even 65. He was getting a war pension and his war pension came to me until I reached 65. I got the old age pension, so then I said I would have to pay water tax, I had only one daughter and she was in Toronto going to school. So I said to her and I said what do you think, do we keep the house? She said Mom we will get a house between us, or a two-bedroom apartment. I said no I don't think so I said I am going into an apartment, it will be much better for me, so she said that was alright, I will buy a house and if you want to come with me that is ok, but I didn't I came here then.

For Mrs. Yellow the move into Patrick Manor was an attempt to remain independent; it was important to her to have a place of her own.

It was difficult, however, for many of the respondents not to think about what they had given up. For example, Mr. White wanted to go back to his old home. At times, living at Patrick Manor created a sense of discontent for Mrs. White; she was, however, quick to rationalize that a house was not everything:

Yes because if Mr. White or I had to die, Mr. White used to say that I will never leave my home but the family persuaded him, now we didn't see this apartment until we moved in. I had never been in this building, but the way I feel that life is too short to worry about not to be happy so why let a house bother you, it's only material.

For most of her life Mrs. White had been a pragmatist. She declared that she could live anywhere; it did not matter as long as she had a place to go. It was not that she did not like their previous living space, but she felt that it was more important to have a place requiring little upkeep. Her lack of attachment to her old home was illustrated by her jettisoning all their belongings except pictures and important papers.

While a conscious decision was made to move out of their old environments, most respondents indicated that they would

return to their previous homes with their mates, if that were possible. All respondents had invested much time and memories in their former homes. Mrs. White's comment summed up how many felt after leaving their homes:

Well the way that I am, if I thought about the years I spent in my house and my little kids, it's a different reason than Mrs. Black's, I would be heart broken, but women are different, they can put it away.

There was a feeling of resolution and fortitude on the part of many of the respondents including some of the men, that the move was inevitable and that fighting it only made matters worse. Because they valued their independence, they preferred to move into an apartment rather than move in with their children. When asked if she ever thought of moving out of Patrick Manor, Mrs. Silver replied:

No, never as yet. I mean I could move somewhere else if I wanted to, because my daughter always says to me, Mom if you are not happy, I have an extra room down there that you can use and if you said one day that you were not happy down here, you could come with me the next day. But I like to be independent for as long as I can, while I can have my health.

Other residents moved into Patrick Manor because with their declining health they could no longer look after their houses; as Mrs. Gold explained:

My husband was sick and I didn't want him to worry. When I came here we had every convenience. My son felt that it would be a comfortable place for us to live and we were near the doctors and near the churches and the shopping malls. He thought that we would be more comfortable here just the two of us so that was how we planned to do it.

For Mrs. Gold, movement into Patrick Manor was a way to remain independent in view of her husband's declining health. However, the Golds continued to return to their old home in the summer, when they were able to live under less difficult conditions.

For most respondents, the move to Patrick Manor was inevitable. They could no longer live at home because they did not want to be alone, or their spouse's declining health made it difficult to keep up their homes. Yet relocation into the complex could be seen as an effort to remain in control of their lives. These reasons are not significantly different from those experienced by other seniors who have moved into age-segregated housing (Malozemoff et al., 1978).

For the respondents it was important that they remain independent. The move into Patrick Manor gave them the opportunity to move into an apartment which they could call home. It allowed them to remain independent from, yet have contact with, their children. It provided them with cheaper housing and a sense of autonomy. It also gave some the

opportunity to make new friends who could relieve the loss of former friends.

All of these factors did not mean that the respondents would feel that the move was necessarily a good one; they still had to deal with a new environment about which they knew very little. It is this kind of accommodation, knowing that they had to move, which should make the transition into a new environment easier.

The question which remains to be answered is, has this new environment helped to contribute to higher life satisfaction? If yes, how was this accomplished?

The New Environment

While each of these residents had decided to move into a new environment, this did not necessarily mean that they would derive higher levels of life satisfaction. Each resident brought with him or her a life history, one that was not automatically left behind with a move into the Manor. Life satisfaction could only be achieved by integrating past life histories with this new environment. That is, this new environment could only accommodate the old sense of self if it

provided the resident with the tools to reconstruct all or part of his or her former lives.

There is evidence that not all environments are favourable to seniors with particular life histories. Two of the respondents had spent time in other seniors' complexes, but as they did not like this environment, they moved into Patrick Manor. For Mrs. Brown, Patrick Manor suited her need to remain active:

Well after my husband died, which will be seven years soon, I sold my house in the country and came over. I was up at The Senior's Park which was very lonely up there. I only stayed a year and nine months. So when I got the opportunity to come here where there was more activity and things were far more convenient, I happened to apply for it and although I waited for two years I finally got in.

Mrs. Brown had always been an active person, a fact which she attributed to having been a teacher: teachers were supposed to be active members in their communities. Patrick Manor provided Mrs. Brown with the opportunity to reconstruct that important part of her past history.

Mrs. Black moved out of an age-segregated complex for similar reasons:

Oh yes I applied here, I was down at this other place and I could not take it any more. They stayed in their apartments. I was there for about six months. Well I

mean I felt like I was a prisoner. No one came, there was a lounge area like we have out there, now I doubt if it was walked on, everyone stayed in their apartments.

Mrs. Black needed friends who could help her deal with the loss of her husband. In her old environment she was unable to do this, and as a result, she felt less satisfied with life. She was not able to find a substitute for her lost husband.

There are two possible reasons for people in age-segregated housing being happier and having higher levels of life satisfaction than those seniors living in age-integrated complexes. First, those who move into age-segregated complexes do so because they want to. Second, when they find incompatible environments, they move out into more suitable accommodations. All those residents who were interviewed appeared satisfied with living at Patrick Manor. The services, activities, and other residents were some of the factors that helped integrate many of these seniors into the Manor community and provided them with higher levels of life satisfaction.

Recreating Home Through Personal Possessions

As a person ages, home becomes more than a place to live. It can become a symbol of independence, a focal place where a

family can get together, a source of pleasant memories, family sentiments and traditions, and a cultivator of self (where the house is a shelter for those persons and objects that define the self) (Kamptner, 1989). Possessions are said to have instrumental and symbolic functions. Those with an instrumental function allow the person to maintain a sense of control, or to manipulate his or her environments. Symbolic possessions "play a meaningful role in people's lives by acting as sources of control and mastery. It allows them to maintain a sense of self-identity, and integrate the persons past self with the present self and the maintenance of a socially supportive network of interpersonal ties" (Kamptner, 1989:166). Thus, the new environment must allow the person who values his or her personal possessions a place in which to put them and hence the opportunity to reconstruct the home in another environment.

The unfurnished apartments in Patrick Manor allowed new residents to bring some aspects of their old environments with them. It also provided other residents with the option to shed their accumulated possessions; most residents took a little bit of home with them in the form of furnishings, pictures, and mementos. Giving them more control over their new living environment provided the respondents with opportunities to keep important symbols of their former homes.

In each apartment that I visited, there were pictures of family members, deceased parents, as well as religious artifacts. Mrs. White had turned her spare bedroom into what looked like an altar, with family and religious pictures. Mrs. Beige had a large family mural on her wall with a picture of her at the top, and there were crafts all over the apartment. Mrs. Brown had displayed all of her husband's trophies in the living room. Everywhere I went in the building there were various aspects of former homes and selves. Mrs. Greenslade liked to travel when she was younger; but now declining health and income made this increasingly difficult. She had many mementos of travelling on display in her apartment. Whenever her friends and children travelled they brought back items from places as far away as Australia. This was one way that Mrs. Greenslade was able to sustain her identity as a world traveller.

For its residents Patrick Manor had become home. They had the independence to set up their apartments in ways which helped contribute to a sense of home, often reflecting a sense of their past. The rules of Patrick Manor were flexible enough to allow residents to retain those belongings which they deemed important.

The Importance of Privacy

The privacy of the home can also be important in maintaining the self. It is an important factor in cultivating a sense of self, whereby the self can be enhanced and protected. This is accomplished through providing a place for "emotional release, self-evaluation, psychological protection, a sense of control, and the expression and reinforcement of one's self and goals without interference or ridicule from others" (Kamptner, 1989:191). The apartments in Patrick Manor became places where friends and family could be invited, and important issues privately discussed.

Those who valued privacy could protect it. Those who did not want other residents to know of their comings and goings went through a side door or waited until they knew that there would be no one around. Lawton sees this physical design as an important factor in allowing those living in this type of arrangement the opportunity to add "an increment of self-regulation by providing the choice" (1989:158). As a result of design, there is a sense of control over their lives. Efforts were made by residents to increase one's sense of privacy. Each resident knew that there were public and private places in the complex. Once a person passed through his or her doorway, it was accepted that conversations, actions, and even dress was monitored. Most understood that

they were around others who might be "curious," but they also realized that no matter where they went there were always curious people.

All residents considered Patrick Manor their home. Why? Some had concluded that at this point in their lives it was the best option: it was a place that allowed them to do as they pleased, a place where their families could come to visit, and for some the other residents of Patrick Manor were like family. It was significant that this place had become home. Yet only three aspects of what made it easy for people to call Patrick Manor home have been discussed. The following sections provide more clues as to why Patrick Manor has become home and why its residents are satisfied with their lives.

Family Ties

Contact with family members can have a number of consequences for the self and life satisfaction. For some respondents it was a sign of accomplishment that they raised good children. As well, family members can be a source of status. Those residents who had children usually noted with pride what their children had accomplished in life. Mrs. Beige listed her children who had graduated from post-secondary school, and she called them her graduates. Mrs.

White was proud of all of the accomplishments of her children and grandchildren.

One's family provided a common ground for all residents in the Manor. Each person had at least one relative, son, daughter, brother, or sister about whom a conversation could be broached. This was especially true of the conversations which went on in the social world of the lobby. According to Mrs. White:

We talk about the weather, which is a topic they like to talk about because they hate this weather, we say we wish it was summer, where were you today, how was your summer, how is your family, because we know that their family is coming in because we see them coming and going.

Close ties with family members influence life satisfaction (Roadberg, 1985). The seniors in Patrick Manor were no different; each respondent had a close relationship with at least one relative. The level of contact varied with the number of children and siblings. Although no question addressed whether family contact had decreased since moving into Patrick Manor, it was evident from the current level of contact that if a significant decrease had occurred, then by extension it would have been high prior to their present residence. It should be noted that even those who did not have children still had much contact with their brothers and sisters, or in the case of Mrs. Black, a niece.

Family members provided both instrumental and expressive support (Ward et al., 1988). However, most of the support from relatives was of the instrumental form. All of those who were interviewed had someone who would from time to time help them with their groceries, take them to church, shopping, or who they could count on in times of need or for company. As Mrs. Silver related:

They are all in town. Well my daughter, the oldest one she calls about two or three times a day, if she is not sleeping, now she does a lot of nights, but she is sure to call at least once or twice a day and Jimmy makes a special effort to, even if he is working, he calls probably from work, now June she doesn't call every day because she is so busy studying and probably the time that she would have time to spare, I would be gone out, or across the way at Mary's, or upstairs. No they all keep pretty close contact. Some times they will come and I will prepare a meal for them, so they still come and will go to their house. They might call and say, Mom we have such and such a thing cooked do you want to come?

It was evident that daughters provided their mothers with much needed help. Yet there were times when family members made a significant impact on a resident's well-being. Mrs. Silver, who felt very sad when her husband had died, commented on how her family helped her:

Yes I think that has really kept me going when I was left alone, that was my family and the grandchildren.

Mrs. Silver's children were a source of strength after the death of her husband; they gave her support to plan her move to the complex and to maintain a sense of independence.

For Patrick Manor residents contact with children who were not in the area was also common, with the main means of communication being the telephone. Moving into Patrick Manor did little, if anything, to limit the time residents spent with their children and did not appear to change the frequency of contacts. Living in Patrick Manor may, in fact, have enhanced the residents relationships with their children, since they were not dependent on their children for housing.

Movement into Patrick Manor had done little to affect former relationships with sons, daughters, and siblings. There was still some degree of contact between the female residents and their children. Much of this contact was in the form of purchasing groceries, inviting parents over to meals at their homes, taking them to church, and out on shopping trips. Children as well as grandchildren also came often to visit their parents or grandparents in Patrick Manor. Contact with the family was important to the residents as it provided them with a sense of fulfilment that they had been good parents. It also allowed them to remain independent. They knew that if they were sick their children would ensure that they received care. However, the female residents felt useful

by having their children over for meals or by caring for their grandchildren.

Having children also helped integrate residents into the apartment complex since family members were a major source of conversation. Talking about their children provided residents with a sense of accomplishment as well as a subject in which all could participate. Contact with their children was another way of recreating the world before Patrick Manor. Very few changes were needed to maintain previously existing patterns. When family were unable to meet certain needs, friendships then became an important factor in reconstructing their lives.

Despite the level of satisfaction that children could bring their parents, they could also lead to dissatisfaction. Mrs. Greenslade moved into Patrick Manor shortly after her divorce. As two of her children were also divorced, Mrs. Greenslade blamed her unhappiness on the breakup of her children's marriages:

I guess it is how you grow up. Children see things and that is how they learn. But that is the way things happen. You are a product of your environment.

However, for the majority of the residents of Patrick Manor including the male residents, children provided a great deal of satisfaction for their parents.

Friendships

As people age, friendships take on greater significance and play a number of roles, each of which may increase one's level of well-being. Research has shown that companionship is tied with a decrease in feelings of loneliness, while at the same time increasing morale among older persons (Lee and Ishii-Kuntz, 1987). Some studies present the theory that for the elderly friendships are more important to well-being than family ties, and that interactions with family are not related to well-being (Lee and Ishii-Kuntz, 1987). The chief reason for these findings is that the type of contact generated among friends is a more expressive relationship than that with family members (Ward et al., 1988).

Friendships were important to all residents interviewed at Patrick Manor. With the exception of one resident all had made new friends since moving into the complex. These friendships took on a role that was more expressive than instrumental. Each resident had a companion who was a close friend, one to whom he or she could tell a secret and know it

would remain private, and one on whom to depend in a time of sickness.

These intra-complex friends provided some of the same roles as the residents' relatives. Mrs. Oakley elaborated:

I love the people here in the building. They are so friendly. We go on outings, we will be going out on a bus tour to the nature parks next week. We are going to go out to the famous traditional food store as well. I was never more content with life until I came to Patrick Manor. To me life is what you make of it and that is it in a nut shell.

Friends were an important source of security inside as well as outside the complex. They checked up on one another especially if a resident was not visible for several days. As Mrs. Silver described:

The last thing that I will do at night is I will visit Annie, my friend across the way, every night. I go and visit her, it is the last thing that I do and I check on her the first thing in the morning and she checks on me of course if I am not out, just to make sure, that both of us are o.k., we always do that, the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning.

Each person provided the other with a sense of security. Residents knew that if they fell and could not get up someone would check on them. This was especially important if someone was ill; it provided the resident with independence but at the same time reassurance that someone would be there if something

happened. This was more of a concern for the female residents, since most of the males were married.

Security was an important concern for the seniors of Patrick Manor. When going outside they usually went in pairs. This not only cut down on the cost of taxis, but more importantly it provided residents with a sense of security. As many seniors would not venture out on their own, this meant that fear of crime might not be as serious a concern as for seniors living alone. It also explained why seniors living in age-segregated complexes exhibited less fear than those in other living environments.

Two factors were important in friendship formation: proximity, and the sharing of similar characteristics. Many of the important friendships occurred between residents on the same floor and usually in the same corridor. While they might know many people on their floors, only one was considered a good friend, as Mrs. Brown clarified:

Oh yes, I never met her until I came in here and we have a lot in common, our dispositions and our attitudes and what should I say our virtues if I can use that word and we see alike and our gifts and our talents are pretty much the same.

Mrs. Brown's best friend, however, lived on another floor. Mrs. White's friendship pattern is more typical:

Mrs. Black and I are special friends - aren't we now? We are like sisters. Not only that we got to trust each other, because some of the others would kill us.

Teski (1981), providing a rationale for friendship development in age-segregated residences, concludes that seniors moving into these complexes bring with them a life world. In order for residents to maintain their sense of reality, they seek others who share at least some of their ways of seeing events and things around them. Thus friendships are more likely to be formed between those residents who will reinforce each other's sense of self.

Although Mrs. White and Mrs. Black, both heavy smokers, felt that other residents disliked them for smoking, they refused to give it up. Both women were independent, and their friendship allowed them to maintain a sense of self since they continued to carry out activities that others frowned upon, but which were mutually sanctioned.

While residents had made new friends since coming to Patrick Manor, their old neighbourhood friends were still important. They maintained close ties to their earlier friends through letters, telephone calls, and visits. The building policy also fostered these ties by allowing friends to visit for as long as a month. That residents had retained many of their old friendships supports findings that rather

than displacing the number of friends a person has, these environments actually supplement them (Malozemoff et al., 1978). It is significant that movement out of a neighbourhood did not isolate these seniors from their old ties. It also supports other research which has shown that age-segregated housing settings add to a person's network (Malozemoff et al., 1978). Maintaining old ties also allows a resident of such settings to relate to his or her past. These residents were still interested in what was happening in their old neighbourhoods; this helped them maintain those aspects of their past which they considered important. This was true, even of Mrs. Black, who could no longer go back to her old neighbourhood but continued to meet with the people she had known in that neighbourhood.

It is easy to see why friendships might be more important than family in Patrick Manor. Friends provided more than instrumental needs; they imparted a sense of security and assuaged depression. The resident's sense of self was established, by seeking out friends who shared similar life worlds. These friends, in turn, could be counted on when conflict arose as was common in such an heterogeneous environment.

While friendships were created predominantly between those residents living on the same floors, they were

maintained through informal and formal activities. For many residents, these activities enhanced maintenance of the self and, as a consequence, their subjective life satisfaction.

Informal Activities

Being active is insufficient to increase a person's sense of well-being; an individual must desire and enjoy the particular activity. This is especially important for elderly females (Kozma et al., 1991). Those interviewed participated in a number of informal activities and each activity played an important role in the lives of those living at Patrick Manor. Informal activities were either solitary such as reading, doing crossword puzzles and crafts, or involved group functions such as pot luck suppers and craft sales.

Some residents spent hours in the Manor's lounges or lobbies involved in no particular activity. Each resident held a view on these "lobby dwellers." Non-participants felt that lobby dwellers did very little with their lives. For some this assessment was accurate; however, as a general observation it was false. Sitting in the lobby provided companionship as well as information about day-to-day happenings. Other residents used the lobby as a place to meet new people. For many, lobby sitting was a form of visiting.

Two informants who spent much time in the lounge were Mrs. Brown and Mrs. White; both, however, were involved in activities other than lobby dwelling.

The degree to which a person was integrated into a lobby group was reflected in territoriality. Mrs. White and Mrs. Black never participated in any activities such as bingo and darts. However, they indicated that even though chairs were not assigned, there were specific places where people sat in the lobby. Residents often got up to give someone else a seat if they had been sitting in a chair that the other resident had continually used.

Other residents used the recreation room for informal gatherings as they did not like the more competitive formal activities. This gave some the chance to play darts, cards, pool, and other games without the pressures of serious competition. The opportunity to participate was much more important to a resident's sense of self than any idea of competition.

While card playing was a favourite activity, not everyone liked to play the same games. Mrs. White liked to play bridge, "but not the kind that they play around here." She liked to play a more competitive game with those friends with whom she had played for over 30 years. Others were more

interested in playing such card games as auction with friends, but not in the recreation room.

Each of these informal groups usually had a special dinner at some time during the year. At each game, members contributed a few dollars and at Christmas or Thanksgiving they would all go out to dinner. Special dinners were also planned by those who played darts and cards on a serious basis. Mrs. White's informal group, which played outside of the complex, had also sponsored a little boy overseas.

Intra-complex visiting was probably the most fulfilling informal activity. The length of time a resident stayed at another resident's apartment depended on the closeness of their friendship. For some residents, it was important that they visit the sick and bring them food. These visits afforded a chance to talk about the past, what had happened that day, as well as to provide food.

For many of the residents, the activities they participated in were an extension of previous pursuits. For example, Mrs. White played bridge from time to time, while Mrs. Beige liked to make mats. For others new opportunities included playing darts and becoming involved in recycling campaigns.

These informal activities allowed the residents to engage in events which were important to their sense of self. Such events were designed to give them a sense of worth. Many of these informal activities were also available on a formal level, but in an informal situation participants enjoyed the fun without being concerned with winning and viewed the activity as an opportunity to socialize. They were able to exert control over their activities and as a result gained a considerable pleasure from the many available options. The list of informal activities were as varied as the residents. For many the informal activities occupied much of their time. For the resident who wanted to participate in formal activities, particularly in positions of leadership, there were plenty of opportunities.

Formal Activities

Opportunities to interact with others is an important aspect of well-being, particularly when one has a choice. As with Les Floralties (Ross, 1977), residents of Patrick Manor participated in those activities that they enjoyed. They had opportunities to engage in functions through formal activities within the residence as well as a number of activities offered outside the Manor. While not everyone participated, many were

aware of the intra-complex activities; this demonstrated a high degree of communication, even among the non-participants.

Patrick Manor had an active seniors' group which organized formal activities, including bingo on Friday nights, pot luck suppers once a month, a religious service provided by various church groups, outings, birthday parties for those over 80, craft sales, and a darts' club.

Participation in these activities depended on a variety of factors. During the early interviews, the seniors' group was a popular group. However, towards the end of my observations, many of the earlier respondents had adopted a negative tone towards the club's president. Nevertheless, these club members still participated in events such as bingo and pot luck suppers. Mrs. Silver's comments summed up the feelings of most of the club members:

Well now I knows her name and but maybe I should not say this but she is not one of my best friends. Now I mean I go to bingo and I does everything that she asks to be done. I mean I am really not her friend. It's not that I don't like her I suppose. But somehow or another she doesn't appeal to me. I suppose she has her rights, now I have not had any kind of a run in with her or anything but she is to me, well I might as well tell you the truth. I don't think she was ever suited to be the president. When you go up to the bingo game and she will yell at people for nothing and things like that. She is a very nasty person, in my opinion. To me she is and to a lot of other people. Now I guess a lot of people thinks she is great, but you know, she is different.

Like many of the others interviewed, Mrs. Silver reacted unfavourably to the current president's management. The club members wanted to participate in the events without having to associate with the president. They continued in these activities by participating and then withdrawing; they were cordial to the president but critical of her when she was absent.

Other activities were set up by external groups such as the seniors' centre and a group for people over 50. For those who did not like to engage in bingo or darts, other activities such as an exercise class, speakers' group, bus tours or planned events such as Christmas dinners and dances were available. Participation in these activities reflected former life histories.

However, over time some residents were willing to take on new challenges. As a teacher Mrs. Brown had been active in community events; she had moved out of another seniors' complex because she felt that it was not an environment in which she could be active. At Patrick Manor, Mrs. Brown engaged in so many activities that she had to be selective in her involvement, an adaptation process which is known as consolidation (Atchley, 1991). For example, as she explained she delayed in becoming the person in charge of the religious services:

I was a member of the dart club when I came in, there are some of my husband's trophies over there. They did not play the game the same as we did where we lived. It was a little confusing to me and so I discontinued, because you can't do everything. Then when these services and there was an elderly lady who was looking after it and she could not carry on. Well I did not want to come into the building and take over something right away because it might leave the feeling that you know, I was kind of pushing or trying to take over. Now you have to be very careful when you are working with senior citizens you see, for some their memories and minds are different and they sometimes get their wires crossed. I wanted to feel my way around which I did. So this lady approached me three times and I thought that it was too bad to say no to her three times so that is what is keeping me busy. When the different churches are coming in on Sunday evenings and then the senior citizens have a supper here and they go out to different restaurants and have suppers and then the church beside is important and every church is important and in the spring and the fall every church will have its sale of work and you are going there or you are probably preparing something to take or proving some hand work to take to the sale so you are busy there.

Others were not joiners of formal activities but liked to participate in activities that involved such projects as special dinners, Christmas sing-a-longs, bingo or card games. Mrs. White was such a person:

Now Christmas, the United Church Choir came I must say it was credit to them and we all watched them come out of the elevator and they had these trays with sandwiches on them and cookies and cakes of every kind. It was wonderful, but this to me was the best Christmas, and we all gave a little donation, for the choir. Then we had the sisters from St. Patrick's convent give a recital. Then the priest from St. Patrick's came and gave a service and I must say the people are good. They even took up a collection afterward. But I must say the best evening we had was when the choir was here. The food they had was out of this world. I must say and there were just as many Catholics at the non-Catholic event as there were non-Catholics at the Catholic events.

The residents of Patrick Manor enjoyed activities inside and outside the building. Some preferred to only play those bingo games arranged by the seniors' group, while others attended those in addition to outside games. For some, the darts' club was what they enjoyed the most, while for others it was the religious services. There were many activities available to the residents and they could participate in those they enjoyed which best suited their former selves. Each event provided the resident with a purpose and activity and helped create a fulfilling sense of self.

Services

Access to services was an important factor in maintaining the well-being of the seniors at Patrick Manor. Residents praised the Manor's location in relation to services outside of the building, pointing out that there were hospitals nearby, a supermarket at the top of the hill, as well as a drug store and bank at the end of the street. Both Mr. and Mrs. Greening were in poor health and for them the proximity of services was important to achieving life satisfaction. As Mr. Greening said:

Well my health is not very good. I don't get out very often. Only when Mr. Littlejohn drops in. I would prefer to live in one of those cottages but you see they

don't have the services that we have here. It's the services here that makes the good life.

Though few admitted to patronizing the complex's convenience store, all residents were quick to point out its existence as well as its high prices. However, for some residents it was a convenient place to purchase groceries, particularly during the winter when it was difficult to get out.

Access to services both inside and outside the building was an important aspect of life at Patrick Manor. This was especially the case for the males interviewed, as it allowed them to maintain their independence and autonomy. Accessing these services depended on their levels of independence.

In some instances the services came to the residents. Mr. White had a caregiver come in once a week to provide minor medical/personal needs. Mrs. Greening had hired a person to do cleaning and wash the dishes twice a week, tasks she could not perform because of her arthritis. Meals on Wheels delivered meals to residents who were too ill to provide for themselves. Yet for many, other residents were quick to come to their aid and drop off various food items.

The location of Patrick Manor made it the perfect spot for its residents. When asked what they thought of the place

or what they liked most about it, residents were virtually unanimous in their response. As Mrs. Blackburn said:

You don't have to leave the apartment building if you don't want to. You can get just about everything in the building. Nancy over at the drug store, only for her all hands would be dying you don't have to go outside of the door, if you don't want to. It is all of the services that makes life easier.

There can be little doubt that the services available at Patrick Manor played a major role in the residents' level of life satisfaction. When asked what services should be added to the complex, residents could not offer a recommendation. This indicated that for residents in non-institutionalized or age-segregated housing, the availability of services can affect their sense of well-being.

Summary

There can be little doubt that living in Patrick Manor had contributed significantly to the life satisfaction of its residents. The environment was instrumental in helping residents overcome their losses in later life. These seniors in Patrick Manor were active, felt that they had control over their lives, and liked where they were living as it allowed them to participate in activities within the building, while not restricting outside participation.

Despite these findings, one cannot say that Patrick Manor is an utopia. Those interviewed indicated that some residents were lonely, and that others did not like living there. Still others sensed a degree of conflict, and some felt that at times their privacy was in jeopardy. However, residents used a variety of means to ensure high levels of life satisfaction. When residents were in conflict, avoidance strategies were used; when conflict was unavoidably encountered, residents acted as if there was nothing wrong. Even when residents were ill, other residents would often provide them with food and assistance. Residents protected their privacy by making use of their apartments when meeting friends and relatives and using the various exits instead of the main door. They adjusted to their new environment to make life better for themselves.

Chapter seven provides an examination of six adaptative strategies used by the informants - five of which used the environment to provide many opportunities for growth of the self. In one case, all attempts to provide an environment which helped seniors with every opportunity to reconstruct their lives did not provide life satisfaction as the particular informant had invested too much of his self in his old environment to be able to adjust. The other adaptative strategy used little of the environment and depended on life outside the complex to provide life satisfaction.

CHAPTER 7

PATHWAYS TO SUBJECTIVE LIFE SATISFACTION

Introduction

Chapter six demonstrated how many seniors actively attempted to recreate their former lives in Patrick Manor. For those who wished, new dimensions could be added to their lives such as playing darts, making new friends, or becoming more involved in life at the Manor. Such active efforts to control their environment and dispose of unwanted symbolic components of their former lives was considered an important step in allowing these seniors to achieve high levels of subjective well-being. Thus, Patrick Manor provided the type of environment promulgated by Lawton (1989:158), one which "provides a maximum choice for a larger array of experiences to occur and be chosen by the older person." Such an environment is essential in enhancing one's subjective life satisfaction.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine more closely how subjective life satisfaction as defined by Neugarten et al. (1961) was achieved in the environment of Patrick Manor. Five individual case studies revealed six types of adaptations within this environment. Four of these studies demonstrated that the environment is suitable for many seniors, allowing them to create social worlds and identities suitable to higher levels of subjective life satisfaction. While the fifth type showed that no matter how well an environment is designed, it cannot allow for all of those unmoveable symbols, roles, and social worlds to ensure that people achieve a good life. That is, an apartment can only be a partial substitute for a house left behind. It cannot replace it nor can it fill the void of a spouse who has been lost. It can only attempt to make it easier for people to replace those significant others lost due to death or separation.

Symbolic interaction will be used to show how each resident attempted to recreate their lives in order to help arrive at an acceptable level of life satisfaction. The autonomy and independence possible in this environment was an important factor in arriving at an acceptable level of subjective life satisfaction. Neysmith (1980:285) explains why such residents are happy:

Well-being for the elderly, like all age groups, can be seen as a reflection of present status modified by

personal history. High morale reflects some feeling of control over our lives, its decline is associated with losses which occurs in an increasingly hostile environment. In stressful life situations social supports buffer or protect the individuals from the pathological effects of these phenomena.

Each new resident of Patrick Manor took with him or her a personal history based on years of living in a different environment with familiar surroundings and friends. Movement into Patrick Manor was usually precipitated by the death of a spouse, declining health, or a desire to be with others. However, the possibility that differences in attitudes and opinions, or the desired degree of privacy could not be accommodated in Patrick Manor still existed. Thus an inability to recreate social worlds, negotiate status, and meet friends might have had an impact on well-being.

The following case studies provide examples of adaptations used at Patrick Manor. The pathways to life satisfaction can be seen in how these residents interacted with the environment and in their degree of attachment to it. However, it would be naive to assume that a resident was totally immersed in or totally isolated from other residents and from activities in the complex. It was more likely that a resident would have some combination of attachment with the physical setting and its occupants. Such an attachment can be placed on a continuum of "none to total."

Each end of the continuum represents the extreme. While there were examples of the extremes, I was unable to interview them. The following examples represent the more common adaptations in Patrick Manor. In dealing with the consequences of aging, such as the loss of a spouse, friends, and health, residents turned to instrumental and expressive forms of support. While Patrick Manor had many supports, this did not mean that everyone accessed only those supports provided by this environment.

Instrumental forms of support included helping friends or family with groceries, getting to church, and having someone to look in on you. Expressive forms included support in dealing with loneliness, sharing feelings, or confidences (Ward et al., 1988). Some residents depended mainly on support through outside contact, others from those within the complex. There is considerable evidence for the relationship between social support provided by friends, and well-being (Airling, 1976; Strain and Chappell, 1982; Bankoff, 1983; Adams, 1986).

It can be argued that the resident's ability to modify the environment to his or her liking is what makes Patrick Manor such an important milieu for its residents. Figure 6 indicates where the seven informants fell on this continuum. Miss Red exhibited low levels of attachment to the complex as

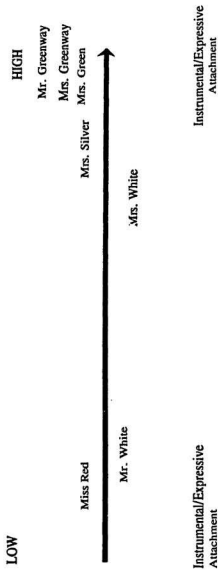


Figure 6: Continuum of Attachment to Patrick Manor

none of her friends and few of her resources are from the complex; she does not participate in any of the Manor's activities. Mrs. Green was almost the opposite, as many of her day-to-day activities are centred around the complex, and many of her friends reside there. Her attachment to the complex includes her participation in the seniors' group where she is a vice-president. Mr. and Mrs. Greenway's attachment to the complex was similar to Mrs. Green's. The other three informants can be placed between these two extremes. Mr. White's adaptation was closer to that of Miss Red's; he lives in the Manor but does not actively participate in any activities. Mrs. Silver represented the newcomer, still adapting to the new setting, but she appeared to be edging towards almost total attachment. On the other hand, Mrs. White had settled into an attachment pattern which is close to the middle. However, there was every likelihood that she would increase her participation if her husband died before her.

Miss Red

Miss Red, a single 70-year-old woman, is in good health and is very independent. She does all of her own cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping and laundry. She retired when she was 65 and moved into Patrick Manor ten years ago, after her

sister, with whom she lived, moved to Toronto as Miss Red did not want to live alone. Every summer Miss Red travels to Toronto to visit her sister, yet at the same time maintains her apartment at the Manor. She is close to this sister and often speaks to her on the telephone.

Being independent is an important aspect of Miss Red's sense of self. She likes to be involved in many social activities; her fierce independence influences her relationships. I was able to interview her because she felt an obligation to one of my informants who had asked her if she would mind talking to me; she had agreed because in the past she had asked my informant to do some volunteer work for her. It was clear from the interview that her sense of self is based in being considered young. She does not participate in the buildings' activities, since many were for "old people." She also felt she could not answer any of my questions as they, too, were for "old people." Miss Red described a time when a university student had come by to interview her, but she had told that person she could not answer any of her questions since they were for "old people." She explained:

Well I told her that I could not answer any of her questions because they did not pertain to me. They may have been alright for the other people in the building but not for me. I might have been even a little rude to her. I felt that none of the questions were right for me.

In many ways Miss Red is able to maintain her youthful outlook by living in the Manor yet at the same time distancing herself from the other residents. She also maintains her sense of self by her involvement in outside activities; she participates in other social worlds and roles, and makes friends with people who have no connection with the building. She also attests to reading material material that does not fit the label of "garbage" - such as "the National Enquirer" - which she feels the stereotypical senior reads. When I asked her what she read, she replied, "I read things written by Danielle Steele and autobiographies of famous people."

Miss Red does not accept the role of the stereotypical old person. Whenever there has been a change in her life she sees it as an event unrelated to the aging process. She moved to Patrick Manor when her sister moved because she no longer wanted to live alone. She sold her car when it was no longer cost effective, and as the housing complex was near the downtown and other services, she obtains a ride from other Manor residents.

Privacy, an element difficult to maintain in an apartment complex of this nature, is important to Miss Red. However, she does not think that living in this building affects her privacy; she can come and go through a side exit, a route that provides her with as much privacy as she desires. She seems

quite proud that she had been resident for a year before any of her neighbours knew that she was living in the building. As she explained:

I was here for a year before anyone knew that I lived in the building. I was only found out when I went to check my mail one day. While I was there someone asked me if I lived here and I said yes.

When I asked Miss Red how happy she was, she said that she was as happy as could be. She said that she likes to be active, and comes and goes as she pleases. She does not feel lonely, despite the fact that none of her friends live in the building. She has a close relationship with her sister who lives in Toronto, and she goes to visit her each summer for four months. Miss Red also maintains close ties by telephone with her brothers (one of whom lives in the city) and other sisters. If she ever feels lonely she calls a friend or picks up a book; she is never bored.

Miss Red is an example of how seniors modify their environments. She is not isolated, but she uses the environment for what she feels she needs to help her remain satisfied with life. The side exit helps her sustain her privacy, and she can remain by herself in an apartment since it is cheap to live there. She helps maintain her youthful image by avoiding building activities, and helping those

people that she considers old. There is no pressure for her to take part in any of the events in the building.

Miss Red is an example of how age-segregated housing can be beneficial to seniors. She has control over her life and remains very active while she is still in good health. Miss Red lives in an environment where people will lend her a helping hand when she is in need.

In many ways, Miss Red's lack of integration in the complex is related to the fact that she is not part of a social world which includes single women. She may feel that she has little in common with other residents yet despite that she feels happy and is able to continue her own life as she has done since her early adulthood.

Much of Miss Red's youthful image is dependent on her health. Should something happen to her health, her ability to remain active and apart from the community may need reassessment. While she has stayed away from many of the activities she sees as being for old people, she has not totally disassociated herself from the community activities at Patrick Manor. She is aware of the events that take place in the complex, and selectively provides other residents with help when they need it. She may be preparing herself for a

time when she cannot get out and do many of the things she wants to do.

Miss Red has little attachment to the people and activities of Patrick Manor. She will only seek help if she needs it and is quick to reciprocate. All of her good friends and social activities are located outside of Patrick Manor. The flexibility of the environment permits her to enjoy life by remaining independent and to lead a private lifestyle.

Miss Red's level of satisfaction is evident in her active lifestyle, her ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and feeling that there are many things left to be done in life. It is also seen in her strong sense of self and her feeling that she is as happy as she can be at this point in her life.

Mrs. Silver

Mrs. Silver is 65 years old. Although she has spent most of her adult life working in the home, she did work for a short period as a school teacher. Except for a heart condition which she has had since she was 42 years old which is being controlled by medication, Mrs. Silver is in good health. She is independent and does her own cooking, laundry,

and cleaning. When she needs groceries, one of her three children provides transportation.

Mrs. Silver, who has lived in Patrick Manor for less than two years, moved there for two reasons. First, she found it difficult to manage financially in her former residence. Second and most important for her was that she was lonely. Thus, the move into the complex allowed her to accommodate her need for companionship without having to move in with one of her children and feel dependent.

Mrs. Silver has two daughters and a son in the city with whom she maintains close contact. Her role as a mother is an important part of what makes her life satisfying. She talks to her children at least once a day on the telephone, visits with them, and they visit her regularly. The nearby bus route makes it easy for her to get to their homes without having to depend on them for a ride. Her family played an important role in helping her adjust to the death of her husband.

Since coming to Patrick Manor, Mrs. Silver has begun to increase her social worlds. She still participates in activities that she had been involved in before her husband died. She plays card games with other residents and attends bingo within the complex and at three different locations outside the building with several of the other female

residents. She also participates in the Manor's pot luck dinners. Since coming to Patrick Manor, Mrs. Silver has learned to play darts; not only does she enjoy this activity, but it provides her with a chance to meet people:

Well I really love a game of cards. I love the game of darts and things like that. I really like to go out to the bingo, I enjoy meeting all the different friends and the different people.

Mrs. Silver has been selective about her activities. She feels that her socialization into life at Patrick Manor is best pursued at a slow pace. She plays bingo in the building, but after the game she only interacts as much as is required such as cleaning up the recreation room; she feels that the president of the club is too pushy. This is a sentiment that other respondents share. Mrs. Silver makes new friends cautiously: "You have to be very careful of the people who you meet." This sense of caution is important since it allows her to make friends with those who share her symbols, ideas, and values; as she related:

You know, now I have met a big lot, but you can't take in a really big area. You really don't know them that well, I have only been here since last June so, I'm the type that likes to get to know who I'm being friendly with before I make friends with them. But I have five or six, I guess you know, there are lots of people here, I know that are friendly here and I know that I could count on if I need them o.k. but yet, not to have them as a daily friend you know. To be really in close contact with. But I have at least five or six that I know about.

Yet Mrs. Silver remains in close contact with friends from her previous social worlds:

Oh yes, I still go out to bingo with the friends I had before moving here. I do the same things with them as I always did. I wouldn't want to lose contact with them really. I like to still keep some of my old friends.

Mrs. Silver's fortitude is seen in her acceptance of her new world as a place where one has to accept certain realities. This is evident in the way she views her privacy and how it is affected by living in the Manor:

Well like anywhere else there are a few that sits in the lounge all day and all night and they watch. They know when you go out and they know when you come in. They know what you have brought in. Now I don't have to bother too much because there is a door at the end of the corridor that I use an awful lot, except when somebody comes who has got to use the buzzer. But there is so much that people know about you. Even when you live in a house, the people who live next door to you know what you do. But it doesn't bother me, because like I said I usually wait and pick my friends. I know who I am going to ask in for a game or have a lunch with me. If there is somebody I can't trust, well I am going to politely avoid these people. That is how I manage it.

Mrs. Silver has adapted to the changes of aging. When her husband died, she was devastated; her family, however, helped her through her loss. As she wanted to maintain her own independence, Mrs. Silver moved into Patrick Manor and lives a full life. She is actively involved in activities within and outside the complex and visits with old friends as

well as with new ones. Her feeling that she can be as happy as possible under the circumstances is a sign of resolution. There is no way that her husband can be brought back and she has decided to make the best of her life.

Mrs. Silver herself feels that she is adjusting well to her new environment and its residents. Satisfied with the way that her life is evolving, she enjoys many activities, her family, as well as Patrick Manor. The complex has allowed her to remain independent and in control of her life. She has accepted the loss of her house and is dealing with the loneliness caused by her husband's death. Her zest for life is evident in her many new friends and the activities she has adopted since moving into the Manor. In addition, Mrs. Silver enjoys the security which is afforded by living in the complex. While she admits to having ups and downs, she has decided that she can live a rich and rewarding life in Patrick Manor. She looks forward to particular events and tries to be as happy as can be and not lonely - all components of a satisfied life.

That Mrs. Silver has adjusted well to this new environment and that she has become more active and has continued to engage in past activities is corroborated by comments from her relatives:

She loves it there. Since moving into Patrick Manor I have found that she has started doing some of the same things as she did before she moved in. Now her friends come in and see her a lot more now. She has also started playing games such as darts and cards, things that she did not play as much before. In many ways I feel that if she had not moved in there she would be dead now. She really loves it.

Thus by moving into Patrick Manor, Mrs. Silver has been able to enjoy a degree of happiness. She adjusted to the move and is doing many activities that have improved her quality of life. The environment of Patrick Manor has allowed her to create social worlds with friends who hold views similar to hers, while yet maintaining previous links. Her adaptation strategy is one in which she spends a considerable amount of time in Patrick Manor, yet remains involved with activities and people outside of the complex.

Mrs. Silver exhibits high levels of subjective life satisfaction. She has increased her activities, takes the good with the bad, and feels that she has done as well as possible with life. She loves life, and Patrick Manor allows her to keep her independence, an important symbol to her.

Mr. and Mrs. White

Mr. and Mrs. White have been married for 59 years; he is 80 and she is 79. They have four children, all of whom live

in the city. Mr. White worked until he was 65; he has had a number of health-related problems, needs a hearing aid which he "hates to wear," has arthritis and has had three strokes. A health care worker comes in during the week to tend to his physical needs. Mrs. White owned a private business and worked until she was 72. This business was attached to her house so that she could spend more time with her children.

While Mrs. White enjoys living in Patrick Manor, Mr. White does not. In fact, he suffered from depression after he moved there. One of their daughters wrote a letter that praised Mrs. White for her handling of Mr. White's depression. Mrs. White commented on how they both feel about leaving their house behind:

My husband hates the idea of an apartment. We had a very big house and he could never get over the reason why we sold the house, but we sold the house because my husband had three strokes. My mother lived with me for 23 years, she fell over my big stairs, my hardwood stairs and died. My children thought it was too dangerous for my husband. Now my husband would love to go back tomorrow if he could. Now women are different, women they can take it better than men, I suppose it's what we are made of. Because what the hell difference does it make at this stage of our life, if we got enough money to be comfortable, and we can have what we want, we don't need a big place, you don't need three or four bathrooms. On Christmas Eve, I had 31 visitors, so you know the important thing for me is the love of my children, and my love for them and the love of my husband.

Mrs. White believes that those three strokes influenced her children to ask them to move into more suitable

accommodations. When they did move, she left behind furniture, even her pots and pans, taking only their important papers and prized mementos.

Mrs. White is an independent person. As with many other females in the complex, she does all of her own cooking, laundry and most of her cleaning (someone comes in to clean the carpets and windows), and it is not unusual for her to prepare meals for other residents in the complex. Mr. White does not do any of the housework; however, every Friday he does their grocery shopping with the aid of a grandson. For Mrs. White, Patrick Manor has opened up new opportunities, and has facilitated her continued activity in playing bridge, entertaining her family, and writing poetry. She is happy that she no longer has to look after a large house.

On the other hand, Mr. White does not seem to have adjusted well to the move to Patrick Manor. His lower level of life satisfaction can be attributed to the degree of his identity with his home. Retirement and the later loss of his driver's licence may have also contributed to his attachment to his house, as it was a place where he spent much of his time. Many of the family members who persuaded the Whites to move into Patrick Manor felt that the move would be better for Mr. White since it would provide him with new opportunities. Conversely, they felt that Mrs. White would not benefit from

the move. A granddaughter stressed how she felt about their move into Patrick Manor:

His job was very important to him. When he retired he was able to keep in close contact with them by driving down and seeing his friends where he worked. However, the loss of his driver's licence was also difficult for him. He lost much of his independence. Yet we felt that the move to Patrick Manor would be a good one for him. However, the move was much better for grandma.

Although there are male residents who are active in the complex, playing bingo, darts, cards, and engaging in conversation, Mr. White does not participate in any of these activities. Nevertheless, he is not idle. He goes to church every night of the week except Thursday when he goes to the fourth floor lobby of the complex to say the rosary. Given his health-related problems it is understandable that he might not fit in with some of the complex's activities. As well, Mr. White is married, and smokes a pipe, an activity disliked by many of the people in the complex. He has not gone out to the lobby since one woman told him to get out of her seat. As Mrs. White related:

My husband smokes the pipe, he is an ardent pipe smoker, now if any one says do you know Mr. White, now they says that is the man with the pipe, everybody says that, now the first week we were here he went out and he sat in this chair, because nobody owns a chair, we all have the same right to a chair as anybody else, the hall or anything else, and this lady said to him. Did she say please, no she said get up out of my chair and put out that pipe. That is exactly what she said to him and he didn't go out there after that.

Mr. White's sense of self is tied to his house. This attachment may have played an important role in the way he saw himself after he retired; this house was his own home, that he had spent much of his life paying off. According to Mrs. White:

... my husband would move out tomorrow if we could get our old house back, but it is not because he does not like the people here, it is simply because he bought the house when he was working and it took him 15 years to pay it off. Then people were working on salaries and we got a lot done to it. And all of these things brings your home closer to you and all of our kids grew up in it. It was his little heaven and he could have all of his friends in and he could play his games of cards and you felt that way when you left your house.

However, living in Patrick Manor does not restrict or make it difficult for Mr. White's family to drop over for a visit. It may be that for Mr. White the only way that he can be happy is if his house, a powerful symbol for him, could be transported into the complex. It is possible that if symbols such as furnishings from his old house had been brought to the complex, he could have made Patrick Manor a little more like home.

Mr. White remains an active person; he attends church, goes out to get groceries, and has a good relationship with his family. He also has a good relationship with his wife, as demonstrated by the flowers and candies he buys for her every week. Yet he is not totally satisfied with life. After retirement, part of his identity revolved around his house, a

place where he could entertain his friends and his family could come and go whenever they wanted.

On the other hand, Mrs. White is prospering in the new environment of Patrick Manor. She is engaged in many of its informal activities, such as lobby meetings and musical services. Mrs. White is happy at Patrick Manor and does not want to leave. Being accepted was difficult at first since Mrs. White is a smoker, and many of the residents do not smoke. Mrs. White's best friend at the complex is also a smoker, and while she has many friends on the third floor where she lives, she feels most comfortable with second-floor residents who did not mind that she smokes. While at times she appears to be an independent person and at others a rebel, Mrs. White values the way people in the complex perceive her. Her sense of self is bolstered by being liked by everyone and she often made such remarks as:

No, no. I'm not afraid of anyone here, not a bit, some of them upset me because they are different personalities but, ah, but if you ever put my name on this I'm dead, I'll have to move out, some of them fight with one another.

There are other ways that Mrs. White protects her image among the other residents. She stays away from disputes. Even when she is not feeling well she always has a smile for the people around her:

They mix with each other and they fight and they make up and they fight. And they drink. Oh yes, because I was there one day and I had to get up because I wouldn't want to be in any of it. Well even the ones I don't like I smile at and say, hello, how are you ...? Now not to me, they will run over to me and practically knock me down and they will say hello Mrs. White, because I am always smiling because I am a bit of a hypocrite, because I would not want to get any of them on my back so I handle it that way.

Mrs. White has a positive outlook on life and wants to live to be 100. To her, having enough money to get by on, her health, and a good family is what makes life satisfying. She feels that living at Patrick Manor has created another family, as "Some of these people you like more than others and you meet with them." She added:

... talking about the nurse in particular I don't think she has any one, but you know she could get out and mix with the crowd, because in actual fact we are like a family, I mean if you have got a family, certainly you like them all now you like some of them more than others. I mean don't you? I mean I like some of my brothers and sisters more than I like the others. I love them all but some of them I like more.

For many of the residents there is a sense that Patrick Manor is a small family. People look after one another even if they do not always agree. Mrs. White points out that residents help people who "you might not be close to." She, like many other residents, feels useful in helping her neighbours. Tending the sick and giving away clothing gives her a feeling of self-worth. Moving into Patrick Manor was

just another adjustment to growing older and accepting her inability to look after herself and her husband. Mrs. White has adapted to the process of aging, and is still involved in many of her pre-Manor activities. The Manor accommodates Mrs. White's family and she has created a life there which is fulfilling and active. She now sees her former home as a dwelling that required considerable money and upkeep.

Perhaps the only time that Mrs. White feels dissatisfied is when Mr. White says that he does not like living at the Manor. His house was a part of his identity that could not be transported into Patrick Manor and as a result he could not be totally satisfied with his situation. However, on the whole, Mrs. White enjoys life and particularly her living arrangement which affords her the opportunity to do as she pleases. An active person who has control over her life, Mrs. White has resolved that she will make the best of life. She is proud of her family and their accomplishments and feels that many of her own goals have been realized through her children. Mrs. White continues to play bridge with her friends; she feels that in order to be happy all that she needs is a small room where she can lead a quiet life.

Both Mr. and Mrs. White make different use of the environment of Patrick Manor. Mrs. White's activities and friends appear to be evenly split between the complex and

outside. She has friends living in the building and is selective in participating in the complex's informal activities. Yet she is also involved in many social activities outside of the complex with other friends and family members. This is not the case for Mr. White as most of his activities occur outside of the complex or within his apartment.

It is easy to see that, overall, Mrs. White is quite satisfied with life. She has decided that this is where she is going to spend the rest of her life and that it is a place that helps ensure her a maximum level of independence. For her, living to be 100 years of age would be a great accomplishment. She considers herself to be as happy as she can be.

Mr. White is not as happy or as outgoing as Mrs. White. This is partly due to his health. However, he has not been dealing with his loss of life's roles - as a house owner and an active working man - which have decreased some of his life satisfaction. Perhaps if the Whites had taken some of the furnishings from their home, it would have been easier for Mr. White to come to terms with leaving. Yet despite this, his family's accomplishments still provide him with ample pleasure.

Mrs. Green

Mrs. Green is a 68-year-old widow. She lost her husband when she was 47; at that time they had been married for 25 years. Mrs. Green raised nine children, one of whom was adopted, and worked for a number of years as a midwife in her home community. When her two youngest children moved into the city to attend school, Mrs. Green felt that it would make sense to move into the city with them since otherwise she would only have to pay for their accommodations. When she moved she brought her father who was in his early eighties. Once her children finished their post-secondary education and obtained jobs, Mrs. Green applied to move into Patrick Manor with her father.

Ten years ago Mrs. Green moved into Patrick Manor; she related her primary reason for moving:

... my two youngest finished their course and got work. I applied for an apartment here because of my father being so old. It was so near the hospital and the doctors. We were lucky, we were so lucky to get into an apartment like this, because this is the best apartment that you can find anywhere.

Mrs. Green is an independent person; she does her own shopping, laundry, cleaning, and cooking. Except for a mild angina which does not require medication, Mrs. Green is in good health:

Well my health is very good. I don't have any serious complaints. Now I did have a few pains in my chest, but that was a few attacks of angina. It's not serious. I am not on any medication for it, so I think I am very lucky because at the average age today we are supposed to live only to be 65 and in these homes and in other homes you live to be 90 and 100.

Mrs. Green's zest for life is evident in her need to be busy. She is the current vice-president of the building's seniors' club; she also plays cards and darts. Instead of playing in the competitive darts club set up by the seniors' group, Mrs. Green chose rather to play with an informal group of seniors in the complex:

Monday morning, well Monday morning you do some laundry, if all of the washers are in use you wait till Tuesday or the next day. But Monday afternoon we have a dart league going, it's a small one, eight or ten senior citizens. They enjoy themselves, that would make you happy to see others being so happy you know and they really enjoy it.

Mrs. Green enjoys helping other residents, and attributes this need to her past experience as a midwife. In addition, her upbringing taught her that it was always admirable to help old people:

I don't know, I guess that it was the way that you were brought up. My parents always taught us to respect old people, help them if you can and to always be there to pay your respect to old people. Help them out every way that you can because, you will be old yourself someday. So I like helping out old people.

Mrs. Green speaks with pride about Patrick Manor. When she has visited her children who live outside Newfoundland, she has had a chance to see other seniors' complexes across the country. Although her children have asked her to stay with them or to move to complexes like Patrick Manor in their communities, Mrs. Green has resisted all of their requests as she loves life at Patrick Manor:

I have visited a senior citizens home out in Vancouver, because I have got sons out in Vancouver. I visited them a couple of years ago and they took me to a couple, because they wanted me to stay out with them. As I was telling you about Patrick Manor, I visited seniors' complexes and seniors' homes out in Vancouver, in Oshawa, in Nova Scotia, but this is the best one that I have ever seen. It has so many conveniences for old people, for real old seniors. No there is every convenience here there is an elevator, there is a mailbox, you can post mail, your mail is delivered, your mail is taken out every day, and then you got the laundromat downstairs and you got the recreation room. I mean you know I haven't seen either building like it. It is a beautiful building.

Like other seniors interviewed, Mrs. Green feels happy most of the time and does not often feel lonely or bored. As she explained:

... you know it is up to yourself to get bored, the only time that I used to get bored and it wasn't really bored and I think it was I really wouldn't know the name of it, it was around the time when Gerard died. When I was here by myself, it used to hurt some bad you know when you think of it. When it did get so bad, that's what I used to do, I would get up and go out around and visit my friends. Because if you sat down and thought about it you couldn't, you wouldn't live I don't think.

Mrs. Green's sense of self is tied to her role as a mother and she would be devastated if anything happened to her family. Much of this fear is linked to the potentially hazardous work, such as fishing, in which her sons are involved. This fear can also be linked to the recent death of her son, Gerard, in a car accident. He had just come in from a fishing trip in which his vessel had saved five fishermen whose boat had gone down. Less than twenty minutes after docking, four members of the crew, including Gerard Green, were killed on the highway. Living at Patrick Manor has given Mrs. Green the opportunity to deal with the loss of her son, and the fear that her other children may be in danger from time to time. She has made so many friends in Patrick Manor that she could not name her best friend. She has learned to deal with loneliness, an important factor in ensuring that she is satisfied with life:

Well I guess anyone living alone do find it awful lonely at times. But I have friends that come back and forth visiting me. I have a friend from the community I grew up in coming in here some times, now that is a nice ways a way, now when they come in they might stay three or four nights at a time, that way you know and if you do get lonely you can go out in the lobby and sit down and if you do there are always people coming and going, back and forth and in and out, so there is always someone to speak to you know.

Mrs. Green exerts control over her life and she feels that lonely people are responsible for their own state:

Well they could be, if they let themselves get bored, you know that is up to yourself really. If you want to get bored and stay in, now self-pity, is more or less boredom you know, have self-pity for yourself. Whereas you should get up and go out. You could have a nice walk in this building, instead of going up and down the street because you have got five floors you could walk around and go up on the elevator or walk. If you want to meet somebody or you could sit down and talk to. You could go up on any of the lobbies and talk to any of the tenants in here.

Living at Patrick Manor provides Mrs. Green with so many opportunities that she never needs to be bored:

All kinds of free time, my dear, I spend as much time as I want sitting. When I get tired of sitting down I do a lot of crafts, knitting and sewing, making quilts, knitting socks. You need never stop for a minute that is for sure, there is always something to be done around here.

There can be little doubt that Mrs. Green is satisfied with her life. Her major source of dissatisfaction is the fear that something might happen to her children. She controls that fear by having them call her when they come in from the sea. She has many friends in the complex with whom she can visit if she feels unhappy and lonely. Although most of her activities are associated within the complex, she is an active person within and outside of Patrick Manor. As with other residents, the ability to plan and do as she wants is a powerful influence in Mrs. Green's satisfaction with her life.

Mr. and Mrs. Greenway

Mr. and Mrs. Greenway, aged 89 and 88 respectively, have been married for 13 years. With his first wife, who died in 1975, Mr. Greenway had eight children. He was a fisherman for 50 years; when not fishing, he worked on the docks as a stevedore, or in paper mills, and remains fiercely independent. This is also Mrs. Greenway's second marriage.

Mr. Greenway moved into Patrick Manor 17 years ago for three reasons: first, he had only to pay his rent, which included utilities; second, the Manor was close to services; and third, to help alleviate his loneliness after his first wife died. As he remarked:

Well I was left alone, I got so lonely I didn't know what to do. I was going away up to Toronto. I had some of the family up there, sons and daughters, and I got sick of that. Then I came home and the hardest time I found was when I would come home and open that door. I had to go out to the homes of my friends nearby. When I came back at night, that was the loneliest time of my life.

Since moving into the Manor Mr. Greenway has developed a large network of friends that he can count on for help. He met his second wife at one of the seniors' clubs in the city:

Well I use to go down there a lot then. But one day I went down and I met her there at the club and we became friends and married.

Money is important to Mr. Greenway and he is proud that he raised all of his children and put them through school. Despite the high cost of education, he does not owe a cent:

I was a fisherman for 50 years on a rough coast. I had eight children in my family, there was also myself, my wife, my father and my mother. That was twelve mouths to feed, to look after. I never got welfare in my life, didn't know what it was, I don't owe one single cent in the world to nobody and if that's not a self-made man I don't know what you would call him.

Mr. Greenway still watches his money carefully; he dislikes cab drivers who, he feels, try to take advantage of seniors:

Well see what I have heard, it takes a lot for a person on a fixed income to live too and we are not here for the sake of cab drivers to make their living off of us, I'm one of them who is not going to let them. I know what a car costs, I know what it all costs, see so therefore, it's time to put these people out of business. If that's the way they're going to treat me, you or the other person, well by golly they have got a hard nut to crack here, and they're not going to do it. I came downstairs just as early as them. That's not playing the game. They're exploiting the old people, taking advantage of them. Lots of people get aboard those taxis and don't open their mouths, they're afraid, well here's one that is not afraid.

Mr. Greenway's family are a source of pride; he is quick to point out how well-turned out and well-educated they are. He is especially boastful in conversations with other residents:

I had four school teachers. I put two of them through college, one of my sons taught in Blackwood, and Greenwood. One of them ended up with the C.N. Marine in passenger service, as supervisor. So I think I have nothing to regret. I'm not bragging or nothing.

When he was still a fisherman, Mr. Greenway was active in conventions. This activism is still apparent today; he writes letters to various officials in order to help the residents of Patrick Manor. Mr. Greenway was instrumental in getting a traffic light at a dangerous intersection near the Manor, and a bus service for the building; the latter service, however, failed due to lack of use. He uses the Manor's lobbies for his own forum, and his ideas are well received by other residents. As one female resident pointed out:

If you need anything done Mr. Greenway is the person who you need to get to help you. He is a man who has been around the world. He is always writing letters. He is a smart man.

Although his health has declined, Mr. Greenway still finds time to fight for issues that he feels are important.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Greenway are active in the building, attending events and visiting other residents for a friendly game of cards. In addition, Mr. Greenway attends many of the nightly meetings on his floor, although not on the top floor where most of the men get together. The Greenways are satisfied with life. Patrick Manor allows Mr. Greenway more

control over his finances than he could have living in an older home, and he is able to remain independent. This is a major part of his sense of self that he does not want to lose.

There is little doubt that the Greenways are happy. That his family has fared so well provides Mr. Greenway with a sense of accomplishment. The residents of Patrick Manor commend him for his volunteer work and he derives a sense of pleasure from this. He would love to live to be 100. The only potential detriment to his happiness would be if something happened to his wife. However, his large network of friends within the complex would provide a cushion in such an event.

Summary

Each of these case studies demonstrates how residents of Patrick Manor have decided to live their lives. Some are highly attached to the Manor, its residents and activities, while others have limited their activities or combine activities from within and without the complex. In many ways the residents have decided to make the best of the move to Patrick Manor. Each case illustrates how former lives have been recreated through making new friends who share similar views and activities. The residents actively made efforts to

remain in contact with family, relatives and friends from the past. Some symbols, social worlds, and roles have been retained while others have been cast aside.

The environment and other residents of Patrick Manor allowed the respondents to continue lives they perceived as useful and active. The physical environment allowed each resident a certain degree of privacy when it was important to them. The boundaries between the public and private domains were clearly demarcated. The lounges, convenience store, laundry room and recreation room allowed residents to meet others and make friends, yet most of the new friendships were made among those living on the same floor. Patrick Manor provided its residents with a sense of security from external threats and being alone when sick and helpless. For those who helped others, it provided each person with a sense of worth.

Being able to participate in new as well as old valued activities, and modify the environment to suit their particular wants and needs, was an important source in ensuring that residents felt satisfied with their lives. While all those interviewed indicated there were moments when they felt down, those moments were rare. It was common knowledge that if you felt lonely or unhappy you needed only to go out and see a friend who would cheer you up. All except Mr. White were satisfied with Patrick Manor and enjoyed life

to its fullest, despite contending with losses associated with growing older and even Mr. White seemed to be coping well in this environment. The following chapter discusses the findings from this research, as well as implications for future research and housing policy.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study shows that one type of age-segregated complex can enhance the lives of seniors. The benefits of this type of housing are accrued when the housing is designed with the needs of seniors taken into account in areas such as companionship, services, formal and informal activities, and the need for maintenance of independence. Respondents moved into Patrick Manor mainly because they felt that they could no longer live alone. Those who wanted to make a large circle of new friends did so; some engaged in new activities, while others remained involved in previous activities. Involvement with family was still an important aspect of residents' lives, either by personal contact or by telephone. Most felt that their privacy was affected little by living in the complex.

For residents of Patrick Manor, subjective life satisfaction is achieved through the provision of a flexible and adaptable environment which provides the senior with an opportunity to lead an independent life, while at the same time providing him or her with the options to participate fully in that community, to interact solely with the world outside, or a combination of both. The group under study were able to achieve life satisfaction through adaptation to an environment that allowed each individual to have control. Miss Red, who never participated in the activities around her, developed a world of her own, participating in activities outside of the complex. Her privacy was achieved through her use of the Manor's back and side exits. By participating only in activities that she saw as being for younger people, Miss Red was able to feel young in an environment which she saw as being full of old people. Other residents sought out friends and activities in the complex and were happy and satisfied with their lives. They embraced only those activities that they enjoyed. Yet others chose to have an even balance of activities outside as well as inside the complex.

Some residents of Patrick Manor were unable to look after themselves. They were provided with formal services such as Meals on Wheels, as well as the informal supports of friends who pick up needed items. These residents were accepted and looked after by other residents as if they were family.

However, it would be wrong to suggest that every senior is suited to this type of environment. Although some residents did admit that there were those in the complex who did not have high levels of life satisfaction, I was unable to interview any of them. Mr. White was unhappy because he was not living in his own house that he had built and where he raised his children, and as such he was an example of a resident who had a low level of life satisfaction.

Future Research

Very little research has been conducted in Canada on the impact of housing environment and life satisfaction. Yet the rate at which environments are being built for seniors far outpaces research on the effects that these environments have on the well-being of its residents. The research presented in this thesis provides a partial picture of how environment affects life satisfaction, especially as it is subjectively defined. The sample, however, is relatively small and with the exception of five males most of the respondents are widowed females. According to the interviewees, 85 percent of those living in the complex were females; this was confirmed by the building superintendent.

In future research on environment and life satisfaction more emphasis should be placed on males who live in age-segregated complexes. We need to discover how living in environments which are predominantly female affects the successful adaptation of males to the aging process. Some of the females interviewed thought that the males in the complex were lonely; this, however, was not substantiated by the males. There is also a need to conduct qualitative longitudinal studies on the effects of living in a residence for a long period of time. As environments increase, more comprehensive studies on those living conditions that are better suited to assisting seniors to adapt to the physical and social losses associated with the aging process should be conducted. Special consideration should be given to locations in proximity to important services such as shopping areas, hospitals, bus routes, and also to developing on-site services such as special meeting areas. There is a need to find out more about the benefits of living in age-integrated versus age-segregated complexes.

Implications for Research on Aging

The current research in this thesis lends added support against the theory of disengagement. Those seniors who were interviewed continued to be quite active well into their later

years and enjoyed their activities. Research has also shown that life satisfaction is affected by such diverse factors as how a spouse feels towards housing, the safety of one's children, and one's perceived health. This research has also demonstrated that it is important to provide environments where seniors have maximum control over their lives. These residents of Patrick Manor are happy because they live in an environment which helps them maintain their sense of self.

Implications for Housing Policy

The need for increased housing for an aging population will continue well into the next century. The fastest growing category will continue to be the over-65 age group who will require environments which cater to their increasing social and physical limitations. With the right combination of services the seniors' apartment complex will be a step in the right direction for ensuring higher levels of life satisfaction. The study of Patrick Manor has shown that seniors can remain in this kind of housing and maintain social ties and higher levels of independence well into later life. I interviewed and observed many residents in their eighties who led independent lives.

A combination of formal and informal supports increases a person's sense of well-being. For many, the next step after apartment living is the nursing home, a thought to be put off for as long as possible. Mrs. Yellow was able to live alone in her apartment because she had someone come in to clean and do other chores which she felt she could no longer do. She was proud that she could still do her own laundry, knit, and visit with other residents in the building as well as with outside friends. She was able to maintain a sense of independence despite her declining physical health. When asked how she felt, she answered, "I am as healthy as most of the people around me."

The people living in Patrick Manor were not isolated from the community. They went to shopping centres, on bus tours, grocery shopped at the end of the street, used the public transportation system, and participated in social and recreational activities in the community. These findings indicate that age-segregated housing, when properly located near necessary services, maximizes the seniors' control over their lives and can add significantly to their quality of life. It also shows that if seniors are aware of and can effectively use the various services designed to help them live in the community, there may not be as great a need to create nursing homes in the future.

Conclusions

As people age, they have to adapt to changing social and physical losses. This study's findings indicate that through the provision of an environment which furnishes social supports, services, and easy maintenance, the environment does play a role in facilitating the seniors' ability to adapt to these losses. At the same time, it helps provide them with a sense of independence and privacy. Each person has the opportunity to engage in those activities that he or she chooses. While these findings indicate that these seniors are satisfied with their lives, one cannot stop there. There is a need to find out how other environments are helping seniors adapt to increasing losses. Two of the residents interviewed indicated that they had moved out of other seniors' complexes after a short period of time; this demonstrated that life in other complexes can decrease one's life satisfaction. It was fortunate for these two residents that they were able to move, but what about others? This thesis has provided insights into life inside a seniors' complex where the residents are mistresses and masters in their own home. Patrick Manor provides a good example of how the right combination of formal and informal support can enhance the quality of seniors' lives, especially when it allows its residents the freedom to engage in activities that provide them with a sense of worth and meaning.

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APPENDIX: UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

General questions:

Are you married?

Are you originally from this community?

How long have you lived in this building?

What type of housing were you living in before you moved in here?

Why did you decide to move into this particular type of housing?

Do you still do things with the friends that you had when you were in your last home?

How many people have you met since coming here that you would call friends?

Compared to others your age, how would you rate your health?

Can you tell me how you would say things are going for you these days?

How happy would you say that you are?

Can you tell me what your typical day is like?

Do you do things on week-ends that are different from what you do during the week?

Do you have anyone who does your grocery shopping, cleaning, laundry, etc?

Family and Friendships:

How many children do you have?

How often do they visit you, call you on the phone, or write to you?

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

How often do they visit you, call you on the phone, or write to you?

Who would you say is your best friend?

Have you made many new friendships since you have moved in here?

Have you kept your old friendships you had before you moved here?

Are there any times during the day when you feel lonely? Why do you feel this way?

Do you think there are people in this building who are lonely?

Can you tell me why they might feel this way?

Do you visit other people in the building? How often?

Leisure and Leisure Time Activities:

How much free time would you say you have?
What type of activities do you do away from this building?
Cards, bingo, church, dinners, shopping.
What type of activities do you participate in this building?
Meeting with friends in the lounge areas, dinner, shopping in the convenience store, etc?
Of all of the activities that you are involved in which one do you like the best?
What sort of activities do you get involved in to keep busy?
Are you a member of the seniors group in this building? Why, why not?
Do you participate in any of the planned activities offered in the club downstairs?
Are you ever bored here?
Do you think that there are people in this building who are bored? Why do you think this is the case?

Housing Satisfaction:

What do you think of _____?
Has living here had any kind of an effect on your life?
How satisfied are you with living in this building? Why do you say this?
Can you tell me what you like most about living in this building?
Can you tell me what you like least about living in this building?
Can you tell me what makes this building a good place to live in?
Do you know anyone who does not like living here? Can you tell me why they might not like living in this building?
Is there anything missing from this building that you think it should have? For example, a main dining room where people could go to eat without having to cook their own meals?
Would you say that this place has become home for you now? Why or why not?
Would you rather live in a building which has different age groups? Why or why not?

Interpersonal Relations:

When you meet with other people in the building, what sort of things do you talk about? Would you say that there are people in this building that you like to avoid for some reason?
If you had a problem, is there anyone in this building you could call on for help?
How do people deal with residents that they would normally want to avoid but end up sitting next to?
How would you deal with a person in the building that you might not feel comfortable around?
Do you feel that living in this building has an effect on your

privacy?

Can you do all of the same things here that you did when you were in your home before you moved here?

Have you ever thought of moving from this building because of the way some residents behave?



