

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A STUDY OF THE SATISFACTIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS
WITH LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF A GROUP OF
MEMBERS OF SENIOR CITIZEN CLUBS IN
METROPOLITAN WINNIPEG

Being the Report of a Research Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of Master of
Social Work

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship of the aged parent to his adult children in terms of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living arrangements (living apart and living together). This was related to independence from adult children and communication with them.

Of a sample group, 100 senior citizens from twelve senior citizen's clubs in Metropolitan Winnipeg were interviewed, and the data obtained in these interviews was analyzed.

The conclusions indicated that the ideal situation is to live together with independence, but, that those aged persons living apart expressed a higher degree of independence and hence of satisfaction with living arrangements than those living together. It was found further that independence and communication were more significant factors in determining satisfactions than living apart or living together. However, since a much greater number of those living apart were independent, it was concluded that the preferred pattern is living apart.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problems of the aged have been subjects of research for some time. This study is concerned particularly with the feeling of the aged person regarding his relationship with his own family.

The relationship with his family can be studied from several points of view. Family relationships vary in different ethnic and religious groups. Socio-economic and occupational levels are also important factors in determining the type of relationship that exists. The number of children and grandchildren, and the type of living arrangements can also alter family relationships.

The focus of the study will be on the feelings of the aged regarding their living arrangements. The aspect of feeling that we are concerned with is the satisfaction or the dissatisfaction with the living arrangements. By the latter it is not meant the condition of the house, or its location, but refers specifically to living apart from or living together with adult children. Satisfactions with living arrangements can be studied from other points of view as well. Proximity to peers and nearness to recreational facilities are important considerations for the old person in choosing his living arrangements because his satisfactions depend largely on whether he has interesting things to do and whether he can enjoy life with his old friends. The source and size of his income also determines his

living arrangements, and influences the satisfaction he derives from these arrangements.

Satisfactions with living arrangements are also conditioned by whether or not the aged parent is independent from his adult children so that he is free to do as he wishes. Also, whether or not he is in communication with his adult children determines satisfactions because of his natural desire to maintain family ties.

Since the concern here is the relationship to the family, the scope of this study will be: the independence from, and the communication with the adult children. Independence does not mean merely "living apart". In this study, independence refers to financial, physical, and emotional independence. For example, can the aged person spend his own money as he chooses? Can he entertain friends independently, etc.?

A study made at Cornell University by Martin N. Martell, Ph.D., in 1956 concluded that: "In the preferred pattern old parents are supposed to live apart from their adult offspring, especially when both the parents and offspring are married."¹ As well, according to Linden in his study:

¹Martin, N. Martell, "Situations of Aging in American Society", I and II, Dissertation Abstract, XVII, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 914.

A recent poll of older people indicated that they prefer not to live with their children. This feeling is based on a universal preference for independence in our society.¹

With this in mind the following hypothesis was formulated:

"The aged parent expresses satisfaction living apart from but in communication with his adult children more often than when living together."

Out of the hypothesis came several questions which the study will attempt to answer. These questions are: What are the living arrangements? Are the living arrangements satisfactory? Are the living arrangements the result of choice or necessity?

In this study the term aged parent will refer only to individuals born between January 1st, 1887 and January 1st, 1897; male or female; living in Metropolitan Winnipeg; mobile enough to attend a Senior Citizen's group in Winnipeg; and capable of understanding and answering the questions put to them.

The term expresses satisfaction will mean that the interviewee answers positively by word and tone.

Living apart means residing in a different household. (Household is a self-contained unit having separate toilet and cooking facilities).

Living together means residing with adult children in the same household.

¹Maurice, E. Linden, "The Older Person in the Family", The Journal of Social Casework, XXXVII, No. II, (1956), p. 77.

Adult children are those married or single offspring of the aged parents who are living in Metropolitan Winnipeg.

An initial and cursory survey of the existing literature prompted and spurred our thinking along the lines which have already been outlined. It helped by giving background material and providing a perspective for the study. The background material also revealed which studies had already been conducted and it also pointed out gaps which assisted in formulating the focus and scope of this particular study.

In Chapter II a more detailed survey of the literature will be made to point out the thinking of the more eminent authorities in this area of study and their relation to the present project.

In Chapter III the method will be described. The following is a brief outline of the approach.

To answer the questions posed in the hypothesis original data was required. To obtain this data a schedule will be devised containing questions pertaining to the hypothesis. Interviewing is a standard technique used by social workers and therefore to reach the subjective feeling tone the interview method was chosen. The interviews will be controlled by the uniform schedule,

Due to the exigencies of time the simple random sampling method will be used. The sources of data for the sample will be the members of various Senior Citizen's clubs in Metropolitan Winnipeg. This study is being conducted in Metropolitan Winnipeg by a research team of students from the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba.

In choosing a sample population, two choices were available. Of the two, which were either Senior Citizen's clubs or the recipients of social allowance of the Department of Public Welfare, the former was chosen. This made the sample more representative of the total population by eliminating a narrow economic or financial group.

It is more practical, economical and efficient to base studies on samples, and for most practical purposes the conclusions drawn from a sample can be just as valid as conclusions drawn from the entire population.

Various limitations inherent in the method were recognized at the outset. For example, it is difficult to establish a relationship in one interview. Therefore, there may be trouble in engaging the respondent in sufficient conversation in order to reach the feeling tone. Furthermore it is not possible to assess the reality orientation of the old person except in the gross.

There are various other limitations around the sample chosen (Senior Citizens), the schedule (not measuring the quality of communication), and the interview method. These will be discussed more fully in Chapter III.

In Chapter IV the main classifications in analyzing the data will be satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living arrangements relating to: living with adult children and living apart from adult children; communication with adult children and independence from adult children.

The analysis will be done on a percentage basis because it is not expected that the sample will include the same number of aged parents living apart as those living together. This will be expanded and discussed further in the chapter on Analysis.

In the fifth and final chapter, conclusions will be drawn in relation to the hypothesis, and the study as a whole will be evaluated.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The world today is faced with the problem of increasing population. As the general population increases so does the number of our aged citizens. The White House Conference on Aging states:

We have 16 million people over 65 today. This is five times more than we had in 1900 and the number will double in the next forty years. The number over 75 will triple. At that time, the over-65 group will exceed 10% of our population.¹

This study was done in the United States of America while another study carried out by the Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg in 1956 quotes "that there will be an increase of 25% in the aged population of Canada from 1951 to 1971."²

Along with the population explosion and the out-of-proportionate rise in the percentage of our aging citizens there is an awareness in the field of social science that there is an urgency to assist the aged citizens to adjust in our industrial society. Studies on the aged have emphasized different facets of the problem. The following studies: Relationships Within Three-Generation Families,³

¹White House Conference, Proceedings of Conference on Aging, (Washington, D.C., January, 1961), p. 117.

²The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, Age and Opportunity, A Report Prepared by the Committee on Services for the Aged (Winnipeg: The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, 1956), p. 1.

³Relationships Within Three-Generation Families, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

Thurston County's Older People,¹ and The Family Life of Old People,² have contributed interesting background material which proved helpful to this present study on the aging carried out by master students from the University of Manitoba, School of Social Work. These studies substantiate the idea that there has been a change in the relationships existing between the aged parent and their adult children since the turn of the century. After 1900 there was a shift from rural to urban living; from the agriculture-centered life to an industrial one, and all of this was complicated the more by rapid scientific and technological advances.

Formerly the relationships were kinship-centered and in this setting the role of the parent was clearly defined. The parent wielded more influence and was held in higher esteem. As living became more and more urbanized family and kinship relations were de-emphasized and associations selected on a basis of occupational and avocational interests and similarity of ideas and values were emphasized.

Other reasons for the changes in relationships between parents and children are increased life expectancy due to advances in medical technology, decline in family size, and a trend toward earlier marriage. In our industrial society, parents are able to live one-

¹Thurston County's Older People, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

²Peter Townsend, The Family Life of Old People, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957).

quarter of their married lives after their last child has left the parental home. The study, Our Needy Aged,¹ suggests that this family trend is associated with our industrial society and has a marked effect on family organization and functioning. Society expects the young couple to establish their own household leaving the middle-aged parents to continue on their own. The parents grow older and are admired as independent senior citizens until a spouse dies or becomes physically incapacitated.² The remaining parent feels isolated, useless and believes that he is a drag on his children. The aged parent is called upon to make more complex adjustments than ever before.

These adjustments are external and internal such as a necessitated change in his living arrangements and the aged parent's subjective reaction to this change. The aged parent therefore needs the psychological support of his family in order to make a decision in this regard which might be considered objective. Any plans pertaining to living arrangements for the aged should involve them from the outset. At this point, the surviving parent is often expected to live with his or her children who by this time are themselves middle-aged. Thus, the study, Our Needy Aged,³ recognizes that an

¹F. A. Bond, et al., Our Needy Aged: A California Study of a National Problem, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1934).

²Mayer, M.D. Fisch, "Organic Psychiatric Disorders of the Aged: How They Affect Family Relationships," Social Casework, XXXIX (February, 1958), pp. 503-507.

³Bond, et al., op. cit.

added responsibility is heaped upon the adult child who has for a number of years been free from this burden of caring for his parents and now must adjust to these changing circumstances.

In the agriculture-centered family there was built-in communication due to the fact that more than two generations generally lived in one household and family ties were very strong. The advent of industrialization, urban living, and the nuclear family saw a lessening of this communication. Despite the fact that much of this communication has been discontinued, the psychological theory on the normal growth of personality indicates that it would be unnatural should the aged parent cease to desire an ongoing close relationship with his or her adult children. As one 63 year old woman said, "You're more your own master when you're independent. But it's nice to be near."¹

The greatest satisfaction, therefore, would seem to be provided when the old person can maintain or return to his place in the community where he is able to continue accepting his responsibilities. In this way he can enjoy being an active member of the community and continue to live an independent life in his own home for as long as possible. It could be suspected that this is being done in part as indicated by the fact that in the United States, according to

¹The Family Life of Old People, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey.)

the study, Psychological Aspects of Aging,¹ 80% of persons 65 and over maintain independent households. In the study, Age and Opportunity, the claim is made that "independent living is favored".² This report equates "independent" with "favored" and it assumes that because two-thirds of the aged live independently it is the favored form of living. From the point of view of the present research group the word "favored" is a poor choice. There is sufficient information in the Age and Opportunity Report to indicate that more of the older people were actually living in an independent manner. However, this study does not indicate clearly why they live apart from their adult children. In the present project there will be an attempt to show why the aged parent lives apart and consequently it may come closer to showing how the aged feel about their living arrangements and whether they are actually in favor of independent living.

The sociological studies taken into consideration in the survey done by Geneva Mathiasen indicate that:

The impression from recorded evidence seems equally clear that where there is no choice, where ill health or financial considerations require a three-generation household, where there is little or no reciprocal advantage, - the results are likely to cause dissatisfaction all around.³

¹The American Psychological Association, The Nation and Its Older People, A Report Prepared by the Committee on the Research Division of Maturity of Old Age, (Washington, 1956).

²The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, Age and Opportunity, A Report Prepared by the Committee on Services for the Aged, (Winnipeg: The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, 1956), p. 1.

³Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

Late in our project the survey, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family,¹ by Geneva Mathiasen, came to our attention. In her survey one of the studies mentioned was the one carried out by the Pennsylvania State University² in 1958 for the purpose of determining how satisfactory the arrangement of living together in one household was for the three-generation family. Studied were 97 three-generation households in a small urban community; 45 in a rural community. Interviews were held separately with representatives of all three generations, providing the third generation member was over the age of ten. Four-fifths had been living under this arrangement for more than a year. The older generation indicated a preference for living in their own household while their adult children stated that they would prefer not having their parents living independently.

In the study, Relationships Within Three-Generation Families,³ an attempt was made to measure the quality of relationships in three-generation households by questioning all three generations about disagreements. It was found that there were disagreements all around. The grandchildren reported that they had the largest number of disagreements with the aged although not appreciably more than with their parents. The aged disagreed more with their adult children than

¹Ibid.

²Relationships Within Three-Generation Families, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

³Ibid.

with their grandchildren and their adult children in turn disagreed considerably more with their aged parents than with their own children.

Another finding from this study was the cause of disagreements between the three generations involved. The chief cause of disagreement between the adult children and the aged parents was smoking and/or drinking. The second cause was around the disciplining of the children. Disagreements between grandparents and grandchildren centered around staying out late, choice of radio programs, girls using make-up, choice of friends, smoking and drinking. This study covered an area which one of our set limits (the quality of communication) prevented us from measuring.

Another comprehensive study on the three-generation relationship concerned itself with the aged people of Thurston County, Washington.¹ It studied the relationship between the living arrangements and the social adjustment of the aged parent in an attempt to discover the reason why elderly people and their adult children were living together in the same household. They discovered that in 61% of the cases the living arrangement was for mutual convenience rather than necessity. They also found:

¹Thurston County's Older People, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

Those older people, sharing living arrangements with their children from choice rather than necessity were best satisfied of all the families studied, including those living independently. Those unable to live alone and living with children from necessity were least satisfied of all. Those living with sons and daughters for convenience reported considerable leisure but also had more interests, hobbies and social participation than any other group. Those unable to live alone had the most difficulty with free time. When asked about problems they were facing, those living with children of necessity had the most problems of all, - health, finances, and loneliness heading the list. The first two, health and finances, might logically have necessitated the living situation and could not be helped. But this group even more frequently than those living alone mentioned "lonesomeness" as a problem. The fact that loneliness may present more of a problem to those living with children by necessity than to those living alone presents a significant indication of relationship.¹

This study would appear to give credence to the idea that any amount of mutual convenience to be found in well-planned physical living arrangements for the aged parent in no way compensates for a lack of filial affection and good relationships between the aged parent and his adult child.

The next study on which we will comment is the survey carried out by Peter Townsend² in Bethnal Green, London, which had for its scope a much broader area of interest relevant to the aged than ours in that it looked at the whole aspect of family life. This survey was incorporated into the book, The Family Life of Old People. The first part of the book shows us that the dominant interest of most old people in the London borough of Bethnal Green was the extended

¹Ibid., p. 4.

²Peter Townsend, The Family Life of Old People, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957).

family. This aspect of the book was completely sociologically oriented. The latter part of this book dealt with the social problems of old age, scrutinized in the light of the survey's resultant information as well as their implications for policy. The aim was to derive practical recommendations for policy from sociological evidence.

This survey was carried out within a working-class area in east London. The study found that:

fifty-nine percent lived in one-generation households, 31% in two-generation households (these are usually unmarried or widowed children) and only 10% in three-generation households. Most of the old people interviewed wished to be independent and were attached to their own homes. The great majority believed that to live together was to invite open conflict with the child's spouse, and this they wished to avoid. They thought they served both their own interests and those of their children by living near them rather than with them.¹

Old people were not against living alone. Their one big qualification to living alone was that they should live near the children. "A strikingly large proportion - 85% of those with children - had a child living with them or within a mile."² In looking at the findings of the Bethnal Green survey we must keep in mind that the families' geographical proximities cannot be expected to be duplicated in the United States and Canada.

¹Ibid., p. 31.

²The Family Life of Old People, cited by Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

However, it is interesting to note that in a study on old people carried out in Chattanooga, Tennessee, family relationships were also very strong.

Seventy-two percent reported living children and about 25% lived with children. Only one-fifth of these, however, or 5%, did so from choice rather than necessity.¹

Geneva Mathiasen suggests that Chattanooga might not be typical of American cities. The interviewers carrying out the present study on the aged were also skeptical about the remaining 20% of the aged parents residing in Chattanooga who indicated that they were living with their adult children because of necessity. On the basis of our interviews it is our impression that the aged parent places an extremely high value on "independent decision-making" and when questioned about his living arrangements is loathe to admit that he could be living in the same household as his adult child for any other reason but that he wishes it this way.

Further evidence from the Peter Townsend survey suggests:

that the extended family is slowly adjusting to new circumstances, not disintegrating. To the old person as much as to the young it seems to be the supreme comfort and support. Its central purpose is as strong as ever. It continues to provide a natural, if conservative, means of self-fulfilment and expression, as the individual moves from the first to the third generation, learning, performing and teaching the functions of child, parent and grandparent.²

¹Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

²Peter Townsend, The Family Life of Old People (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), p. 210.

One of the most important findings to emerge from this study was in connection with the major role of the aged parent in the three-generation family. By this it is meant that they found that the aged grandparent although in receipt of support in many circumstances from his family, however, in turn helped the family in many cases through provision of midday meals, baby-sitting and other services.

This survey, although limited, provided us with information pertaining to the aged parents' living arrangements, his communication with his adult children as well as indications that the aged parent felt strongly that he preferred living apart from, but in communication with his adult children.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The general method chosen by this research team was the interview, because it was felt that in a face-to-face situation one could most easily arrive at subjective feelings. In addition, the interview method is a technique known to social workers.

To obtain the data a sample of one hundred was chosen. This number was feasible in terms of the time available and the size of the research team. Results from samples are considered fairly accurate as a survey of an entire universe.

Membership lists were obtained from three United Church senior citizen groups. Upon surveying these lists it was found that a majority of the members were over seventy-five years of age and, therefore, did not fall within the definition of "aged parent". Thus it became necessary to look for another population. In the second week of January, 1962, the Age and Opportunity Bureau was contacted, who in turn provided the research team with the names of fourteen senior citizen clubs in Metropolitan Winnipeg. The final sample for the study was based on one hundred out of a possible one hundred and forty-nine names available from twelve out of the fourteen groups. The sample was taken during the 'on-season' of the clubs, in January, 1962.

At each club two-thirds of the people who fell within the definition of "aged parent" were interviewed. This was based on the

simple random sampling method. Because it was not possible to ascertain, in advance, the composition of the total universe, people had to be chosen "at random".

On occasion there might be only three people out of a possible seven or eight who fell within the definition of "aged parent", present at the meeting. When this situation arose three out of the three people were interviewed and group members returned to that club on another occasion to interview the remaining three or four members. In this way the two-thirds sample was obtained.

Limitations in the sample arose. One of the most significant of these was that in choosing senior citizen club members the sample was limited to the more sociable type of "aged parent". This may put an innate bias in the sample. Since it is difficult to establish a relationship in one interview some senior citizens were loath to reveal personal information about themselves, particularly around finances. Also, it was not possible to dispel any overt or covert hostility towards the research team, in one interview.

The instrument used to collect the original data was the schedule. It controlled the interviews. Questions in the schedule were comprised of both closed and open-ended questions, including multiple-choice type questions. They were designed to answer the three parts of the hypothesis--i.e. living arrangements; communication; and, independence from adult children.

A uniform method of explanation of the study was given by a group member at each club meeting. It was explained that information

collected would be tabulated in an impersonal manner--on a statistical basis exclusively, with no names being used.

The interviewers were free to interpret the questions for the respondents. However, no extraneous conversation between the senior citizen and the group member was noted or utilized as data. Original data was collected by the schedule exclusively. This may be cited as a limitation in some respects because often a person talks more freely when not answering a specific question. It is observable that when answering a specific question answers tend often to be monosyllabic. Significant comments or conversation might have been noted by the interviewers had a space entitled "other comments" been provided in the schedule.

The schedule was developed and tested on a sample group of twenty-four senior citizens at the Notre Dame Day Care Center in mid-November, 1961. After this "trial run" the schedule was revised. Two of the open-ended questions were deleted because it was found that they were too difficult to classify and analyze. Two other questions were deleted after it was found that they really had no bearing on the questions to be answered. For example, the question, "Do your grandchildren irritate you?" had no relevance to the hypothesis, and therefore it was deleted.

The use of the trial run was to determine whether or not the data was available to the research team; and to see if it could be obtained and used according to the interviewing method and the sampling instrument. The preliminary sample of twenty-four proved

that the data was available when the research team completed twenty-one out of twenty-four sample schedules. In addition it was found that it was feasible to conduct the interviews at a specific agency--indeed, that it was immaterial whether the interviews were conducted at their homes or at an agency.

The preliminary sample was, therefore, useful in that it enabled the team to correct and modify the method.

In this study the data for analysis will be the responses to the questions posed in the schedule and answered in the interviews.

There are three main classifications or units of study in this research project. The first unit of study is the 'aged parent', which will be divided into two classifications--Aged parent satisfied or dissatisfied with living apart from his adult children, and Aged parent, satisfied or dissatisfied with living with his adult children.

The second unit of study is 'communication'. The first classification under communication is the telephone which has been sub-divided into the frequency with which the aged parent telephones his adult children; and the frequency with which the adult children telephone the aged parent. The second classification under communication is visiting. The sub-sections under visiting are the frequency with which the aged parent visits his adult children; and the frequency with which the adult children visits his aged parent.

The third unit of study is 'Independence from adult children'. The classifications under this unit are independence and dependence.

The two classifications under aged parent will be measured according to the answers given on the schedule to questions one, two and three of sections A and B under "living arrangements". (See Appendix A).

The following definitions were established to measure the quantity of communication. These definitions were patterned after similar ones in a study by Ruth Albrecht in which she, too, measured a unit of study quantitatively.¹

Phoning frequency--three telephone calls per week will be considered good communication; once or twice a month will be considered average communication; less frequently than twice a month will be considered poor communication.

Visiting frequency--one visit per week will be considered good communication; once a month will be considered average communication; less frequently than once a month will be considered poor communication.

Independence will be measured in the following fashion. If questions two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten-B and eleven and twelve are answered affirmatively this will be taken to mean independence. If these questions are answered negatively then this will be an indication of dependence. If question nine is answered "necessity", it will indicate dependence; if answered "choice", it will indicate independence. If question one is answered "yes", it will indicate independence; if it is answered negatively,

¹Ruth Albrecht, "Relationships of Older Parents With Their Children," Marriage and Family Living, XVI, No. I, (1954), p. 34.

it will indicate independence. If question ten (a) is answered "yes", it will indicate dependence; a negative answer will be taken to mean independence.

If 36%, that is to say, four or more of the questions in this section on independence from adult children, are answered in a manner indicating dependence, the individual will be classified as dependent. Conversely, if fewer than four questions are answered in a dependent manner, the interviewee will be classified as independent. Thirty-six percent was arbitrarily chosen as a measure of independence. This constitutes a limit to the study,

In this same section, question twelve is not to be regarded as a query under "independence". It is a strategically placed inquiry to be used as a 'check' against the results of the second unit of study--Communication. This means that if question twelve is answered negatively this will partially invalidate any indication of "good communication" previously established in that unit.

The data will be compiled according to the units and classifications which have been set forth. After this is done, cross-classifications will be made and presented to establish the validity of the hypothesis and resultant questions.

The first step will be to determine which percentage of aged parents live apart, and which percentage live together with their adult children. The sample will then be divided into two sections consisting of those aged parents who live apart and those who live together. The next step will be to determine the satisfaction and

the dissatisfaction of those living apart and those living together. A cross-classification will be made in order to compare satisfactions or dissatisfactions with living together.

With regard to the questions on the choice or necessity of living arrangements, beyond determining the number of aged parents who expressed choice or necessity we are not using these factors as a basis for any conclusions or comparisons.

The second part of the analysis will deal with communication. This concerns only the communication of those aged parents living apart from their adult children. A cross-classification will then be made between the amount of communication and the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living apart.

The third section of the analysis will deal with the area of independence from adult children. The percentages of dependence and independence will be established according to the working definition. The independence of each group, i.e. those living apart and those living together, will be measured. A cross-classification between independence and dependence and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living arrangements will be the next step. Following this, a division will be made and the independent and dependent, living-apart group will be measured against their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living apart. Conversely, the independent and dependent living-together group will be measured against their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with living together.

For the purpose of clarity, tables will be used to relate the findings. All the findings will be presented in the form of percentages because it is not expected that the sample will include the same number of aged parents living apart as those living together. This will facilitate comparisons.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Living Arrangements

The first part of the analysis will deal with living arrangements. Here the initial finding of the study was that of the one hundred aged parents interviewed in the sample, 70 were found to be living apart from their adult children and 30 were found to be living together with them; 82 expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements and 18 expressed dissatisfaction. Of these hundred, 88 chose their living arrangements while 12 indicated that they were living as they were because of necessity.

The sample was divided into two categories, namely, aged parents living apart from their adult children, and aged parents living together with their adult children. This made comparisons possible between the two groups in regard to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their living arrangements.

In this connection it was found that of the 70 aged parents living apart, 60 expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements and 10 expressed dissatisfaction; 65 chose their living arrangements and 5 indicated that they so lived because of necessity.

On the other hand, of the 30 aged parents living together it was found that 22 expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements and 8 expressed dissatisfaction; 23 chose their living arrangements and 7 indicated that they so lived because of necessity. For

clarification of these findings see Table I immediately following.

TABLE I
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF 100 AGED PARENTS
BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Living Arrangements	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Apart	70	85.7	10	14.3
Together	30	73.3	8	26.7
Total	100	-	18	-

More than two-thirds (70%) of the aged parents interviewed were found to be living apart. Of these, an even higher figure of 82 per cent expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements. When comparisons were made between the two groups it was found that, while satisfaction with living arrangements was expressed in a higher percentage of cases where aged parents were living apart than where they were living together (85.7% as against 73.3%), satisfaction with living arrangements was high in both groups, and the relative difference between the two groups was not great.

From these observations it was concluded that aged parents living apart from their adult children were to some extent more likely to be satisfied with their living arrangements than the aged parents living together with their adult children. However, as satisfaction in both groups was high, living apart or together did

not appear to be the only factor in determining satisfaction with living arrangements.

During the process of interviewing, the research team discovered that some of the aged parents who were living with their adult children owned their own homes and were not only financially independent from their adult children but they were, in some cases, still supporting them. It was felt that aged parents living with their adult children under these circumstances might express satisfaction more frequently than those who lived with their adult children where the latter owned the home and were financially independent of their parents. The significance of this discovery in terms of the study will be elaborated in Chapter V.

In order to determine whether or not these circumstances did actually have a bearing on satisfaction with living arrangements, the group of aged parents found to be living with their adult children according to the definition of the study was sub-divided into two further groups. This was done on the basis of whether or not the aged parents claimed to own their own homes and/or to be supporting their adult children who were living with them. In other words, the aged parents who claimed to own their own homes and/or to be supporting their adult children were classified as one group, henceforth to be referred to as "aged parents having adult children living with them" while those aged parents who did not claim either to own their own homes or to be supporting their adult children were classified as the other group, which will be referred to as "aged parents living with adult children".

Thus, after these classifications were made it was found that of the original group of 30 aged parents living together with their adult children, 13 had children living with them, and 17 were living with their children. Of those who had children living with them, 10 expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements and 3 expressed dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, of the group who were living with their adult children, 12 were found to express satisfaction with their living arrangements and 5 were found to express dissatisfaction. These findings are clarified by Table II, presented below.

TABLE II

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF 30 AGED PARENTS EITHER
LIVING WITH THEIR CHILDREN OR HAVING CHILDREN
LIVING WITH THEM, BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Living Arrangements	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction			
	Number	%	Number	%		
Children living with parents	13	43.3	10	76.9	3	23.1
Parents living with children	17	57.7	12	70.6	5	29.4
Total	30	100.0	22	-	8	-

On the basis of the findings outlined in Table II, it was found that, of the total group of aged parents living together with their adult children, a smaller percentage claimed to own their own homes, and/or to be supporting their children, than those who did not claim this. However, the percentage was found to be surprisingly large; 43.3 per cent as compared to 57.7 per cent who did not make any such claims. As expected, the aged parents who either owned their own homes, or who were supporting their adult children expressed satisfaction in a higher percentage of cases than those who did not. However, the relative difference in satisfaction, as expressed by the two groups was very small. Therefore, it was concluded that whether aged parents owned their homes and supported their children, or they did not, was not of particular significance in terms of their satisfaction with their living arrangements. The validity of these findings and conclusions will be discussed in Chapter V.

Communication

This part of the analysis will deal with the communication of the aged parents with their adult children. It will deal only with the communication of those aged parents living apart from their adult children, as it was not thought feasible in the confines of one interview, to measure the amount of communication in the cases where the aged parent lives with his adult children (or where the adult children live with the aged parents).

It was found that of the 70 aged parents living apart from their adult children, 58 had average to good communication with their adult

children and 12 had poor communication.

The next step was to compare average to good and poor communication with satisfaction and dissatisfaction with living arrangements. Here it was found that 55 of those with average to good communication also expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements, and 3 expressed dissatisfaction. On the other hand, 5 of those with poor communication expressed satisfaction with living arrangements and 7 expressed dissatisfaction. For clarification of these findings refer to Table III, below.

TABLE III
COMMUNICATION OF 70 AGED PARENTS LIVING APART,
BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION WITH LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Communication	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Average to Good	58	82.9	55	94.8	3	5.2
Poor	12	17.1	5	41.7	7	58.3
Total	70	100.0	60	-	10	-

Table III illustrates that a high percentage (82.9 per cent) of the aged parents living apart from their adult children had average to good communication with them. Of the aged parents with average to good communication, 94.8 per cent expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements. Meanwhile, of those with poor

communication a much smaller percentage (41.7 per cent) expressed satisfaction. Observed in a different manner an even more striking difference was found between the two groups in the percentage of aged parents who expressed satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their living arrangements. For example, of the aged parents who had average to good communication, 94.8 per cent expressed satisfaction, and only 5.2 per cent expressed dissatisfaction. The variation here was very great in favor of satisfaction. On the other hand, of the aged parents who had poor communication, 41.7 per cent expressed satisfaction and 58.3 per cent expressed dissatisfaction. In this group dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction was expressed in the higher percentage of cases.

Therefore, since satisfaction with living arrangements was expressed by a much higher percentage of aged parents when they had average to good communication than when they had poor communication it was concluded that communication is related to satisfaction with living arrangements. However, it should be noted that aged parents could be satisfied with their living arrangements even if they had poor communication with their adult children. This is evidenced by a fairly high percentage (41.7 per cent) who expressed satisfaction in this group.

Independence

The third section of the analysis of data deals with the broad area of the aged parents' independence from his adult children. In this part of the study the initial finding was that of the 100 aged

parents interviewed in the sample, 73 were independent, and 27 were dependent.

Of the 70 aged parents living apart from their adult children 57 were found to be independent, and 13 were found to be dependent. On the other hand, of the group of 30 who were living together with their adult children, 16 were found to be independent, and 14 were found to be dependent. These findings are illustrated with more clarity by Table IV, which is presented below.

TABLE IV
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF 100 AGED PARENTS
BY INDEPENDENCE AND DEPENDENCE

Living Arrangements	Independence		Dependence	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Apart	70	57	13	18.6
Together	30	16	14	46.7
Total	100	73	27	-

Table IV illustrates that a large percentage (73 out of 100, or 73 per cent) of the total group of aged parents who were interviewed, were found to be independent. When this group was divided into the aged parents living apart from their adult children, and those living together with them, independence was still found to exist in more than 50 per cent of cases in each group. However, the difference in the percentages between the two groups was a very marked one, with independence found to exist in 81.4 per cent of the cases for the group

living apart, and in only 53.3 per cent of the cases for the group living together. Observed in another manner an even greater difference was found between the two groups in the percentage of aged parents who were independent and dependent. For example, of the aged parents who were living apart, 81.4 per cent were found to be independent, and only 18.6 per cent were found to be dependent. The variation in this group was very high in favor of independence. On the other hand, of the aged parents who were living together, 53.3 per cent were found to be independent, and 46.7 per cent were found to be dependent. Although in this group independence was still found to exist in a higher percentage of cases than dependence, the variation between the two percentages was much smaller.

Therefore, it was concluded that while a relatively high percentage of aged parents who were living together were also independent from their adult children, a much higher percentage of those living apart were found to be independent. Consequently it was deduced that living arrangements were associated with independence.

In the next stage of the analysis of data the aged parents who belonged to either the independent or the dependent groups were examined in relation to satisfaction with living arrangements. Here it was found that of the 73 independent persons, 67 were satisfied with their living arrangements, and 6 were dissatisfied. These findings are illustrated in Table V.

TABLE V
INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT AGED PARENTS
BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Independence	Satisfaction		Dissatisfaction		
	Number	Number	%	Number	%
Independent	73	67	91.8	6	8.2
Dependent	27	15	55.6	12	44.4
Total	100	82	-	18	-

Table V illustrates that whether the aged parents were independent or dependent, more than 50 per cent of them expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements. However, a much higher percentage of the aged parents in the independent group (91.8 per cent as compared to 55.6 per cent) expressed satisfaction than in the dependent group. Moreover, the variation between satisfaction and dissatisfaction was found to be much greater in favor of satisfaction in the independent group than in the dependent group. Therefore, it was concluded that independence appeared to be associated with satisfaction with living arrangements.

In order to determine whether living apart and living together, or independence was more frequently related to the aged parent's satisfaction with his living arrangements, comparisons were made in this section of the analysis between the aged parents living apart from their adult children and those living together with them. Here

the initial finding was that, of the 57 aged parents living apart and judged to be independent, 51 were satisfied with their living arrangements and 6 were dissatisfied. Of the 13 aged parents living apart and judged to be dependent, 9 were satisfied with their living arrangements and 4 were dissatisfied. Table VI, which is presented below, clarifies these findings.

TABLE VI
INDEPENDENCE AND DEPENDENCE OF 70 AGED PARENTS
LIVING APART, BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Living Apart	Number	Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
		Number	%	Number	%
Independent	57	51	89.5	6	10.5
Dependent	13	9	69.2	4	30.8
Total	70	60	-	10	-

Table VI illustrates that the aged parents living apart, whether they were independent or dependent, expressed satisfaction in more than 60 per cent of the cases. However, satisfaction was expressed by a considerably higher percentage of the aged parents when they were independent (89.5 per cent as compared to 69.2 per cent) than when they were dependent. Furthermore, the variation between satisfaction and dissatisfaction was found to be considerably higher in favor of satisfaction in the independent living apart group than in the dependent living apart group. Therefore it was concluded that

when the aged parents were living apart from their adult children independence was associated with satisfaction with their living arrangements.

Of the 16 aged parents living together and found to be independent, 16 were satisfied with their living arrangements and none were dissatisfied. On the other hand, of the 14 aged parents living together and found to be dependent, 6 were satisfied and 8 were dissatisfied with their living arrangements. For clarification of these findings see Table VII presented below.

TABLE VII
INDEPENDENCE AND DEPENDENCE OF 30 AGED PARENTS
LIVING TOGETHER, BY SATISFACTION AND DISSATISFACTION

Living Together	Number	Satisfied		Dissatisfied	
		Number	%	Number	%
Independent	16	16	100	0	0.0
Dependent	14	6	42.9	8	57.1
Total	30	22	-	8	-

In Table VII it is illustrated that the aged parents living together, whether they were independent or dependent, expressed satisfaction in at least 40 per cent of the cases. However, satisfaction was expressed in a much higher percentage of cases when the aged parents were independent (100 per cent as compared to 42.9 per cent) than when they were dependent. Moreover, the variation between

satisfaction and dissatisfaction was much higher in the independent living together group than in the dependent living together group. As a matter of fact, in the latter group dissatisfaction rather than satisfaction was expressed in the higher percentage of cases. Therefore it was concluded that when the aged parents were living together with their adult children independence was associated with satisfaction with their living arrangements.

By comparing figures between Table VI and Table VII it was seen that whether the aged parents were living apart or together, they expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements in a higher percentage of cases when they were independent than when they were dependent. Therefore, it was concluded that independence was more frequently associated with satisfaction with living arrangements, than living apart and living together. However, the independent living together group expressed satisfaction in a higher percentage of cases (100 per cent as compared to 89.5 per cent) than the independent living apart group, while the dependent living together group expressed satisfaction in a lower percentage of cases (42.9 per cent as compared to 69.2 per cent), than the dependent living apart group. Therefore, in terms of the areas measured in this section of the analysis, namely, living together and living apart, and independence and dependence, the aged parents who were living together and independent expressed satisfaction with their living arrangements most frequently.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

Chapter V will concern itself with a summary of the findings in the analysis and an evaluation of the total study in terms of its limitations, and its broader implications.

The purpose of this study has been to examine family relationships, focusing on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the aged parent with living apart from or living together with his adult children. The prime areas of study have been the independence from adult children and the communication with them.

At this point the questions posed can be answered. Regarding the first question, "What are the living arrangements?" it was found that of 100 aged parents, 70 lived apart and 30 lived together. Mayer Fisch, in his article, "Organic Psychiatric Disorders of the Aged: How They Affect Family Relationships", pointed out that society expected the aged parent to live separately from his adult children.¹ In addition, Martin N. Martell found that "living apart was the preferred pattern,"² From the results of this survey it would seem that the aged parents are tending to do just this--live apart from their adult children.

¹Mayer Fisch, M.D., "Organic Psychiatric Disorders of the Aged: How They Affect Family Relationships," Social Casework, XXXIX (February, 1958), pp. 503-507.

²Martell, Martin N., "Situations of Aging in American Society," I and II, Dissertation Abstract, XVII, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 914.

It was also found that another type of living arrangement existed. Adult children were found to be living with aged parents. This situation was based on the fact that aged parents owned the home and assumed financial responsibility for their adult children. Of 30 living together, in 13 cases the adult children lived with their aged parent and in 17 cases the aged parent lived with adult children.

The second question, "Are the living arrangements satisfactory?" was answered in the following way. It would appear from the analysis of the data that aged parents living apart from adult children are more likely to be satisfied than those living together. However, it is observable that satisfaction in both groups was high and, therefore, living apart or living together does not appear to be the only significant factor in determining satisfaction.

The third question, "Are the living arrangements the result of choice or necessity?" was answered by the statistics obtained in the study. Of the 100 aged parents interviewed, 88 chose their living arrangements while 12 indicated that their living arrangements were the result of necessity.

Although the aged parents living apart from their adult children were found to be more satisfied with their living arrangements than those living together, communication and independence were found to be of more significance in determining satisfaction with living arrangements than the actual living apart or living together. However, living apart and living together are significant insofar as there is a much higher percentage of independence expressed when the

aged parent lives apart. Therefore, it would appear that the hypothesis is valid within the scope of the study. In order to validate the hypothesis completely, communication would have to be measured when the aged parent and his adult children live together.

In spite of the conclusions drawn thus far, we are not contending that our study is applicable to all aged parents. A limitation of this study may be the fact that it was limited to a relatively small portion of aged parents--that although it was hoped in the beginning to get a cross section of older people, in reality the sample was narrowed to the sociable, active aged parent. Future studies in this general area would do well to establish a broader sample.

In retrospect, it is to be concluded that the sample really needs to be larger in numbers because of the tendency for statistics based on small numbers to get easily skewed. To illustrate this point:--had we used choice and necessity as a comparison of satisfaction with living arrangements in the independent and dependent group living together and measured it against independence and dependence, the numbers would have been so small that indeed it would have been useless to compare them because of their statistical inaccuracy.

Although it was not within the scope of the present project, a future study might measure the extent to which communication determines satisfaction with living arrangements when the aged parent lives with his adult children. This is because of a prevalent feeling held by this research team, that physical proximity does not necessarily

imply good communication on the verbal or non-verbal level. In addition, a further study might look at the quality of communication in order to assess satisfactions with living arrangements.

On analyzing the data it became apparent that a number of adult children were living with their aged parents. By this, it is meant that the parents said that they assumed most of the financial responsibility for their adult children. Our data revealed little or no difference in the satisfaction expressed by this group, as compared with the group in which the aged parent lived with his adult children. However, in view of the fact that an examination of the former group was not intended in the present project, this might very well be an interesting and significant area for future study.

Had the study done by Miss Mathiasen on the Three-Generation Family¹ been available prior to the initial steps taken in this project, it is probable that this would have influenced the method used and the direction of the research. Miss Mathiasen found that there was a group of adult children living with aged parents as well as a group of aged parents living with adult children. We discovered a similar group through our research. Had we been aware of Miss Mathiasen's findings we could have taken this into consideration and inserted questions in the schedule to measure the satisfaction of both groups more specifically.

¹Geneva Mathiasen, A New Look at the Three-Generation Family (taken from an unpublished paper presented before the eighty-seventh Annual Forum National Conference on Social Welfare, June 10, 1960, Atlantic City, New Jersey).

The fact that the present study, like others, found that the prevalent pattern is to live apart should be indication enough that opportunities should be given to the Senior Citizen to live apart. These opportunities might take the form of providing Senior Citizen housing units; controlled rent for old age pensioners; government subsidies for housing; increased O.A.S., etc. In addition, it was found that family ties are still desired and seem to be maintained.

Because there are so many ways to communicate and because only telephoning and visiting were examined in this study, a whole field of "non-verbal" communication was left unexplored. Does communication per se produce understanding between the generations and what opportunities are there to communicate? This could be an area for future study.

In addition, are relationships between the generations affected by marital status? That is to say, is there a difference in the relationship of single and/or married offspring to their aged parents?

In conclusion, although our study has limited itself to the problem outlined herein, it has suggested many other areas of thought with regard to the aged and their relationship to their adult children.

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A
APPENDIX A

Interviewer's
Initials

Code #

GROUP III

Living Arrangements

1. Do you have adult children living in Metropolitan Winnipeg? Yes () No ()
2. (a) Do you live with your adult children? Yes () No ()
(b) Do your adult children live with you? Yes () No ()
- A. (1) Is living with your adult children the result of:
Necessity ()
Your own choice ()
Other ()
(2) If by your own choice:
What were your reasons and what influenced your decision?
- (3) If by necessity:
(a) Would you prefer to live apart from your adult children?
Yes () No ()
(b) What are the advantages and satisfactions that this would afford you?
- B. (1) Is living alone the result of: Necessity()
Your own choice.....()
Other.....()
(2) If by your own choice:
What were your reasons and what influenced your decision?

(3) If by necessity:

(a) Would you prefer to live with your adult children?

Yes () No ()

(b) What are the advantages and satisfactions that this would afford you?

Communication: (Only applicable for those living apart)

A. 1. Do you have access to a telephone? Yes () No ()

2. How often do your adult children telephone you?
three times a week ()
once a week or twice a month ()
less than twice a month ()

3. How often do you telephone your adult children?
three times a week ()
once a week or twice a month ()
less than twice a month ()

B. 1. How often do you visit with your adult children at their home?
once a week ()
once a month ()
less than once a month ()

2. How often do your adult children visit you at your home?
once a week ()
once a month ()
less than once a month ()

Independence from Adult Children:

1. Do your adult children contribute regularly to your financial support? Yes..... No

2. Are you free to use your own money as you like? Yes..... No.....

3. Do you feel free to come and go as you please? Yes..... No.....

4. Do you feel free to entertain your friends whenever you wish? Yes..... No.....

5. Do you feel free to refuse responsibilities that you do not wish to assume? Yes..... No.....
6. Do you feel free to make your own decisions without consulting your adult children? Yes..... No.....
7. Do you engage in outside activities? (outside family activities such as church groups and clubs). Yes..... No.....
8. (a) Do you spend most of your leisure time in your own room? Yes..... No.....
- (b) Why? _____

9. Do you take care of your grandchildren? Yes..... No.....
If yes, is it by: (a) Necessity.....
(b) Choice.....
10. (a) Do you let your adult children know when you do or plan to do something out of the ordinary? Yes..... No.....
- (b) Do you feel that you should inform them of your plans? Yes..... No.....
11. (a) Do you buy your own clothing...pay your own rent...pay your own bills, etc...? Yes..... No.....
- (b) Do you prefer it this way? Yes..... No.....
12. Are you included in family activities? Yes..... No.....

APPENDIX B

SENIOR CITIZEN CLUBS USED
AS THE SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

Name of the Club	Number of Members	Number of Members Interviewed
St. Vital United Church	5	3
Rosedale United Church	5	2
Young United Church	7	5
Knox United Church	27	20
West Kildonan Senior Citizens	26	17
St. James United Church	8	5
Bronx Park Community Club	7	4
Notre Dame Day Centre	18	12
Riverview Community Club	10	8
St. Vital Y.M.C.A.	18	13
Oriole Community Club	5	2
North-End Y.M.C.A.	13	9
TOTAL	149	100