

Housing and Living Arrangements of South Asian Immigrant Seniors in Edmonton, Alberta*

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RÉSUMÉ

La population canadienne vieillit et se diversifie sur le plan ethnique. La présente communication porte sur les aînés immigrants de l'Asie du Sud et examine les différences en matière de conditions de logement et de vie des aînés qui ont immigré à diverses époques de leur vie. Nous avons interviewé un échantillon de commodité de 161 immigrants aînés de descendance sud-asiatique à Edmonton, en Alberta, afin d'évaluer le type de conditions de vie, le type de logement, et le nombre de personnes qui y habitent, l'activité dans le voisinage, et les moyens de transport. Dans l'ensemble, les aînés qui étaient venus au Canada avant la fin de la quarantaine étaient plus susceptibles de conduire une auto que ceux qui étaient venus à un âge plus avancé et, s'ils étaient mariés, de vivre dans une famille d'une ou deux générations. Les femmes étaient plus susceptibles que les hommes d'avoir perdu leur conjoint, maîtrisaient moins bien la langue anglaise, vivaient dans une famille de trois générations si elles n'étaient pas mariées, et étaient moins susceptibles de conduire une auto. La plupart des répondants étaient satisfaits de leurs conditions de vie, et de leur logement, et se sentaient en sécurité à la maison et dans le voisinage. Les répercussions au plan théorique font l'objet de discussion.

ABSTRACT

The Canadian population is aging and becoming more ethnically diverse. This paper focuses on South Asian immigrant seniors and examines differences in housing and living arrangements among seniors who immigrated at different life stages. We interviewed a convenience sample of 161 immigrant seniors of South Asian descent in Edmonton, Alberta, to assess type of living arrangement, type of housing and *dwelling density* (measured in persons per room), activity in the neighbourhood, and means of transportation. Overall, those seniors who came to Canada before the end of mid-life were more likely than those who came at an older age to drive a car and, if married, to live in a one- or two-generation family. Women were more likely than men to be widowed, have poorer English-language skills, or live with a three-generation family if unmarried, and less likely to drive a car. Most respondents were satisfied with their living arrangements, housing, and perceived safety at home and in their neighbourhood. Theoretical implications are discussed.

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In 2001, most of the 28 per cent of Canadian seniors who were immigrants had come from Europe when relatively young and were growing old in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2003). In contrast, of the seniors who immigrated to Canada when they were elderly, about half were from Asia (McDonald, George, Daciuk, Yan, & Rowan, 2001). While gerontological research has been concerned about the *minority elderly* (e.g., Kamo & Zhou, 1994), it has rarely looked at the *migrant elder*. This lack of research is evident with respect to South Asian immigrants to North America (Burr, 1992), even though South Asians are the second largest visible minority group in Canada (Tran, Kaddatz, & Allard, 2005), and there is a need to examine the experiences of South Asian immigrant seniors who have come to Canada at different stages of life.

The relationship between the environment and aging has been recognized in gerontological research since the 1970s (Wahl, 2001). The ecological model of aging (e.g., Lawton, 1982; Lawton & Nahemow, 1973) emphasizes the interdependence between the person (represented by a set of *competences*) and the physical and social environment (conceptualized as *demand* on competence, both objective and perceived). Adaptive behaviour or positive emotions (e.g., satisfaction) may result from a wide variety of combinations of individual competence and environmental demand. Similarly, the complementary congruence model (Carp, 1976) focuses on the degree of complementarity between competence and environmental resources or barriers. In later life, people struggle in their transactions with their environment between satisfying the need for security and satisfying the need for autonomy (Parmelee & Lawton, 1990). Aspects of the physical environment (e.g., type and quality of housing, accessibility of transportation, availability of services in the neighbourhood) and of the social environment (e.g., type of living arrangement, social climate in the neighbourhood) are important in later life, as changes in physical and cognitive capacities necessitate adaptations if the individual is to remain as independent, mobile, and safe as possible. Furthermore, as Scheidt and Windley (2006) state, "The complex question of *whether, where, and how* culture affects residential adaptations and healthy aging over time remains largely unaddressed" (p. 121). Nevertheless, theories of acculturation (e.g., Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) stipulate that any cross-cultural transition leads to stress and skills deficits and that personal characteristics (e.g., language fluency), group characteristics (e.g., culture gap), and situational factors (e.g., length of cultural contact) may mediate the process of acculturation.

Thus, those immigrant seniors who immigrate in later life are likely to be less acculturated than those who immigrated earlier in life.

Regarding housing, previous studies have focused on immigrants in general (e.g., Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation [CMHC], 2005a), Canadian seniors in general (e.g., CMHC, 2005b), and the meaning of place and social network for older immigrants living in North American inner cities (e.g., Becker, 2003; Chan, 1983). Regarding living arrangements, statistical analyses of census data in North America have consistently shown that older immigrants, and especially those with an Asian background, rarely live alone and are more likely to live with extended families than are non-immigrants (e.g., Basavarajappa, 1998; Kritz, Gurak, & Chen, 2000; Tran *et al.*, 2005). These studies, however, do not tell us what older immigrants' preferences are or whether they are satisfied with their living arrangements.

Research has shown that, for older people, neighbourhood safety is an important factor in residential satisfaction (Kahana, Lovegreen, Kahana, & Kahana, 2003). For some immigrant seniors, unfamiliarity with the new environment, language, and culture may reduce their sense of safety (e.g., Chan, 1983). Feeling socially accepted in the neighbourhood may also be an important issue (Novac, Darden, Hulchanski, & Seguin, 2002).

North American seniors are dependent on cars for both essential and social activities (Bess, 1999) and tend to consider alternative means of transportation unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, access to automobiles declines with age (Rittner & Kirk, 1995) and public transportation and easy access to shopping and other services in the neighbourhood may increase residential satisfaction (Kahana *et al.*, 2003). A recent study of non-seniors showed that recent immigrants were much more likely than the Canadian-born to use public transit to commute to work, and women were heavier users of public transportation than men (Heisz & Schellenberg, 2004). It is unclear whether these findings apply to immigrant seniors.

The first objective of this study is to examine the relationships between South Asian immigrant seniors' physical and social environments (i.e., housing, neighbourhood, living arrangements, and transportation), on the one hand, and age at immigration, length of residence, and gender, on the other. The second objective of our study is to examine immigrant seniors' satisfaction and perceptions of safety regarding their housing, living arrangements,

neighbourhood, and transportation. We explore these questions using the following groups from our sample:

- immigrant seniors who arrived in Canada before the end of mid-life (age 54 or younger) and have had 10 or more years residence (*established-when-younger* immigrants)
- immigrant seniors who arrived in Canada after mid-life (age 55 or older) and have had 10 or more years residence (*established-when-older* immigrants)
- immigrant seniors who arrived in Canada after mid-life and have had less than 10 years residence (*recent* immigrants).

Ten years of residence is used because family-class immigrants in Alberta are not eligible for government benefits until after 10 years (Chappell, Gee, McDonald, & Stones, 2003). Fifty-five years old is used because it is considered the common age for early retirement in Canada and has been used in previous research on immigrants as a definition of *elderly* (e.g., Basavarajappa, 1998; Burr, 1992). The three groups defined here have been created for the purposes of this study and the findings may be influenced by our grouping respondents this way (i.e., the research results may reflect how our respondents were sorted into the three categories).

Methodology

This study was conducted in Edmonton, Alberta, a city of about 800,000. Potential respondents (i.e., who were 60 years of age or older, were born in South Asia, and were permanent residents or citizens of Canada) were recruited through a local ethnic association and an immigrant settlement agency. A face-to-face, structured interview in the senior's language of choice (English, Hindi, or Punjabi – the three most common languages spoken by our respondents) and lasting about 2 hours was conducted at the senior's home or another place of the senior's choice.¹ The senior was given CAN\$20 for participation in the study. While the respondents constituted a convenience sample, attempts were made to obtain as representative a sample as possible.

The questionnaire obtained demographic and immigration information and included questions about living arrangements, dwelling type, tenure, satisfaction with dwelling and neighbourhood, perceived safety, perceived discrimination, and transportation. The questionnaire was translated into Hindi and Punjabi and then translated back into English, to ensure accuracy of translation (Brislin, 1986), and it is believed that the final questions had the same meaning for all respondents, regardless of the language of interview, and elicited comparable responses. The final

questionnaire incorporated feedback from community representatives on earlier drafts of the questionnaire and from pre-tests of each language version.

A total of 161 interviews were conducted (99 in English, 31 in Hindi, and 31 in Punjabi). Chi-square tests and one-way ANOVAs were used to assess significant differences in the social and physical environments and related satisfaction levels among recent immigrants ($n=57$), established-when-older immigrants ($n=36$), and established-when-younger immigrants ($n=68$), and between men ($n=80$) and women ($n=81$).

Results

Most of our respondents were born in India (82%), Punjabi was the predominant mother tongue (61%), most were either Sikh (52%) or Hindu (33%), and the average age was 68.5 years (range 60–92 years). Over half rated their health as *excellent* (25%) or *good* (30%), and 33 per cent reported some activity limitations. The majority (83%) had been sponsored as immigrants, with 67 per cent having immigrated to Canada to be with their families. Most of our respondents and, among the married, their spouses were either retired (66% and 46%, respectively) or keeping house (15% and 27%). Differences among the three immigrant groups and between men and women on several demographic, immigration, and income variables are shown in Table 1.

Housing

In 2001, more of our respondents (74%) lived in single-detached houses than was the case for Canadian households led by seniors age 65 or over (58%) (CMHC, 2005b). Twelve per cent lived in townhouses and duplexes and 8 per cent lived in apartments. The average number of bedrooms was 3.78 ($SD=1.33$). The majority rated the condition of their dwelling as either *good* (45%) or *excellent* (40%), figures comparable to those for the general population, where 71 per cent of families with a head of household aged 65 and over live in dwellings that are above standard (CMHC, 2005b). There were no significant differences in dwelling type, condition of dwelling, or number of bedrooms among immigrant groups or between men and women.

Our respondents lived in larger households (average 4.27 persons, range 1–12) than did Canadian-born seniors (CMHC, 2005b), with a mean *dwelling density* (1.20 persons per room; $SD=0.58$, range 0.33 to 4.00) higher than that for non-immigrants (CMHC, 2005a). Recent immigrants and established-when-older

Table 1: Sample characteristics: Significant differences for immigrant groups and by gender

Sample Characteristics	Recent Immigrants (n = 57)	Established-When-Older Immigrants (n = 36)	Established-When-Younger Immigrants (n = 68)		Males (n = 80)	Females (n = 81)		Total (N = 161)
	%	%	%	χ^2	%	%	χ^2	%
Widowed	35	44	16	12.65*	16	42	12.89**	29
Secondary School or Lower	63	80	38	22.57***	49	64	9.49*	57
Sponsored by Children	98	100	62	37.86***	93	82		87
Reason for Immigrating: Family	83	81	47	21.41***	58	77	6.61**	67
Income Adequate for Couple ^a	34	61	90	28.12***	64	67		66
Income Adequate for Single Person ^b	19	88	56	18.16***	67	43		52
Income Adequate (Couple or Single)	29	74	81	38.08***	65	56		61
	M	M	M	F	M	M	F	M
Rating of English Ability ^c	2.36	2.47	3.39	18.99***	3.05	2.59	7.25**	2.82
Age	66.56	74.47	67.06	27.05***	68.58	68.51		68.54
Age at Immigration	61.30	59.11	40.94	145.97***	52.19	52.23		52.21
Years in Canada	5.18	15.36	26.10	162.71***	16.36	16.23		16.30

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

^a $n = 102$

^b $n = 56$

^c four-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very well).

immigrants lived in dwellings with densities ($M=1.44$ and 1.37 , respectively) significantly higher than those of established-when-younger immigrants ($M=0.91$, $p<0.001$). The mean dwelling densities that seniors perceived to be *just right* were 1.39 for recent immigrants, 1.36 for established-when-older immigrants, and 0.95 for established-when-younger immigrants ($p<0.001$), suggesting that acculturation to Canadian values and standards had occurred among the latter.

Nine per cent indicated that they or their families had experienced discrimination when looking for housing. For established-when-younger immigrants only, a significantly higher percentage of men (21%) than women (0%) reported having experienced such incidents, mostly when they were younger. Most incidents involved landlords' lying about the non-availability of vacant accommodation or landlords' refusing to show their houses (7 of the 11 responses).

The majority of seniors (90%) felt very safe at home alone. The responses were independent of immigrant group or gender. Commonly cited reasons for feeling safe included *safe neighbourhood* (50), *experienced no problems* (29), and *good neighbours* (17), and for feeling unsafe, *health problems* (7) and *crime* (6).

Most of our respondents were either *very satisfied* (54%) or *satisfied* (38%) with their housing. There were no significant differences in satisfaction among immigrant groups, despite variation in dwelling density, or between men and women. Most (83%) did not want to move from their current residence. The most frequently cited barrier to living in the facility of their choice was cost (21 of 34 responses given by 26 respondents).

Living Arrangements

Unlike for Canadian-born seniors, living alone was very rare for our respondents (5%) and living in extended families was the most common living arrangement (56%). These findings are consistent with those of previous research on Canadian immigrant and ethnic minority elderly (e.g., Basavarajappa, 1998; Thomas, 2001). Table 2 shows that, among the married, established-when-younger immigrants were the least likely to live in multigenerational families and the most likely to live with their spouse only (54%), suggesting that acculturation to Canadian norms tends to occur over time. Among the unmarried, there were no significant differences among the immigrant groups; however, even the established-when-younger immigrants tended to live in multigenerational families rather than live alone, suggesting that traditional ethno-cultural norms remain a factor.

Note that those who lived alone or with spouse only had come to Canada at a significantly younger age ($M=43.33$ vs. 55.50 years, $p<0.001$), had lived in Canada for a longer time ($M=23.43$ vs. 13.65 years, $p<0.001$), and were slightly younger ($M=66.81$ vs. 69.18 years, $p<0.05$) than those who were living with children/extended family. While living alone is associated with increasing age in the general Canadian population (CMHC, 2005b), our "old-old" respondents ($n=24$) were not more likely to live alone than were our "young-old" group. Discriminant analysis showed that only age at immigration was a significant predictor of living arrangement $\Lambda^2(1)=34.89$, $p<0.001$). This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies on immigrant elders (e.g., Basavarajappa, 1998). Finally, for those respondents living without a spouse, men were more likely than women to live alone, while women were much more likely than men to live in an extended family (see Table 2). These findings are consistent with Wilmoth's (2001) and Burr's (1992) findings.

Table 2 shows that our respondents were less likely to own their homes personally than are all Canadian seniors (CMHC, 2005b). Recent immigrant seniors and established-when-older immigrants were more likely to live in dwellings headed (owned or rented) by their children, while established-when-younger immigrants were more likely to own or rent themselves. Further, those respondents who lived in extended families were more likely to live in dwellings owned or rented by their children, a finding consistent with the findings of previous research on Asian American ethnic elders (Phua, Kaufman, & Park, 2001).

Regardless of their current living arrangement, most of our respondents (88%) would not have preferred a different living arrangement than the one they had. Those who would prefer a different arrangement were split between wanting to live with others and wanting to live alone. The most frequently cited barrier to achieving their preferred living arrangement was cost (11 of 24 responses given by 19 respondents).

Neighbourhood

Most of our respondents (82%) said that they went out alone in their neighbourhood. In summer, 79 per cent went out daily and 12 per cent went out several times a week. They went out less often in winter: 37 per cent daily, 25 per cent several times a week, and 22 per cent weekly. For men, there were no significant differences among the three immigrant groups in going out alone in the neighbourhood. However, among women, recent immigrants and established-when-older immigrants were significantly less likely to go out alone in the neighbourhood and went out less frequently in

Table 2: Percentage distributions for housing and living arrangements by immigrant group and gender

Sample Characteristics	Recent Immigrants (n = 57)	Established-When- Older Immigrants (n = 36)	Established-When- Younger Immigrants (n = 68)		Males (n = 80)	Females (n = 81)		Total (N = 161)
	%	%	%	χ^2	%	%	χ^2	%
Tenure							3.89*	
Own	72	81	84		73	85		79
Rent	28	19	16		28	15		21
Headship (who owns or rents)				48.09***				
You, spouse, or both	16	19	71		44	37		40
Your children	71	64	22		44	54		49
You (or spouse) and children	11	14	4		11	6		9
Other	2	3	3		1	4		3
Living Arrangement among Married ^a				21.89 ***				
With spouse only	14	11	54		24	46		33
With adult children	20	22	20		24	16		20
3-generation family, with spouse	66	67	26		53	39		47
Living Arrangement among Unmarried ^b							12.16**	
Alone	14	6	24		37	3		14
With adult children	14	6	12		11	11		11
Three-generation family	73	88	65		53	87		75

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$ ^a $n = 103$ ^b $n = 56$ (including 47 widowed, 1 never married, 3 divorced, and 7 separated legally or geographically)

both summer and winter than did established-when-younger immigrants. Women were also less likely to go out alone than were men. Chan (1983) has shown that the outdoor activities of older women immigrants are influenced by winter climate conditions.

The majority (91%) of the 132 seniors who went out alone in their neighbourhood reported that they felt very safe walking alone in the neighbourhood, a finding consistent with their ratings of perceived safety at home. The responses were independent of immigrant group or gender. The most frequently cited reasons for feeling safe included "safe neighbourhood" (48), "good neighbours" or "friendly people in the neighbourhood" (36), and "having experienced no problems" or "no crime" (35). The reasons for feeling unsafe included *having experienced discrimination* (4), *traffic and winter roads* (2), *not knowing the language* (2), and *no interaction with others* (2).

However, 10 per cent of men (but none of the women) in our sample indicated that they or their families had experienced discrimination while living in the neighbourhood ($p=0.004$). Such incidents included physical acts, name-calling, and avoidance and made victims feel unsafe. Nevertheless, in general, our respondents were either *very satisfied* (72%) or *satisfied* (27%) with their neighbourhood.

Transportation

Table 3 shows that, unlike Canadian-born seniors (Bess, 1999), most of our respondents did not have a valid driver's licence or the use of a vehicle. Males were more likely to drive than females and established-when-younger immigrants were more likely to drive than recent immigrants and established-when-older immigrants. None of the recent immigrant women drove.

Although 91 per cent of our respondents lived near a bus stop, only 42 per cent said they used public transportation. Males and immigrants who came to Canada later in life were more likely to use public transportation than were females and established-when-younger immigrants (see Table 3).

Unlike for Canadian seniors in general, a common means of transportation for our respondents was a ride provided by someone in their household (61%), especially for females and for those who came to Canada later in life. Getting a ride from someone outside the household was also quite common (29%) (see Table 3).

Despite reliance on public transportation and rides provided by others, the majority of seniors reported that it was *very easy* (57%) or *somewhat easy* (13%) to get to places they needed to go. However, 13 per cent of

our respondents said it was *somewhat difficult* and 7 per cent said *very difficult* to get to places they needed to go. The most frequently cited reason was the need for a ride (16 of the 34 responses). Consistent with their verbal reports, those who drove reported greater ease in getting to places than did those who did not drive ($p<0.01$). There were no significant differences in the ratings of ease of transportation among the immigrant groups or between men and women.

Over half of our respondents lived in neighbourhoods where there was a bus stop (91%), grocery store (67%), pharmacy (62%), bank (54%), or clinic or doctor (55%). A significantly higher percentage of respondents who lived close to these facilities reported that it was easy to get to places where they wanted to go than of those who did not live near these facilities.

Discussion

Previous studies of Asian immigrant elders in Canada have tended to focus on East Asian immigrants (from China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan). Our study shows that South Asian immigrant elders are similar in many regards to East Asian elders and are a contrast to the general Canadian population of seniors. Furthermore, our study makes two additional contributions to the research literature. First, we examine South Asian *migrant elders'* housing, living arrangements, neighbourhood experiences, and transportation in relation to their length of residence. Second, we examine the gendered nature of South Asian aging immigrants' experiences in Canada.

Overall, our findings show that those immigrant seniors who came to Canada before the end of mid-life, in contrast to those immigrant seniors who came to Canada when older, are the most acculturated to independent living (i.e., are most likely to own or rent their own home), are most likely to live alone or with their spouse only, and are more likely to drive a car, as is the norm in the aging Canadian population generally. Despite better financial circumstances (primarily as a result of becoming eligible for government benefits such as old age security), those who came to Canada when they were older and have resided in Canada for more than 10 years are not any more acculturated to independent living than are those who recently came to Canada in their old age. Furthermore, note that older age at immigration is associated with lower English-language ability, lower educational level, limited driving skills, being sponsored by children, and a desire to be united with family. Nevertheless, it is possible for immigration policy and the immigrant-screening process to minimize the impact of length of residence. For example, the later-entry conditions for older immigrants may

Table 3: Percentage distributions for transportation variables by immigrant group and gender

	Immigrant Group by Gender						Immigrant Group			Gender		Total
	Recent Immigrants		Established-When-Older Immigrants		Established-When-Younger Immigrants		Recent Immigrants	Established-When-Older Immigrants	Established-When-Younger Immigrants	M	F	(N = 161)
	M (n = 30)	F (n = 27)	M (n = 17)	F (n = 19)	M (n = 33)	F (n = 35)	(n = 57)	(n = 36)	(n = 68)	(n = 80)	(n = 81)	
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Means of Transportation												
Drive	17 _c	— _c	18	5	70 _d	29 _d	9	11	49 ^{***}	39	14 ^{***}	26
Ride (within household)	50 _e	85 _e	59	84	21 _f	77 _f	67	72	50 [*]	40	82 ^{***}	61
Ride (outside household)	31	30	24	37	15 _g	37 _g	30	31	27	23	35	29
Bus/LRT	80 _h	19 _h	77 _i	26 _i	39	23	51	50	31 ^{*i}	63	22 ^{***}	42
Has Driver's Licence	33 _a	— _a	29	5	79 _b	43 _b	18	17	60 ^{***}	51	20 ^{***}	35
Has Use of a Vehicle	27	7	29	5	70	54	18	17	62 ^{***}	45	27 [*]	36

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Cells with the same subscript are significantly different using the χ^2 test

ⁱ differences significant for men only

predispose a dependence on adult children or a predilection for extended-family living (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2007).

Looking at the gendered nature of the South Asian aging immigrant experience, older female immigrants appear to be less acculturated to independent living than are older male immigrants, as they tend to have less education and poorer English-language skills, are slightly more likely to live in three-generation families, and are less likely than men to go out alone in the neighbourhood or to drive. Furthermore, older female immigrants who have come to Canada recently tend to be the least acculturated to independent living in Canadian society, as they tend to rely on family and friends for transportation, to go out alone in the neighbourhood less frequently, and to live with extended families. Marital status may play a role in these gender differences. Whereas currently unmarried men (*widowed, never married, divorced, or separated*) are more likely than unmarried women to live alone, unmarried women are more likely to live in an extended family with their adult children than to live alone. This reflects cultural gender, and age relations. Women's devotion to family and children is an important value for the South Asian community, especially for first-generation immigrants (Naidoo, 2003). While self-reports of discrimination are infrequent, these gender and age relations may help to explain why older men report experience of discrimination more often than older women do. In their relative isolation from the larger society, the women are less likely to experience directly the discrimination that occurs in looking for housing or in the labour market. At the same time, their social isolation is a product of age and gender relations within the South Asian immigrant community.

Our findings are consistent with the ecological model of aging (Lawton, 1982). Compared with seniors who came to Canada earlier in life and are growing old in Canada, seniors who came to Canada later in life, regardless of length of residence, tend to lack certain skills and resources that facilitate independent living. Yet, although the new physical and social environments (e.g., harsh winter climate, discrimination by others in the neighbourhood) are a challenge for a small number of seniors who immigrate to Canada later in life, most immigrant seniors are able to find a workable strategy, using familial resources to compensate for their lower personal competence with respect to independent living. For example, unlike the Canadian-born, many South Asian immigrant seniors rely on an extended-family living arrangement that can provide support. As a result, they can live in reasonably good-quality dwellings in safe neighbourhoods and have their transportation needs met

reasonably well. The higher dwelling density in these households does not seem to be a problem for these seniors. Contrary to common belief, our findings suggest that aging immigrant seniors are quite satisfied with their housing, living arrangements, neighbourhood, and transportation.

Maddox (2001) argues that there is a "progressive marginalization of theory in gerontological inquiry about housing and living arrangements" (p. 437), as the focus of research has shifted to administrative and social-policy issues. He suggests addressing the theoretical vacuum by exploring housing *appropriateness*—not just affordability, adequacy, and accessibility. Maddox argues that appropriateness recognizes diversity of need and preference among seniors, as well as the desire for aging in place. Ecological models argue that successful adaptation occurs when there is a good fit between the person's competence and the physical and social resources that the environment provides.

Like many other studies about immigrant seniors, our sample is small and selective, so our findings need to be interpreted with some caution. Also, in any study of a relatively cohesive community where data are obtained through interviews, there is the possibility of a social desirability effect. First, respondents may present themselves and their community in the best possible light. Second, using interviewers from within the community may increase discomfort with disclosure. Nevertheless, this study provides insights into the relative acculturation of older immigrants as influenced by their age at immigration, length of time in Canada, and gender.

Note

1. Preliminary data from the English-language interviews were presented in a paper at the 34th Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) annual conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 21–24, 2003.

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