

SOCIAL STRUCTURAL LABELING AND  
SELF-LABELING OF THE AGED

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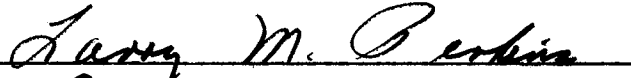
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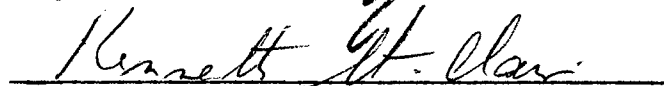
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## CHAPTER I

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Discrimination on the basis of race or sex has become rather unacceptable as evidenced by law and some changing societal attitudes. There appears to be less public awareness of discrimination on the basis of age. Robert N. Butler (1973:2) has expressed the thought:

Ageism, like racism and sexism, is a way of pigeonholing people and not allowing them to be individuals with unique ways of living their lives. . . . It provides a rationalization for pushing the elderly out of the job market without spending much thought on what will happen to them when they are no longer allowed to work. Ageism is the sacrifice of older people for the sake of "productivity" and the youth image that the working world feels compelled to project.

The aged segment of modern society has become more visible partially because of their increasing numbers. The 1970 United States census figures show that:

the older population (aged 65 and over) grew faster than the remaining population since the 1960 census count (21.1% versus 12.5%); the older part of the older population (75 and over as compared with 65 through 74) grew faster (37.1% versus 13.0%); the number of older women grew faster than the number of older men (28.6% versus 12.1%).

One hundred years ago (Brotman, 1971:1), in 1870, 11.6% of the population were aged 45-64 and another 2.9% were sixty-five and over, making a total of 14.5% of the population in the age group of forty-five years and over. In 1970 the total of middle-aged and older population came to 31.5% of all Americans, nearly a third of the total

population of the United States.

The process of aging may be accompanied by such problems as increased probability of illness and incapacity, impending death, restriction of participation in social affairs, loss of an independent household, or economic dependence. Blau (1973:xi-xii) has suggested that poverty, illness, and inadequate housing are more widespread among the old than any other age group.

Satisfactory living accommodations have been considered important for the adjustment of people of all ages. The United States Senate's Special Committee on Aging (1965:29) noted that:

Housing and its immediate physical surrounding influence well-being and the quality of life of people in any age group, but suitable housing is doubly important to the retired person whose home is the center of virtually all his activities. Few factors have as much potential for promoting the well-being of the elderly as housing of appropriate size which offers safety, comfort, and the opportunity of choice between privacy and contact with the community.

Housing appears to be a central concern for the aged. For a variety of reasons (i.e., health, finances) older people tend to spend a considerable amount of time at home and experience increasing isolation. And consequently, many older persons find it necessary or more satisfactory to reside in age-segregated communities or institutions which cater to their interests and needs.

Another adjustment problem which has frequently been neglected in studies of the aged is the need to be useful (Blau, 1973:xii):

For it is the sustained experience of being necessary to others that give meaning and purpose to the life of all human beings. Opportunities to remain useful members of the society are severely undermined by the exits from adult social roles that are typical of old age. True, older people do receive some financial restitution after widowhood and retirement, but our society has failed

yet to assume new and meaningful forms of social restitution for them. As a result, enforced idleness and uselessness have become the fate of many older people in American society.

#### Statement of the Problem

In view of the decreased importance of many of the roles of the aged person in industrialized societies, this investigation is an attempt to study the sense of meaningful existence of aged persons as it relates to the segregated retirement communities and nursing homes in which they reside. The purpose of the present study is to determine if labeling attitudes and labeling behavior evidenced by residential social structures (encouraging or not encouraging activity) have an effect on the sense of meaningful existence of the aged residents.

#### Organization of the Study

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, the following three chapters will review the literature pertinent to the development of a sense of meaningful existence in the aged. Chapter II will provide an analysis of ideal types of reactions to aging, with particular emphasis on the influence of the social setting on the majority of aged individuals. Chapter III will detail societal labels of aged and the influence of the labeling process on aged self-conception. Chapter IV will present societal values as associated with work roles and substitutive activity roles for the aged, as such roles relate to the maintenance of meaning, usefulness, and purpose in life. Chapter V will detail the theoretical framework by which to analyze the effect of social structural labeling and self-labeling of the aged. The

methodological techniques, by which the hypotheses proposed by the theoretical model are to be tested, will be described in Chapter VI. The resulting data will be presented in qualitative form (Chapter VII) and quantitative form (Chapter VIII). Data not specifically treated in the hypotheses of the theoretical model will be explored in Chapter IX. Finally, Chapter X will present limitations of the study and interpretations of the findings.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

#### Reactions to Aging

Aging in America has been viewed as an economic, physical, sociological, and psychological problem. Blau (1973:3) described old age as an existential problem for the older person. Adjustment or lack of adjustment to the process of aging tends to be a complex phenomenon. Reisman (1954) has discussed the various reactions to aging, including "adjustive" and "nonadjustive" responses.

#### The Autonomous

Reisman (1954:379-383) provided a classification of three ideal types of reaction to aging. The "autonomous" type of individual maintains an ability both to enjoy and to find meaning in life. He is relatively independent of the rules and penalties imposed on the aged by the cultural changes, or to cultural definitions of their own physical changes: they carry their preservative, their 'spirits,' within" (Reisman, 1954:379).

Viktor E. Frankl, a Viennese psychiatrist and prisoner in the Nazi concentration camps, identified a process in man's struggle for meaning on which he based his doctrine of logotherapy. Frankl described Freud's theory as basing man's primary motivation on the will to

pleasure and Adlerian psychology as stressing the will to power. Frankl (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1963:43) theorized that the striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man. Frankl found that even in a concentration camp man may retain his human dignity. An excellent example of Reisman's autonomous man, independent of the confines of his environment, was Frankl's description of the concentration camp prisoner who through some superhuman capacity managed to preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in extreme conditions of psychic and physical stress (Frankl, 1963:106-107):

The way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity--even under the most difficult circumstances--to add a deeper meaning to his life. It may remain brave, dignified and unselfish. Or in the bitter fight for self-preservation he may forget his human dignity and become no more than an animal. Here lies the chance for a man either to make use of or to forego the opportunities of attaining the moral values that a difficult situation may afford him. And this decides whether he is worthy of his sufferings or not.

The autonomous man exhibits in a dramatic way a specifically human power to grow and develop on a superphysiological level. He seems immortal because of his ability to renew himself. Autonomous reactions to aging have not been greatly studied, however, because such reactions seem to be rare (Reisman, 1954:380).

Despite Frankl's analysis of man's ability to find meaning in the face of dire circumstances, he would be the first to suggest that such reactions appear to be rare. "Of the prisoners only a few kept their full inner liberty and obtained those values which their suffering afforded, but even one such example is sufficient proof that man's inner

strength may raise him above his outward fate" (Frankl, 1963:107). Speaking of the concentration camps, Frankl (1963:115) further noted, "One could make a victory of those experiences turning life into an inner triumph, or one could ignore the challenge and simply vegetate, as did a majority of the prisoners."

### The Adjusted

Reisman's second category of reactions to aging is titled, "the adjusted." The adjusted individual has no such inner resources as the autonomous man. He derives his meaning of life entirely from the social structure in which he lives. Meaning is based on work, power, and positions. So long as the cultural conditions and roles remain stable and protective, the individual has purpose in existence. Social change or role loss, however, results in trauma for the adjusted type. The adjusted man (Reisman, 1954:380) "appears to exist in a psychological deepfreeze; new experience cannot get at him, but rather he fulfills himself by carrying out ever renewed tasks given by his environment; he is borne along on the tide of cultural agendas." The fate of the adjusted individual depends greatly on the institutions to which he is attached and whether such institutions engulf him or awaken him or destroy him.

Fromm (1941:5) has suggested that this generation has been anxious to give away the very freedom which their fathers had fought so hard to obtain. Fromm feels that people's conception of freedom leads to growing isolation, insecurity, and doubt about one's role in the universe. Thus, each step toward freedom threatens people with new insecurities, and freedom becomes a burden. Therefore, tendencies arise



to escape from freedom into submission, to form some kind of relationship to man and the world which promises relief, even if it deprives the individual of his freedom. Freedom should allow man to realize his own individual self and to become an autonomous man. Instead, contemporary society finds man conforming to societal norms and values, as automatons who live under the illusion of being self-willed individuals.

As described by Reisman (1954:379), Frankl (1963:103,107), and Fromm (1941:5), the vast majority of society's members are greatly affected by the social structure within which they exist. Therefore, before considering specific questions concerning the relationship between the physical environment and the behavior of aged persons, one must consider broader issues. Is there a relationship between the physical environment and the behavior and attitudes of human beings? Some theorists feel that administrative policies, the social tone set by the facility staff and management, relations between people, and individual psychological factors are the most important influences on human behavior. "People with different professional training and experience are equally willing to declare that influences on behavior resulting from the physical setting are of major importance while social and interpersonal factors recede into irrelevance" (Ostrander, 1973: 308). The individual is probably influenced by many factors including both the physical and social aspects of the environment.

As described in the Introduction, the suitability of living accommodations becomes even more crucial (Loether, 1967:34) for the aged, because of the proportionately greater amount of time they are likely to spend at home. While a high percentage of the aged attempt to re-

main in independent housing as close as possible to pre-retirement conditions, many aged individuals eventually find it necessary to move into age-segregated group housing. In age-segregated group housing, the administrators of such housing developments may present a great deal of influence on the life pattern of the aged resident.

Robert Kleemeier (1961:274) deals with the special relationships between aged individuals, their physical settings and the administration of age-segregated residences:

First, since we are dealing exclusively with the retired person, the patient, or the resident living in special settings which preclude the necessity for, or even the possibility of, earning a living, all of the daily activities of this group may be considered as free-time activities. Second, since the control of the activities of a large segment of this group may be in the hands of others, the use of this authority to serve the needs of the patient must receive more than casual attention. Third, since we are dealing with a special segment of the older population, some description of the characteristics of the group and of the settings in which they live must be presented along with an evaluation of the possible influences these characteristics may have upon the activity patterns observed.

Kleemeier (1961:286) contends that residential characteristics have predictable effects upon the attitudes and behavior of the residents.

Further studies concerning the relationship between man and environment include Ostrander's (1973:307-317) research on planning environments for the aged. Ostrander emphasizes the need in studying age-segregated residences to understand the institution's goals, the behaviors needed for goal achievement, and whether the physical setting facilitates or inhibits those goal directed behaviors. Carp (1967:106) described the effect which a residential move could have on the aged, particularly when accompanied by more active and sociable

patterns of life. He found fewer health complaints and consistent betterment of outlook and life style. Snyder (1973:330) has researched the influence of the social, physical, and organizational structure of nursing homes on the behavior of their residents:

Various forms of patient segregation, whether externally imposed by nursing unit regulations or by activity scheduling, or individually imposed due to greater freedom of the more able residents to move, may severely limit the physical and social environment of many institutionalized elderly (Snyder, 1973:330).

In such studies experts in the field of residences for the elderly suggest a strong relationship between the physical and social setting of the aged individual and his attitudes and behavior patterns.

If one is to accept the theories of Frankl and Reisman that the majority of individuals are not motivated by inner strength, but rather choose to be influenced by the social structure, then the aged population is no exception. It appears that most individuals fall into Reisman's adjusted category, deriving their meaning and purpose primarily from the society in which they exist. With aging, the individual's life space tends to narrow due to decreased mobility and reduced social roles. As a result, the social and physical aspects of residence become a primary source of influence to the aged individual. If indeed the fate of the adjusted individual depends greatly on the institutions to which he is attached, then the fate of the aged individual often lies greatly in the hands of the staff and administrators of the setting in which he resides.

#### The Anomic

The third category of reactions to aging, as described by Reisman (1954:379), is protected from neither within nor without. The

individual decays psychologically. The anomic individual fades as physiological vitality is lost and when the culture does not carry the individual onward with supportive functions. The autonomous and the anomic reactions to aging are alike in that the individuals concerned (Reisman, 1954:383) make little use of the standard cultural preservatives, the former because they transcend and reshape them, the latter because they cannot attain them or maintain them.

The anomic individual bears many characteristics of social alienation. Alienation has been related to feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Studies have indicated that the aged are often alienated (Lystad, 1972: 98) from the mainstream of society. For the old, the loss of family members, often coupled with physical illness, results in social isolation, either through living alone or through living in institutions for the elderly. This isolation is followed by depression and despair and concern with death. The anomic reaction to aging bears many similarities to the theory of disengagement.

#### Disengagement Theory

The disengagement theory, as presented by Cumming and Henry (1961) describes aging as an inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement, resulting in decreased interaction between the aging person and others in the social systems to which he belongs. While in the anomic reaction to aging it is the society which withdraws from the individual, the disengagement process may be initiated by the individual or by the social system. An individual's disengagement from the social structure is accompanied by a decrease in the number of social roles being

played, a shrinkage in the size of the social life space, and a lessening of the amount of daily interaction with others. The postulates of disengagement theory include the following (Cumming and Henry, 1961: 211-218):

Postulate 1: Although individuals differ, the expectation of death is universal, and decrement of ability is probable. Therefore a mutual severing of ties will take place between a person and others in his society. . . .

Postulate 2: Because interactions create and reaffirm norms, a reduction in the number of variety of interactions leads to an increased freedom from the control of the norms governing everyday behavior.

Postulate 3: Because the central role of men in American society is instrumental, and the central role of women is socio-emotional, the process of disengagement will differ between men and women. . . .

Postulate 4: Disengagement in America may be initiated by either the individual because of ego changes or by the society because of organizational imperatives, or by both simultaneously. . . .

Postulate 9: Disengagement is a culture-free concept, but the form it takes will always be culture-bound.

A great deal of criticism has been directed toward Cumming and Henry due to their assertion that disengagement is "normal" during the aging process, preparing the individual to face the inevitability of death. Zena Blau (1973:151) describes disengagement as the exceptional reaction to aging rather than the typical one. Some empirical evidence suggests that disengagement is not a normal response in terms of a desirable adaptation to aging.

Numerous studies in a variety of communities and in institutions for old people report that activity, whether in the form of work or an avocation, and sociability, whether in the form of a single intimate relationship or more extensive social relationships of a less intimate character, are the most stable and consistent correlates of high morale in old age (Blau, 1973:151).

### Summary

The potential reactions to aging have been categorized by David Reisman into three ideal types. The autonomous man, as found in Frankl's description of the man who finds meaning for life in the face of suffering, is independent of the influences of society. While such reactions are highly desirable and advantageous among the aged, the autonomous reaction is perhaps rare at any age level. The adjusted man derives his meaning and sense of purpose entirely from the social structure in which he lives. According to Reisman's description, the majority of aged individuals fit his "adjusted" category. Since meaning for this individual depends greatly on maintaining societal expectations, morale is related to the substitution of new roles for those lost with retirement. With residence in age-segregated communities, the aged person is dependent to a great extent upon the support given by his environment. The final category of reaction, the anomic, has little source of meaning, either from within himself or from societal support. Through this generalized approach to reactions of various persons to the aging process, the following study will operationalize the psychological and sociological factors related to meaning and purpose in life for the aged.

## CHAPTER III

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LABELING PERSPECTIVE FOR THE AGED INDIVIDUAL

#### Introduction

It is doubtful that becoming old was ever very easy for man, but it has been made more and more difficult in modern society for several reasons. First, American society tends to venerate youth, not old age. The American society is a youth-oriented, work-oriented society, with great respect for strong body and sound health. Secondly, old age is marked by the loss of significant roles, roles which provided the individual with both psychological and social significance.

In the American society, the question "Who am I?" is usually answered in terms of an occupational role. Therefore, retirement from the labor force creates an identity crisis, particularly for the older man. The marginal position of the aged in American society is described by Talcott Parsons (1949:230-231):

By comparison with other societies the United States assumes the extreme position in the isolation of old age from participation in the most important social structures and interests. Structurally speaking, there seem to be two primary bases of this situation: in the first place . . . the isolation of the individual conjugal family . . . when the children of a couple have become independent through marriage and occupational status the parental couple is left without attachment to any continuous kinship group. . . . The second basis of the situation lies in the occupational structure. So far . . . as an individual's occupational status centers in a specific "job" he either

holds the job or does not and the tendency is to maintain the full level of functions up to a given point, and then abruptly to retire. . . . In view of the very great significance of the occupational status . . . retirement leaves the older man in a peculiarly functionless situation. . . .

In modern society, there appears to be little dignity in being among the aged. The scientific accomplishments of industrialized society have prolonged the lives of our aged. At the same time, the technical revolution has brought marked changes in the structure of the family, work roles, and in the role of the aged in community life. Prejudice, stereotyping and discriminatory behavior against the aged by the majority group of younger adults often occurs in modern society. The aged have often been the brunt of societal and personal labels.

#### The Labeling Perspective

Contrary to the view that deviance has an inherent quality of wrongness, reactions to deviations from social norms can vary greatly in terms of tolerance and disapproval. The norms which define deviant behavior are not necessarily the same in various cultures, nor in a given culture over a period of time. Pollis and Pollis (1970:230-242) illustrate the variability of norms as social control by noting three areas of influence: (a) the range of applicability of norms, (b) the probability that norms will be accepted by those to whom they apply, and (c) the probability of detecting deviation and applying sanctions for deviation from norms. Thus, norms (Clinard, 1974:17) have varying degrees of strength, or "resistance potential," in the event of a disapproved deviation from them. Each norm can be thought of as having a tolerance limit, a ratio between violations of the norm and a group's



willingness to tolerate or suppress it.

In a society of such diversity as the American society today, it is difficult to determine what deviance really is.

An almost endless variety of behaviors and characteristics are considered to be deviant by some people at least and encounter pronounced stigma in certain groups, depending upon the conditions and situations. They include, for example, physical disabilities and impairments such as crippling, blindness, mental retardation, . . . old people (Clinard, 1974:18).

The labeling perspective emphasizes that deviance must be viewed from the perspective of the audience. Simmons (1969:4) portrays this quality:

So deviance, like beauty is in the eyes of the beholder . . . almost every conceivable human characteristic of activity is pariah in somebody's eyes. This means that most people (you and I included) would be labelled deviant by some existing persons and groups. Anyone who moves around much from place to place or social world to social world has probably run into this. There is nothing inherently deviant in any human act; something is deviant only because some people have been successful in labelling it so. The labelling is a local matter that changes from place to place and even from time to time in the same place. To understand deviance we have to understand its environmental context. So we have to look at the people doing the labelling as much as at the deviant himself.

The major conceptions of the labeling perspective are based on the writings of Lemert (1951), although the idea had been previously expressed in various ways in the work of George Mead (Blumer, 1969), Edwin H. Sutherland (1939), Frank Tannenbaum (1938), Alfred Schutz (1967), and others. More recently the labeling perspective has been elaborated by Howard Becker (1963), Harold Garfinkel (1967), Erving Goffman (1963), Kai Erickson (1962), and John Kitsuse (1962), culminating in a recent comprehensive work on labeling theory by Edwin Schur

(1971), describing the theoretical basis of labeling.

Kitsuse (1962:253) presented the labeling perspective in that:

Forms of behavior per se do not differentiate deviants from non-deviants; it is the response of the conventional and conforming members of the society who identify and interpret behavior as deviant which sociologically transforms persons into deviants.

Erickson (1962:308) described his interpretation of labeling deviant behavior in the following manner:

From a sociological standpoint, deviance can be defined as conduct which is generally thought to require the attention of social control agencies--that is conduct about which "something must be done." Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. Sociologically, then, the critical variable in the study of deviance is the social audience rather than the individual persons, since it is the audience which eventually decides whether or not any given action or actions will become a visible case of deviation.

Howard S. Becker (1963:9) described a number of social conditions that must be met before a person is treated as a social deviant. The main condition, of course, is that other people must respond to the label put on the person. The other side of labeling, as it were, is that once a person is typed, his acts are interpreted in accordance with the deviant status to which he has been assigned. "Whether an act is deviant depends on how other people react to it" (Becker 1963:10). Becker (1963) noted that the degree to which other people respond to a given act as deviant varies greatly. It may vary over time, but the degree to which an act will be treated as deviant depends also on who commits the act and who feels he has been harmed by it. Rules tend to be applied more to some persons than others.

For instance, the slum boy is much more apt to be searched and arrested by the police than is a middle-class boy. A black is much more apt to be arrested and convicted than a white person. Further, some rules are enforced only when they result in certain consequences. Deviance does not appear to be a simple quality. It may be described as a product of a process which involves responses of other people to the behavior.

Becker (1964:3) described the process of labeling in the following manner:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infractions constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the applications by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.

Edwin Lemert made an interesting distinction between primary and secondary deviation (Lemert, 1967:17). Primary deviation is assumed to arise in a wide variety of social, cultural, and psychological contexts. It does not lead to symbolic reorganization at the level of self-regarding attitudes and social roles. Secondary deviation is deviant behavior, or social roles based upon it, which becomes a means of defense, attack, or adaptation to the overt or covert problems created by the societal reaction to primary deviation. Lemert established much of the basis for the current labeling approach even earlier. Lemert (1951:22-23) stated that:

We start with the idea that persons and groups are differentiated in various ways, some of which result in social penalties, rejection, and segre-

gation. These penalties and segregative reactions of society or the community are dynamic factors which increase, decrease, and condition in the form which the initial differentiation or deviation takes. . . . The deviant person is one whose role, status, function and self-definition are importantly shaped by how much deviation he engages in, by the degree of its social visibility, by the particular exposure he has to the societal reaction, and by the nature and strength of the societal reaction.

### Stigma

Two terms which the process of labeling suggest will be more closely examined here. "Stigma" and "stereotype" are very real phenomena involved in the process of labeling. Erving Goffman devoted an entire volume to the topic of stigma. Goffman (1963:4) identified three different types of stigma:

First there are abominations of the body--the various physical deformities. Next there are blemishes of individual character perceived as weak will, domineering or unnatural passions, treacherous and rigid beliefs and dishonesty, these being inferred from a known record of, for example, mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts, and radical political behavior. Finally, there are the tribal stigma of race, nation and religion, these being stigma that can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family.

Studies related to stigma are pertinent to problems of aging. In a predominately youth-oriented, work-oriented society which respects a strong body and sound health, the aged portion of this society are often the subject of extreme stigma. The principle tenet of American society has been described as: "the world belongs to the young."

"The widespread image of the aged man and woman as an object of commiseration, tolerance, and pity is one of the great cultural mis-

fortunes of society" (Bortz, 1963:10). This attitude is by no means a recent one. The Biblical promise of seventy years is filled with sorrow (Psalms 90:9-10):

For all our days are passed away in their wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Aristotle (Bortz, 1963:11) viewed the aged as pessimistic and ineffective. Shakespeare's writings include the description: "a poor old man, as full of grief as age; wretched in both." Shakespeare pictures the aged "In second childishness and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans ears, sans everything." With such an historical image of the aged, Western man has built up fear of aging and a prejudice against the aged which stigmatizes them as a nonproductive burden on society.

### Stereotyping

Similar to Goffman's discussion of stigma and based on Walter Lippmann's (1922:81) "pictures in our minds", Chapman and Simmons detailed the process of stereotyping. Simmons (1969:25) stated that society is the creative force behind the deviant. Stereotyping leads to distorted appraisals and reactions. Grouping by stereotype overestimates similarities and exaggerates differences. Because they are self-perpetuating and self-fulfilling, stereotypes prove highly resistant to change even in the face of good contrary evidence. Robert Merton and others have shown, however, that even those aspects of the stereotype which happen to be "true" may only be the self-fulfilling re-

sult of applying the stereotype in the first place. Another effect of stereotypes is the result of virtually automatic rejection and isolation of those who are wrongly or rightly labeled deviant. They are prejudged and largely helpless to alter their evaluation and treatment by others. The negative stereotype may imprison the deviant in his deviant roles. The deviant role imprisonment occurs because the stereotype leads to restricted opportunities.

Stereotyping (Schur, 1971:41) has dual significance. On one hand, it reflects the needs of participants in complex interactions to order their expectations so that they can predict the actions of others, at least to an extent sufficient for coherent organization of their own behavior. On the other hand when one thinks of the selective perception frequently involved in this process, one can recognize that the potential for reactions based on inaccurate assessments is great.

In a study using semantic differential items and comparing such terms as one's self, middle-aged men, working men, and retired men (Simpson and McKinney, 1966:222), the term "old man" is consistently ranked lower on such important aspects of judgment as freedom, usefulness, effectiveness, and satisfaction with life. Furthermore, (Havighurst and Albrecht, 1953:339) it has been reported that older persons are less desirable than others as members of organizations, that they have fewer chances of becoming officers, and that others are likely to feel responsibilities to the old as burdensome. Attitudes toward the aged often involve unfavorable and harmful stereotypes (Golde and Kagan, 1959:355).

Stereotyping and discrimination of the aged (Strein and Schneider, 1971:44-45) is particularly evident among older persons in the labour

market, evidenced by the difficulty of men in their forties to obtain jobs and by forced retirement at a specified age--usually 60 or 65 years.

Many persons can live out their working lives untouched directly by the factors that adversely affect the employment of women, of Negroes, of the foreign born, or other minority groups, but none can escape the effects of age--as it influences both his employment and that of someone to whom he is closely related (Bancroft, 1952:52).

Carp (1972:7) provides a detailed analysis of the retirement process. He describes retirement as the point at which the older person either realizes new levels of creative development or experiences retirement as a degrading period of obsolescence during which he is considered to be a burden on society and a disruptive influence on the development of younger persons.

Many of the reasons (Barron, 1961:60) which employers give for discriminating against older workers in hiring and retirement practices involve the same process of stereotyping that is an integral part of prejudice against ethnic minorities. The discriminatory practices of employers can partially be traced to pressure applied by other groups. For instance, insurance companies warn employers that if they hire men over forty-five years of age or retain employees beyond sixty-five, their employees will be required to pay higher premiums for Worker's Compensation, health, disability and accident insurance. The stereotypes of aged workers include (Barron, 1961:61):

1. Older workers are less productive . . .
2. They are frequently absent . . .
3. They are involved in more accidents . . .
4. They do not stay on the payroll long enough to justify hiring expenses . . .
5. It is too costly to provide them with adequate pensions . . .

6. Older workers cause major increases in employee group insurance costs . . .
7. They do not have needed job skills . . .
8. They are inflexible and unimaginative and have trouble getting along with younger workers . . .

#### The Aged as a Quasi-Minority Group

Based on the evidence of extreme stereotyping and discrimination, a group of gerontologists have been studying and analyzing the aged in American society as an emerging quasi-minority group. Both the social psychology of older people at work and retired from it (Barron, 1961: 56) and to a large extent their whole situation in urban industrial life resemble those of the ethnic groups which are usually called minorities. In order to categorize the aged as a quasi-minority group, especially older workers, studies have been made of typical minority-group reactions among the aged. These reactions include a marked self-consciousness, sensitivity, and defensiveness about their social and cultural traits, accompanied by self-hatred. Thus, the bitterness, resentment, and self-hatred of older workers who experience discrimination in employment are described as minority group reactions. As the reaction of American society to majority discrimination against minority groups has been to enact legislation to punish such behavior, some states have enacted "fair employment practices" laws against both ethnic and age discrimination.

For these reasons, there has been considerable support for using the theory of the aged as a quasi-minority group in collecting and analyzing data on problems of aging in urban industrial societies.



## Social Structural Labeling of the Aged

Kitsuse (1962:248) described the labeling process as follows:

Deviance may be conceived as a process by which the member of a group, community, or society (1) interpret behavior as deviant, (2) define persons who so behave as a certain kind of deviant, and (3) accord them the treatment considered appropriate to such deviants.

As has been previously described, stigma, stereotyping and prejudice against the aged in the American society have been approached on both an individual and an institutional level. In terms of the process of labeling which was described by Kitsuse: (1) old age is regarded as a stigmatized, undesirable state, (2) individuals who meet the criteria of old age--which in employment circles is usually defined as 65 years--are defined according to negative, stereotyped criteria, and (3) the aged are discriminated against in accordance with the stereotypes appropriate to old age.

In Chapter II, the theory was developed that the majority of the aged in America react to aging in accordance with Reisman's category, "the adjusted individual." The adjusted individual is greatly dependent on the roles, norms, values and penalties imposed by society. Meaningfulness is based on work, power and position. An image of youthfulness is their source of social and economic prestige. The maintenance of social and economic prestige depends on the substitution of new roles for those familial and work roles lost with age.

As the life space of the aged individual decreases, particularly in those cases where he enters an age-segregated residence, the residence itself becomes a primary social structure. As a primary social structure, the administrators of the residences seem to be a highly in-

fluent source of support or non-support for their aged residents. The labels which the residential administrators apply to the aged will be carried out in terms of behavior patterns toward the residents-- either encouraging and supportive or discriminatory and non-supportive.

#### Self-Labeling of the Aged

One major consequence of the labeling process is the tendency of the labeled person to become "caught up in" his label. In the process of "role engulfment," the labels applied by others become part of the individual's personal identity or self-concept. In considering role engulfment, one must consider both how others define the actor and how the actor defines himself. As role engulfment increases, there is a tendency for the actor to define himself as others define him.

It has been theorized (Schur, 1971:70) that role engulfment is likely to have a greater impact if the factors initiating it occur "all at once." Such is often the case with the aged, with the individual being considered a capable and useful member of society, and then without any changes in his physical, psychological or social capacities, he is arbitrarily retired from his work roles. The changes accompanying retirement are so drastic that the individual may easily fall into role engulfment.

According to the symbolic interaction perspective, a conception of self is derived from social interaction. The individual develops a concept of himself as he interacts with others. According to George Herbert Mead's conception of the social self, the individual adjusts his conception of self to what he conceives is the conception within his organized society with regard to him. Thus, the labels which

society place on the aged segment of society are apt to affect the self-conception of the aged individual.

#### Summary

Labeling has been established not only as a perspective by which to study deviant behavior, but as a potentially useful perspective by which to view the problems of the aged in modern society. The crises involved in roles losses with retirement from occupational and familial roles may be viewed as being intensified by the labeling processes of stigma, stereotyping, and prejudice toward retired and aged individuals. The social structure was examined as a potential source of influence on the aged individual through its attitudinal and behavioral processes of labeling. Finally, self-labeling was portrayed as a very critical consequence of societal labels of the aged.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MEANING OF WORK AND LEISURE

#### Historical Attitudes toward

#### Work and Leisure

For the Ancient Greeks (Zimmermann, 1963:47), toil was despised and delegated whenever possible to the slaves. Leisure was the criteria of a worthwhile life.

Certain interpretations of Christianity affected a great change in the concept of work and leisure (Pieper, 1952:24-27). Christianity held that original sin exacted the payment of work from man. Then, the Protestant Reformation labeled work as the path to Heaven, giving it the quality of holiness. Even leisure time, what little there was, was to be spent in the glorification of God. According to the Protestant Ethic, men were supposed to work and be as productive as possible all their lives.

The Protestant Ethic functioned well during times of scarcity when there was no problem of meaningful use of time. "But with the twentieth-century economy of abundance, the Protestant Ethic became the main cause of the problem of retirement, or of how to use time meaningfully in the later years" (Havighurst, 1961:310). At the same time, industrialization and urbanization brought into existence a large group of non-working older people.

Throughout time man has dreamed of achieving a state in which he

would be free from the stress of labor. Present technological advancements have brought this day of liberation close to reality. The irony of the situation, however, is that the glorification of work has effectively transformed our society into a laboring society (Arendt, 1959:5):

It is a society of laborers which is about to be liberated from the fetters of labor, and this society does no longer know of those other higher and more meaningful activities for the sake of which this freedom would deserve to be won. Within this society, which is egalitarian because this is labor's way of making men live together, there is no class left, no aristocracy of either a political or spiritual nature from which a restoration of the other capacities of man could start anew. Even presidents, kings, and prime ministers think of their offices in terms of a job necessary for the life of society, and among the intellectuals, only solitary individuals are left who consider what they are doing in terms of work and not in terms of making a living. What we are confronted with is the prospect of a society of laborers without labor, that is, without the only activity left to them. Surely, nothing could be worse.

Cultural values greatly determine the role of work in the American society. Work offers prestige, social participation, and a sense of usefulness. Another cultural value emphasizes individual or personal responsibility for one's own welfare. Success and economic independence (Tibbitts, 1960:17) or failure are felt to depend on one's own industry, initiative, alertness, and frugality. The concept of individual responsibility has placed many older people in a difficult position when faced with retirement. Income, position and status are all endangered with retirement from the work roles.

## Work and Leisure: Complementary

### Components of Human Activity

Work and leisure can be visualized as complementary components of human activity. Historically, (Miller, 1965:80) there are three work-leisure traditions: (1) pre-industrial: traditional work softened by related customs and rites; (2) industrial: work and leisure as polar opposites; (3) post-industrial: the integration of work and leisure.

The pre-industrial culture was based on an agricultural economy where little recreation or organized leisure existed. Most work was based in the home. The economic and social roles of the person were functional, useful and significant to the family. The elderly retained some functional roles until poor health prevented any activity.

With industrialization and urbanization, work became the central life interest, regulating economic, social and family life (Miller, 1965:81). The Puritan tradition emphasizing work as the major cultural value was established. A man's work became the basis for his social identity. A man's self-conception was directly influenced by his work. In a society which places such an emphasis on efficiency and production as provided in the work role, there is little use for the elderly who no longer have functional work roles to fill.

In post-industrial society as described by Miller, work remains the basis of social identity. The nature of work has changed, however. Due to attempts to make boring, repetitive work meaningful, a characteristic of the twentieth century (Miller, 1965:82) is the re-introduction of leisure into work. "The opportunity to engage in something

creative, even if only in a hobby association provides a compensation for the deadening effect of working on a simple repetitive task . . . " (Rose, 1956:330). It has become increasingly difficult to separate work-time from non-work time. The meaningfulness of activities is bound closely to cultural values. Havighurst (1961:319) has pointed out that by and large the meanings people attach to leisure activities are essentially the same as those derived from work activities.

Along with the reduction of opposition between work and leisure (Miller, 1965:82-83), a cultural value which affects the American pattern of life is the contemporary emphasis on action. As a result, activity of any sort has been valued over non-activity. Those (Buhler, 1961:386) who are not active are made to feel useless and even worthless. Thus, as both leisure and activity come to be valued, the older person who engages in some activity, no matter what, is less subject to social labeling as "non-functional" and "useless" than is the individual who disengages himself from activity. Such activities have even greater value if the activity both has meaning for the individual and is generally respected by others.

The Institute of Gerontology of the State University of Iowa lists the following needs and drives of the older person in relation to the leisure programs (Kaplan, 1960:409):

- (a) Need to render some socially useful service,
- (b) Need to be considered a part of the community,
- (c) Need to occupy their increased leisure time in satisfying ways,
- (d) Need to enjoy normal companionships,
- (e) Need for recognition as an individual,
- (f) Need for opportunity for self-expression and a sense of achievement,
- (g) Need for health protection and care,
- (h) Need for suitable mental stimulation,

- (i) Need for suitable living arrangements and family relationships, and
- (j) Need for spiritual satisfaction

Every measure which reduces the feeling of uselessness and gives the old person a new meaning in life is invaluable. A study by Karsten (1962:6) of the aging industrial workers in Finland found the key word was "activity" and not the fact that the activity was rewarded by a salary or had monetary value of any kind. Such activity enables the older person to feel himself useful in retirement, while avoiding solitude and brooding.

#### Activity Theory

Activity theory is considered to be the oldest theory of gerontology. Based on the Protestant work ethic and middle-class, middle-age norms and values, the activity theory maintains that it is wrong to be inactive. Some theorists trace the roots of activity theory into the concepts of symbolic interactionism. In symbolic interaction theory, the self-concept is derived from the social network of interaction. "It is assumed that notions of the self vis-a-vis the environment emerge, are validated, and are sustained or changed primarily in interaction with others" (Maddox and Eisdorfer, 1962:254). Thus, as one ages, the maintenance of a good self-concept depends on the responses he receives through his interaction with others. (Herein also lies the basis for labeling theory as applied to the aged.) If the individual remains active or engaged, his self-concept is more apt to remain intact.

Activity theory "advocates the fullest possible involvement with others" (Koller, 1968:51). The activity theory rests on the basis as-



sumption that successful aging is aging with activity. Burgess and his associates at the University of Chicago designed a series of studies to determine the principal factors positively related to good adjustment in old age. Using the scale "Your Activities and Attitudes" (Caran et al., 1959), they found the factors to include: satisfactory health, being married and having good family relations and friendships, participation in leisure time and other activities and membership in at least one organization. In other words, the best adjustment in aging is related to a full, active, engaged life.

#### Research on Activity Theory

The field of gerontology has experienced a flurry of research activity in attempts to prove or disprove the activity theory. The following section will review some of this research. Lehr and Dreher (1969:134) found a contradiction of attitudes, dependent on the age-span involved. The 60-65 year-olds were dissatisfied with retirement and expressed a negative attitude toward higher activity, thus confirming the disengagement theory as described in Chapter II. In the age group 70-75 years, however, those who showed greater role activity, had more social contacts, and who had a sense of being needed were satisfied with their general life situation as well as with the status of retirement.

Maddox and Eisdorfer (1962:254-255) suggest that since an expansion of interests and activity is highly valued in our society, constriction of interests and activities produce a crisis in self-evaluation in the individual. "The probability that an individual will develop a negative image of the self and feel alienated from his environ-

ment, then, presumably increases as activity with and within that environment decreases" (Maddox and Eisdorfer, 1962:255). The results of the study confirmed a positive relationship between activity and morale, although the type of activity makes a difference. "If activity is related to morale, then it may follow that morale is more likely to be maintained among the elderly in some social structures than others . . ." (Maddox and Eisdorfer, 1962:260).

The study by Pihlblad and McNamara (1965:49-73) concerning social adjustment of the elderly found that all measures of participation (visiting, church activity, voting, and participation in civic, social and professional organizations) were significantly related to adjustment. Dr. S. L. Pressey's findings from a study on successful and problem older people (Vickery, 1962:116) indicated that successful aging is related to continuing usefulness, maintenance of social relationships and abilities, and interest in lively and varied activities. In a cross-cultural study, Havighurst, Neugarten, Munnichs, and Thomae (1969) reported a substantial positive correlation between total activity in twelve social roles and general life satisfaction.

Several studies have emphasized the type of activity as a potential factor in morale or life satisfaction as it relates to activity. Lemon, Bengtson, and Peterson (1972:519) suggest that the quality or type of interaction, not the quantity of interaction, may be the most important predictor of life satisfaction. Activity with friends seemed to have greater benefit than activity either with neighbors in a formal context or solitary activity of any frequency. On the other hand, a longitudinal investigation by Maddox (1963:203) revealed that both interpersonal activity and noninterpersonal activity were significantly

related to morale.

Martin (1973:224-227) attempted to prove that activity and disengagement theories do not represent mutually exclusive processes, but rather, that these processes operate on different levels (the personal level and the social structural level). High life satisfaction in the older person may be a combination of inter- and intra-personal activity (Interaction with friends, age-oriented organizations and clubs, recreational groups) coupled with structural disengagement (withdrawal from the extended family and from the economy).

Closely associated with the concepts of morale, adjustment and satisfaction with life, meaning and purpose in life has been related to continued or substitutive roles and activities. Crumbaugh (1972: 419) relates changes in roles and identity with changes in the older person's sense of meaning and purpose:

The decline of physical and mental capacities, and particularly the stage of retirement, yield in most individuals an altered life-style which loses or modifies the sense of meaning and purpose that has been the source of actualization and the mainspring of energy over many decades. New values must be explored for meanings which can fulfill the same identity or create a new one, while remaining within the realm of realization of the present organic function and cultural milieu. Otherwise the individual degenerates into helplessness and despair of existential vacuum.

Crumbaugh is the author of the Purpose in Life test which is an instrument designed to measure Frankl's concept of the "will to meaning." It is particularly relevant that Crumbaugh, considered an expert in the study of meaning and purpose in life, perceives in this research the impact which social factors such as retirement and role loss have on the sense of meaning and purpose in life of the aged individual.

Rather than portraying "meaning and purpose" as an existential characteristic untouched and unaffected by the social setting, Crumbaugh stresses the need for new values and presumably, new roles to prevent the individual's degeneration into the "hopelessness and despair of existential vacuum."

### The Role of the Social Structure

Even when people who are living together do not deliberately plan a formal organization, a social organization develops among them. Social organization refers to "the observed regularities in the behavior of people that are due to the social conditions in which they find themselves rather than to their physiological or psychological characteristics as individuals" (Blau and Scott, 1962:2). The social conditions that influence the conduct of people can be divided into two main parts (Blau and Scott, 1962:2): "(1) the structure of social relations in a group or larger collectivity of people, and (2) the shared beliefs and orientations that unite the members of the collectivity and guide their conduct."

Max Kaplan (1960:424) suggests that one's leisure-time actions stem from a possible combination of three chief sources:

- (1) from the groups to which we belong and whose controls and norms bear upon us;
- (2) from the culture into which we happen to be born, whose interlocking and complex pattern of groups, institutions, and prevailing ideologies sets a "climate of opinion" for all of life, including our attitudes toward unobligated time and its uses; and
- (3) from the limitations and potentials of our bodies and minds which influence the selections we make within groups and society and our own creative contribution toward new patterns of organization and thought in them.

Based on the vast amount of sociological research in the area of social organization, gerontological literature discusses the implications of social structure and organization as an influence on individuals' behavior.

As has been previously discussed in Chapters II and III, the social structure, and particularly the residences in the case of age-segregated living arrangements, are potential sources of influence on the aged individual. Kleemeier (1962:913-918) examines the influence of certain kinds of environments (special settings for the aged) on human activities and use of time. It is suggested that the more traditional old age settings (such as many nursing homes) are designed with the low energy levels of residents in mind. In such settings, low activity levels are frequently accompanied by low morale.

Herbert Shore (1962:16-24) provides a very insightful evaluation of institutions for the aged. He quotes a paper read before the Gerontological Society:

In far too many instances institutionalization has carried with it the connotation of depersonalization of the individual--reduction to a mass. The institution required adjustment on the part of its guests--a state of non-creative suspension in the meaningless limbo of purposeless quietude, the traditional facility, lacking a realistic philosophy of therapy and lacking even a semblance of program, contributed to the pessimistic attitudes toward institutions (the end of the road) as well as the conviction of hopelessness relative to the recuperative powers of older persons.

The Council of State Governments (Shore, 1962:17) listed five undesirable characteristics found in the average institution for older people. These characteristics include: (1) the tendency for such facilities to follow a custodial care pattern rather than a rehabilitation pattern; (2) they expect passivity in the residents rather than

physical and mental activity; (3) they tend to require the residents to conform to rules and regulations rather than allowing for individual preferences and self-expression; (4) the staffs tend to become impersonal and overprofessional; and (5) the institutions tend to take in more residents than is beneficial to the welfare and happiness of the residents. Shore (1962:19) further suggests that a more progressive residence for the elderly should include "well-organized and comprehensive social service programs, especially in family casework and in group work, recreation, and leisure-time activities."

Kleemeier (1961:273) emphasizes the role of the administrators of residences for the aged:

In homes for the aged, hospitals, and other special settings for the old, responsibility for the full life pattern of the individual, in varying measure, is assumed by the administrators of the program into whose hands the older person is placed. While it is true that the degree of accepted responsibility may be minimal or even absent, as in the case of certain retirement communities, in many full-care institutions it may be virtually complete.

He further notes that while it is difficult to determine the exact contribution of the setting to the activity levels of its residents, the setting can nevertheless bring out activity levels or allow atrophy to occur.

Kandler and Hyde, as reported by Kleemeier (1961:298), show how dependent activity and social interaction is upon the presence of trained and sensitive staff. In the more institutional settings, activity changes do not occur without the instigation and encouragement of the staff.

Mary Lystad (1972:98) in her review of literature on social alienation discusses the role of institutions in combating alienation

among the elderly. In a special program for residents in a home for aged, the aged were encouraged by young workers to involve themselves in activities. Activities such as ball-playing, group discussions and handicrafts were stressed. It was found that some of the patients who had previously been alienated from their environment began to speak and to participate freely in the program. When left alone again, however, they reverted to their alienated behavior patterns.

#### Summary

In conclusion, activity provides various role-supports necessary for reaffirming one's self-concept. "The more intimate and the more frequent the activity, the more reinforcing and the more specific will be the role supports" (Lemon, Bengtson and Peterson, 1972:515). Role supports are needed in order to maintain a positive self-concept which in turn is associated with high life satisfaction. A vast amount of research in gerontology has been concerned with the association between activity and such qualities as morale, adjustment, life satisfaction and a sense of meaning and usefulness in old age. Research has further indicated that the social structure and setting of the aged have a potential impact upon the activity level of the aged individual.

## CHAPTER V

### THEORETICAL MODEL

The following model is specifically formulated as a theoretical framework by which to analyze the effect of social structural labeling and self-labeling of the aged. Any model which tries to predict human behavior is based on certain basic assumptions regarding that behavior. The critical concepts found within the assumptions will be defined.

#### Definition of Concepts

Values--the criteria or conceptions used in evaluating things (including objects, ideas, acts, feelings, and events) as to their relative desirability or merit (Zanden, 1970:634).

Purpose in Life--a cause that gives direction to life and makes it understandable.\*

Usefulness--the state of having value and utility.

Self-Reliance--reliance upon one's own efforts and abilities (Webster, 1963:785).

Work-activity--the labor, task or duties one performs in his/her functional roles.

Retirement--the loss of functional roles in the form of work activities (including familial and occupation roles).

\*This is a paraphrase of Frankl's (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1963: 43) definition: "a cause or sense of mission that is uniquely one's own and that gives direction to life and makes it understandable.



Leisure-activity--free-time, non-occupational activities.

Social Structure--a configuration in which different categories of people are bound together within a network of relationships; the concept implies that people are bound within networks of relationships (groups) in which they interact with one another (role-play) in terms of certain shared understandings (cultural patterns) that define the behavior expected of them as given kinds of people (positions) (Zanden, 1970:634).

#### Assumptions

- A<sub>1</sub>: The primary motive in mankind is a search for meaningful existence.
- A<sub>2</sub>: Dominant values which define meaningful existence are found in every known society.
- A<sub>3</sub>: Societal members generally accept meaningfulness as it is defined by that society's dominant values.
- A<sub>4</sub>: The dominant values which describe an individual's meaningful existence vary from one society to another.
- A<sub>5</sub>: In modern society, meaningful existence is essentially composed of purpose in life, usefulness, and self-reliance.
- A<sub>6</sub>: In modern society, meaning is essentially acquired through work-activity.
- A<sub>7</sub>: Retirement strips individuals of most of their work-activity roles.
- A<sub>8</sub>: Meaningful existence is seldom self-sustaining; its sources are primarily derived from the social structure.
- A<sub>9</sub>: Leisure-activity in retirement is the essential source

of meaningful existence.

A10: Motivation for individual behavior comes more out of social structures than out of the individual.

#### Rationale

Philosophers and scientists have attempted for centuries to explain the primary motivation of man. Freud identified this primary motivation as the "will to power" (Frankl, 1963:154). Viktor Frankl (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1963:47) stated that man seeks primarily to find meaning and purpose in human existence. According to Frankl (1963:176) there are three principal ways in which man can find meaning in life: First, by what he gives to the world in terms of his creation; second, by what he takes from the world in terms of encounters and experiences; and third, by the stand he takes when faced with a fate which he cannot change. In Frankl's will to meaning is the concept of an individual striving to find a justification for his existence.

It appears that in every known society there are certain dominant values, including those values which define meaningfulness. These dominant values, of course, vary from one society to another. The variability (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961:4) in the ways of life of a people is a result of the definitions pertaining to the values of these people. Studies have suggested that the status of the aged varies greatly from society to society. "It is inevitable that position of the aged should be relative to the dominant values of the society" (Cowgill, 1972:12). Ruth Benedict's study (1946) contrasted American and Japanese cultures. Her findings suggest that the aged in Japanese

society had great status while those in American society were relegated to a low prestige position. Much of the basis for the difference in valuing the aged in these societies is in the concept of usefulness. In Japanese society, the knowledge which comes with age provides the older person with usefulness to the younger members of society.

Cowgill (1972) suggests that the status of the aged will be higher in preliterate societies.

In such societies, old people are the repositories of knowledge and tradition; they have the natural and pivotal function of transmitting such knowledge and tradition . . . the status of the aged will be highest in those societies in which they are able to continue to perform useful and valued functions (Cowgill, 1972:10).

Retirement and role loss in modern society constitute a complex phenomenon. A man's occupational position functions not only as a means of earning a livelihood, but also as proof of his efficacy and worth. "Thus work is an integral part of the male's personal and social identity" (Blau, 1973:29). Therefore, the social expectation that older people must give up their jobs at a fixed age often represents a marked and sudden discontinuity for individuals, particularly for males. Functional role loss, however, is in no way limited to men. With the growing number of women entering the labor force, more women experience the discontinuity of retirement. The concept "empty-nest syndrome" refers to the women's potential depression after all of her children have left home.

In a sense, the menopause and the conclusion of child-rearing activities have the same meaning for women that occupational retirement has for men. Each role is closely related to sex identity--motherhood with femaleness and work with maleness--and the irrevocable exit from these roles psychologically signifies the onset of barrenness and

impotence, both signs of old age (Blau, 1973:22-23).

Role loss is further intensified on the occasion of the loss of one's mate--which occurs more often for the woman, as she tends to outlive her husband. Jules Henry (1963:22,400) describes "dynamic obsolescence" as being not only a characteristic of modern attitudes toward technology but also of modern attitudes toward aged individuals who are regarded as useless.

Cowgill (1972:11) indicates that "in primitive societies there is less modification of roles as people become aged as compared with modern societies in which retirement from economically productive roles has become the expected pattern." In modern society, the Protestant Ethic has emphasized the work role (Havighurst, 1961:310). In a society which stresses competition, the older person tends to eventually lose out in the struggle and consequently be downgraded in status. "A value system which emphasizes ego development and individualistic achievement places the older person at a disadvantage as compared with a value system which submerges the individual in the group which in turn provides security for dependent or incapacitated members" (Cowgill, 1972:12).

The American definition of freedom is based on faith and confidence of the individual in his own competence and mastery.

This concept of freedom depends on the value of individualism, and this, in turn, produces a particular definition of personal identity predicated on independence and self-reliance. Only by being independent can an American be truly a person, self-respecting and worthy of concern and the esteem of others (Clark, 1972:263).

Margaret Clark (1972:273) further comments that morality is intimately bound to self-reliance, and self-reliance in turn, is tied to work and

productivity, as well as to social and economic independence.

At every stage of life, an individual needs confirmation of his worth (Blau, 1973:149). Confirmation of one's worth can be obtained through what he does--his activities that have value--and through what he is--his personal qualities that elicit respect from others. There is an interplay between activities and social relationships. Satisfying activities, work-activities or leisure activities, enable a person to sustain respect for himself as well as respect from others. In the same way, satisfaction in interaction with others encourages him to share their activities and thus, maintain a sense of usefulness and purpose. In modern society, then, meaningful existence is essentially based on having purpose in life, as well as a sense of usefulness and self-reliance. The means by which such meaning is acquired is basically through activity. Activity primarily takes the form of functional work roles in pre-retirement, but may be replaced in the form of leisure-activities in post-retirement. The meaningfulness of activities is closely related to cultural values. Havighurst (1961:319) points out that by and large the meanings people attach to leisure-activities are essentially the same as those derived from work-activities.

As has been established in the literature in Chapters II, III and IV, the social structure and setting of the retired individual have a potential impact upon his self-concept, morale, and activity level. If societal labels become incorporated into the self-labels of the retired individual, then society can potentially affect his behavior. When the social structure carries the labeling process into the behavior stage, encouraging or discouraging activity, then it further influences the individual. The influence of residential social structures

becomes even more vital to the aged, his self-concept and his behavior. Physical restrictions, transportation and other factors tend to narrow the life space of the aged individual. Thus, the residence becomes the primary influence in his life. The attitudes of administrators and staff, the physical facilities and the social activities provided for the residents of retirement villages, nursing homes and other age-segregated facilities are potentials for influencing the aged residents, in heightening or lowering their level of activity, and thus, their purpose in life, sense of usefulness and sense of self-reliance.

The model presented here categorizes the residential social structures into two attitudinal types. The residential social structure<sub>1</sub> views the aged as useful, encouraging leisure-activity by the retired individual. Here the emphasis is on the activity theory, which values the continued contributions of the aged. The activity model is based on the assumption that successful aging is aging with activity. By being viewed as useful and encouraged to remain active, the individual may engage in more leisure-activities and begin to label himself as useful and as having a meaningful existence. On the other hand, the residential social structure<sub>2</sub> which views the retired person as basically useless, expecting passivity and dependence, is following the disengagement tradition. The attitude is that the gradual withdrawal of the individual from society benefits both the individual and society.

## Hypotheses

Based on the related literature and the theoretical model discussed, the following hypotheses have been formulated for empirical investigation:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Retired individuals having a highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity will maintain a highly meaningful existence.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Retired individuals having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness; and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity will increase in their sense of meaningful existence.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Retired individuals having a highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will decrease in their sense of meaningful existence.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Retired individuals having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will maintain a low sense of meaningful existence.
- H<sub>5</sub>: The indicators of meaningful existence (purpose in life, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance) will be positively related together.

H6: The level of leisure-activity will be positively related to meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and c) perceived self-reliance.



## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The previous theoretical formulation (as presented in the related literature and theoretical model) has been an attempt to alleviate some of the gap in gerontological theory. Gerontological study has been characterized by flurried research activity and comparatively little that can technically be called theory.

The labeling approach--which emphasized societal reactions to deviation--is becoming increasingly central to sociological research and analysis of deviance. The labeling perspective has been applied to a great extent in the area of crime and delinquency. There has been no concerted effort, however, to apply the labeling perspective to the problems of the aged in modern society. In Chapter III, the labeling processes of stigma, stereotyping, and prejudice are made applicable to societal treatment of the aged. The present study is an attempt to operationalize and empirically test a labeling theory of the aged (as well as a verification of the activity theory). The labeling process will be examined both in social structural and personal terms.

The labeling processes as described are complex phenomena, probably not amenable to laboratory study. As there was no means for control of variables, the researcher took precautions to find social structures which met the assumptions as presented in the theoretical model.

The discipline of sociology has been enmeshed in the reliance on precise, empirical tests of highly operationalized concepts. The questionnaire and interview have occupied a position of veritable unquestioned supremacy as the methods of the social sciences. Webb et al. (1966:3) has suggested that strength of method might include several independent measurement processes:

Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it (Webb et al., 1966:3).

For these reasons, the present study has utilized three methodological techniques including questionnaires, interviews and simple observational procedures. Questionnaires designed to elicit demographic data and attitude scales were presented to retired individuals living in various age-segregated residences. Interviews with the administrator, staff and personnel of these residences provided indications of attitudes and behavior toward the residents. It was felt that first-hand observation of activities within the residences would provide an alternative source of information regarding their attitudes and behavior. It was feared that the administrators and staff would be apt to express opinions which they felt would be expected of them rather than an accurate assessment of their "real" attitudes. As both qualitative and quantitative analyses have limitations, the researcher hoped that by using one to supplement the other, more accurate results might be obtained.

The hypotheses derived from the theoretical model identify the study to be an investigation of change over a period of time in a residential social structure. The obvious way to study changes over

time, of course, is to obtain a sample and actually measure its change. The panel technique, a longitudinal technique, measures some attributes of a given sample of people at several points in time. Because it retains the same sample for both pretest and post-test, the panel technique, although it has certain limitations, is the selected method of determining change in the present study.

### The Sample

In order to identify age-segregated residences which exemplified supportive or non-supportive attitudes toward the retired, the researcher made observational studies of various institutions in Tulsa and neighboring areas. Combining interviews with the administrators, staff, and personnel with simple observation, the researcher identified two differing types of residential social structures. Based on the interviews and observation studies, two institutions (A and B) were selected as representative of residential social structures<sub>1</sub> (which encourages leisure-activities). Criteria by which institutions were selected as residential social structures<sub>1</sub> included: a full-time Activity Director as a member of the staff, a schedule of varying daily activities for the residents, expressed and actual encouragement of residents to participate in activities, as well as subjective impressions of attitudes toward the residents as being useful and productive individuals.

On the other hand, criteria by which institutions were selected as residential social structures<sub>2</sub> included: lack of a full-time Activity Director as a member of the staff, lack of a consistent, daily schedule of activities for the residents, expressed or actual behavior

condoning passivity on the part of the residents, as well as subjective impressions of attitudes toward the residents as being less than useful and productive individuals. Two institutions (C and D) were identified as meeting the above criteria for residential social structure<sub>2</sub>. This data obtained by interviews and simple observation will be further elaborated in the following chapter entitled Qualitative Data.

Having identified the necessary residential social structures, the researcher then needed a design by which to choose residents who might be given the questionnaires. The longitudinal panel technique, as previously described, has certain inherent requirements and limitations. First of all, as the research design should allow for a test of change over time, the residents had to be first administered a questionnaire at a time when the researcher could be relatively confident that the residence had not had sufficient time to influence the individuals. Therefore, arrangements were made with staff members of the selected residences in order to learn of new admissions. New residents were interviewed within two weeks of their entrance into the selected residences. Obviously, the "turn-over" rate at age-segregated residences is not fast, as it tends to be dependent on deaths of current residents and the addition of new units to the institutions. There also was the requirement of an appropriate length of time during which the individual could possibly respond to or be affected by his social and physical environment. Because of certain time restrictions--due to the time span required to locate new residents--a six month period was chosen as the length of time to pass before each resident was re-interviewed. Thus, there could be neither random sampling nor stratified sampling. The only requirements for being a respondent were to be a resident of

one of the selected institutions and that he or she be willing to respond. The pretest sample included forty-three individuals living in residential social structures<sub>1</sub> and forty-six individuals living in residential social structures<sub>2</sub>. One individual moved within the six months testing period, leaving forty-five individuals as representative of residential social structures<sub>2</sub>. The basic structure of the research design, with pretest and post-test, is diagramed in figure 1.

Very few individuals were uncooperative or unwilling to answer the questionnaires. In forty percent of the cases where the individual was capable of completing the questionnaire independently, the researcher made the initial contact and then arranged to pick up the questionnaire on his own, or if he preferred it, the researcher administered the questionnaire in interview style.

Retrospective data has received some attention in recent sociological research. Therefore, a group of respondents was chosen from each of the residences, the qualification being that they had lived in the institution for no less than six months and no more than one year. The respondents were given the same post-test as the "panel" sample except for an additional section on retrospective information on the self-concept semantic differential. The retrospective sample included forty-seven individuals. The retrospective scale and all sections of the questionnaires will be discussed in the following section. Table I provides a description of the characteristics of the sample (both panel and retrospective), classified as respondents either from residential social structure<sub>1</sub> or residential social structure<sub>2</sub>.

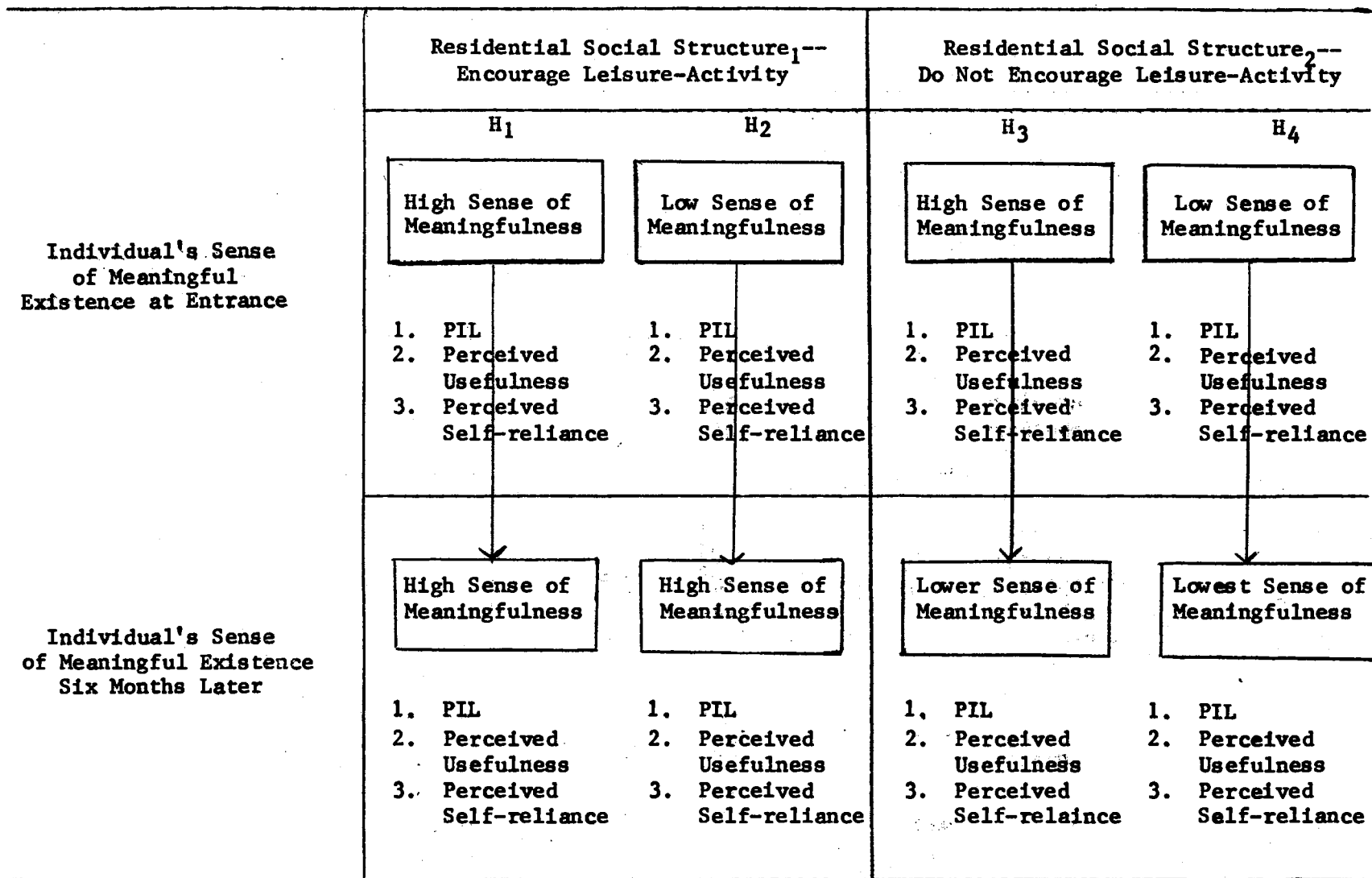


Figure 1 Research Design for Pretest/Post-test Comparison

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Characteristic	Categories	Residential Social Structure <sub>1</sub>	Residential Social Structure <sub>2</sub>
Sex	Male	35.3*	27.3
	Female	64.7	72.7
Race	Negro	1.5	1.5
	Caucasian	97.1	98.5
	Indian	1.5	0.0
	Other	0.0	0.0
Length of residence	Less than a year	52.9	69.2
	One year	47.1	30.8
	Two years	0.0	0.0
	Three years	0.0	0.0
	Four years or over	0.0	0.0
Education	Elementary School	7.3	52.2
	High School	20.6	13.4
	Some college	22.1	13.4
	College graduate	36.8	20.9
	Other type of school	13.2	0.0
Age	55-59	0.0	3.0
	60-64	10.3	7.5
	65-69	13.2	11.9
	70-74	35.3	13.4
	75-79	27.9	22.4
	80-84	11.8	22.4
	85-89	1.5	11.9
	90-95	0.0	7.5
Occupation	Unskilled worker	4.5	43.3
	Semiskilled worker	3.0	4.5
	Service worker	6.1	4.5
	Skilled worker	3.0	10.4
	Office worker	19.7	17.9
	Manager, small owner	13.6	4.5
	Professional (B.A.)	27.3	14.9
	High level owner, executive	10.6	0.0
	Professional (advanced degree)	12.1	0.0

\*Numbers are percentages

TABLE I (Continued)

Characteristic	Categories	Residential Social Structure <sub>1</sub>	Residential Social Structure <sub>2</sub>
Health	Poor	1.5*	22.7
	Fair	19.1	31.8
	Good	50.0	45.5
	Very Good	29.4	0.0
Health comparison	Poor	0.0	16.4
	Fair	13.2	38.8
	Good	54.4	43.3
	Very Good	32.5	1.5
Source of income	Welfare	0.0	4.5
	Medicare	0.0	0.0
	Support from family	0.0	17.9
	Social Security	4.5	32.8
	Retirement Pension	11.9	41.8
	Savings	58.2	3.0
	Other	25.4	0.0
Total Estate Value	Less than \$25,000	37.9	92.5
	\$25,000-\$50,000	30.3	7.5
	\$50,000-\$75,000	9.1	0.0
	Over \$75,000	22.7	0.0
Marital Status	Single	8.8	6.0
	Married	36.8	19.4
	Widowed	50.0	64.2
	Divorced	2.9	8.9
	Separated	1.5	1.5
	Remarried	0.0	0.0
Reason for Residence	Forced	0.0	13.4
	No place to go	1.5	82.1
	Choice	86.8	3.0
	Combination	11.8	1.5
Family visits	Never	8.8	3.0
	Less than once a month	38.2	11.9
	Once a month	11.8	8.9
	Once a week	30.9	41.8
	Once a day	10.3	34.3

\*Numbers are percentages



TABLE I (Continued)

Characteristic	Categories	Residential Social Structure <sub>1</sub>	Residential Social Structure <sub>2</sub>
Family Communi- cation	Never	2.9	4.5
	Less than once a month	13.2	8.9
	Once a month	17.6	13.4
	Once a week	58.8	49.2
	Once a day	7.3	23.9
Attitude toward residence	Definitely no	1.5*	8.9
	Mildly no	1.5	35.8
	Neutral	8.8	44.8
	Mildly yes	19.1	10.4
	Definitely yes	69.1	0.0
Solitary activities	Less than one hour/day	14.7	43.3
	One hour/day	33.8	53.7
	Two hours/day	25.0	1.5
	Three hours/day	13.2	1.5
	More than three hours/day	1.5	0.0
Group activities	Less than one hour/day	33.8	83.6
	One hour/day	42.6	13.4
	Two hours/day	22.1	3.0
	Three hours/day	0.0	0.0
	More than three hours/day	1.5	0.0
Church activities	Less than one hour/day	57.4	86.6
	One hour/day	35.3	13.4
	Two hours/day	4.4	0.0
	Three hours/day	2.9	0.0
	More than three hours/day	0.0	0.0
Importance of Religion	Less important	4.4	0.0
	About the same	38.2	74.6
	More important	57.3	25.4
Belief in Life after death	No	8.8	0.0
	Yes	91.2	100.0

\*Numbers are percentages

## The Questionnaires

The research instruments used to measure the individual's sense of meaningful existence, as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and c) perceived self-reliance, are provided in Appendix A, Appendix B and Appendix C. The pretest questionnaire presented in Appendix A is divided into two sections: (1) purpose in life test items and (2) self-concept semantic differential items. The post-test questionnaire presented in Appendix B is divided into four sections: (1) demographic variables, (2) purpose in life test items, (3) anomaly items, and (4) self-concept semantic differential items. The retrospective questionnaire includes all of the sections of the post-test questionnaire in addition to the retrospective self-concept semantic differential items presented in Appendix C.

The first section of the post-test questionnaire includes twenty items eliciting demographic and personal data. Much of the information generated in this section is not directly relevant to testing the theoretical model of this study. Except for items sixteen, seventeen and eighteen, the demographic data will not be treated in the discussions of qualitative and quantitative data. Portions of the demographic and personal data will be presented and discussed, however, in Chapter IX entitled Further Explorations.

### The Leisure-Activities Scale

As the frequency of activity was a basic component of the theoretical model, the post-test questionnaire included three items designed to measure solitary activities, group activities, and church-related activities.

How much time do you spend with hobbies, games or related activities (alone)?

less than one hour/day  
 one hour/day  
 two hours/day  
 three hours/day  
 more than three hours/day

How much time do you spend with hobbies, games or related activities (with others)?

less than one hour/day  
 one hour/day  
 two hours/day  
 three hours/day  
 more than three hours/day

Thus, the distinction was made between solitary and group activities. Some of the related literature has suggested differing values for solitary and group activities. No attempt was made to distinguish between leisure-activities and activity that might be classified as "useful activity" or of monetary value. As discussed in Chapter IV, much of the literature suggests that activity of any sort has been valued over non-activity.

For the sake of possible further explorations an item was included on church-related activities:

How much time do you spend in church or in church-related activities?

less than one hour/day  
 one hour/day  
 two hours/day  
 three hours/day  
 more than three hours/day

The method used to test the reliability of the items was the TESTAT procedure presented by Donald Veldman (1967:170-181). The TESTAT program provides means, sigmas, r coefficients, and an alpha coefficient for each scale. The coefficient alpha sets an upper limit of reliability based on internal consistency (Nunnally, 1967:210). Coefficient alpha usually provides a good estimate of reliability,

since a major source of measurement error is due to the sampling of content. A very low coefficient alpha suggests that the test is too short or the items have very little in common, and that the researcher should revamp his test if he expects his results to be meaningful. An alpha level of at least .50 should be reached in order for a scale to be considered adequate (Nunnally, 1967:226).

It is important to note that within the TESTAT computer program, alpha refers to the reliability of the entire test. The  $r$  coefficients show the effectiveness of each individual question in relationship to the variable being tested by the other questions of that scale. Using all post-test questionnaires (including the retrospective sample), the TESTAT program was run on all of the scales included within the questionnaire. The three items of the Leisure-Activity scale (presented in Table II) had original  $r$  values statistically significant beyond the .05 level and of substantive strength. The alpha value of .58 on the Leisure-Activity scale represented a high degree of internal consistency.

### The Purpose in Life Test

The Purpose in Life Test designed by James Crumbaugh is an attitude scale designed specifically to measure Frankl's assumption that the primary motivation of man is to find meaning and purpose in life. The twenty items of the PIL are rated from 1 (low purpose) to 7 (high purpose). Average scores tend to skew toward the purposeful end of the scale. An example of the PIL items is:

I am usually:						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(completely bored)			(neutral)		(exuberant enthusiastic)	

TABLE II  
LEISURE-ACTIVITIES BY ITEMS

Items	Original R Value (N=135*)
1. How much time do you spend with hobbies, games, parties or related activities (alone)?	.83
2. How much time do you spend with hobbies, games, parties or related activities (with others)?	.74
3. How much time do you spend in church or in church-related activities?	.65
Original Scale:	Mean 5.09 Sigma 1.90 Alpha .58

\*An r of .17 is significant at the .05 level.

The split-half reliability of the PIL (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1969:2) was determined as .81 (Pearson Product-Moment,  $N=225$ , 105 "normals" and 120 patients). Spearman-Brown corrected to .90. Tests for validity (Robinson and Shaver, 1969:187) have given some support. Using samples of "normals" and psychiatric patients, PIL scores correlated .47 with minister's ratings and .38 with therapist ratings. The present study may question the limitations imposed on the use of the PIL as a measure of pure existential states. The researcher suggests that the items of the PIL also measure meaningful existence to some extent in terms of societal definitions of meaningfulness.

An item analysis using the TESTAT program as previously discussed, indicated  $r$  values for each of the twenty PIL items at levels well beyond the .05 level of significance. The alpha value of .97 reflects high reliability among the items of the PIL scale in the degree to which the items vary together in a consistent pattern. The original correlation values, mean, sigma, and alpha coefficient are shown in Table III.

#### The Anomy Scale

The anomic individual as described by Reisman in Chapter II has been identified as an individual lacking in any true sense of meaning or purpose in life. He is protected neither from any inner source of psychological strength nor from any support from the social structure. The Purpose in Life Test correlates significantly with depression and anomia scales (Robinson and Shaver, 1969:165). The relationship between the PIL and anomy will be discussed in Chapter IX under Further Explorations.

TABLE III  
THE PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST BY ITEMS

Items	Original R Value (N=135*)
1. I am usually completely bored--exuberant, enthusiastic.	.87
2. Life to me seems always exciting--completely routine.	.84
3. In life I have no goals or aims at all--very clear goals and aims.	.88
4. My personal existence is utterly meaningless without purpose--very purposeful and meaningful.	.89
5. Every day is constantly new and different--exactly the same.	.81
6. If I could choose, I would prefer never to have been born--like nine lives just like this one.	.79
7. After retiring I am doing some of the exciting things I have always wanted to do--I am loafing completely the rest of my life.	.72
8. In achieving life goals I have made no progress whatever--progressed to complete fulfillment.	.75
9. My life is empty, filled only with despair--running over with exciting good things.	.89
10. If I should die, today, I would feel that my life has been very worthwhile--completely worthless.	.83
11. In thinking of my life, I often wonder why I exist --always see a reason for my being here.	.92
12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world completely confused me--fits meaningfully with my life.	.77
13. I am a very irresponsible person--very responsible person.	.79
14. Concerning man's freedom to make his own choices, I believe man is absolutely free to make all life choices--completely bound by limitations of heredity and environment.	.51
15. With regard to death, I am prepared and unafraid--unprepared and frightened.	.63
16. With regard to suicide, I have thought of it seriously as a way out--never given it a second thought.	.66
17. I regard my ability to find a meaning, purpose or mission in life as very great--practically none.	.68
18. My life is in my hands and I am in control of it--out of my hands and controlled by external factors.	.62

TABLE III (Continued)

Items	Original R Value (N=135*)
19. Facing any daily tasks is a source of pleasure and satisfaction--a painful and boring experience.	.89
20. I have discovered no mission or purpose in life--clear cut goals and a satisfying life purpose.	.90
Original Scale:	Mean 98.74
	Sigma 21.65
	Alpha .97

\* An r of .17 is significant at the .05 level.



Anomy has been defined as a kind of normlessness:

The traditional sociological model (e.g., Durkheim)--assuming that social conditions give rise to specified feelings (anomie) which in turn result in certain behaviors--is revised to give equal weight to psychological variables as a cause of anomie (Robinson and Shaver, 1969:168).

The anomy scale by McClosky and Schaar (1965:14-40) is composed of nine items arranged on a Likert scale ranging from agree to disagree. The higher the score, the greater the expression of anomy. The corrected split-half reliability coefficient for the scale was .76 (Robinson and Shaver, 1969:168).

Tests for internal consistency produced  $r$  values significant at better than .05 for each of the nine anomy items. The alpha value of .90 shows great internal consistency. The results are presented in Table IV, along with the mean, sigma, and alpha for the total scale.

#### Self-Concept Semantic Differential Scale

Basic to the writings of George Herbert Mead is the idea that an individual's self-concept emerges from social interaction with other people and, in turn, that an individual's self-concept influences his actual behavior. In brief, the responses others make toward an individual affect how the individual comes to see himself.

Modern views on self-evaluation have been influenced greatly by psychiatric writings on depression and megalomania such as those by Freud. Freud (1918-19:290), writing of the self-deprecations of melancholics, stated that "whoever holds, or expresses to others, such a low opinion of himself is ill whether he is speaking truthfully or being unfair to himself." Literature which discusses changes in the self-

TABLE IV  
ANOMY SCALE BY ITEMS

Items	Original R Value (N=135*)
1. With everything so uncertain these days, it almost seems as though anything could happen.	.52
2. What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a lifetime.	.52
3. With everything in such a state of disorder, it's hard for a person to know where he stands from one day to the next.	.75
4. Everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding which are the right rules to follow.	.77
5. I often feel that many things our parents stood for are just going to ruin before our very eyes.	.82
6. The trouble with the world today is that most people really don't believe in anything.	.84
7. I often feel awkward and out of place.	.82
8. People were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act.	.84
9. It seems to me that other people find it easier to decide what is right than I do.	.83
Original Scale: Mean	42.55
Sigma	12.95
Alpha	.90

\*An r of .17 is significant at the .05 level.

concept other than related to psychotherapy is scarce.

The process of self-labeling makes self-concept basic to the theoretical model of the present study. The Self-Concept Semantic Differential devised by Schwartz and Tangri was used as a basis for the self-concept scale to be administered to the respondents. The items were modified, however, to include those concepts pertinent to the model. The respondents were asked to rate themselves on the chosen characteristics from one to seven on each bipolar scale, and thus the scores for the total self-concept scale could range from six to forty-two. Due to the necessity for extreme revision of the items on the original self-concept semantic differential scale, no tests of reliability or validity are available for the modified scale.

The test for internal consistency produced original correlations all significant at the .05 level. All items of the modified scale tend to vary together in a consistent pattern as indicated by an alpha of .92. The original correlations, mean, sigma, and alpha coefficient are presented in Table V.

#### Summary

This chapter has described the research design, including the methodological techniques of questionnaires, interviews, and simple observation, by which the researcher has attempted to operationalize the concepts and hypothesis presented in the theoretical model. Procedures for both social structural and individual sampling were detailed. Finally, each of the scales within the pretest and post-test questionnaires were described and evaluated. The data analysis presented in Chapter VII and VIII will view the hypotheses from both observational

TABLE V  
SELF-CONCEPT SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL BY ITEMS

Items	Original R Value (N=135*)	
1. Active - Passive	.86	
2. Useless - Useful	.90	
3. Self-reliant - Burdensome	.92	
4. Held in high regard by others - Held in low regard by others	.88	
5. Poor health - excellent health	.70	
6. Hold myself in high regard - Hold myself in low regard	.88	
Original Scale:	Mean	30.53
	Sigma	6.00
	Alpha	.92

\*An r of .17 is significant at the .05 level.

and statistical measurement perspectives. Due to the relatively high level of sense of meaningfulness of most new admissions into residential social structures<sub>2</sub>, hypothesis four will be modified to expect "a lowered sense of meaningful existence" rather than a maintenance of the same low sense of meaningful existence found at entrance.

## CHAPTER VII

### HYPOTHESIS EVALUATION: QUALITATIVE DATA

#### Introduction

In an attempt to analyze the model and the hypotheses generated from it, qualitative data derived from interviews and simple observation will be presented. The following discussion will be an attempt to give the writer's general overall impressions of each of the four residences for the aged, particularly as appears relevant to the hypotheses of the present study. The descriptions will include the physical settings as well as the attitudes and observed behavior of the residents, administrators, and staff. Residences A and B were selected as representative of institutions which encouraged leisure-activities. Residences C and D were chosen as basically non-encouraging of leisure-activities (lacking a full-time activity director as a member of the staff; lacking a consistent, daily schedule of activities for the residents; and having expressed or observed behavior on the part of the staff which condoned passivity on the part of the residents). In the conclusion of this chapter, the basic hypotheses of the study will be reviewed in relation to the author's subjective impressions of the four residences.

## Residence A

Residence A, presently accommodating three hundred and seventy-five persons, is divided into three areas including cottages, apartments and the nursing center. The residents are required to pay an initial deposit which buys the apartment or cottage for the remainder of their life. An additional fee is charged each month, depending on the amount of services they require. The cost requirements of the initial deposit tends to limit residents to the financially independent. Although wheel chair patients and those using walkers for support are often in evidence in the halls, the sick or truly immobile patients are segregated into the nursing center. The philosophy of the residence includes the feeling that to integrate the sick with the well tends to negatively affect the morale of the healthy resident by reminding him of his impending age.

The physical facilities of Residence A include a great variety of activity-encouraging areas. There are physical therapy rooms, hobby shops, a library, a shuffleboard room, and a variety of lounges. Restroom facilities particularly equipped for wheelchair patients are within easy access of the lounges. For the men in particular, there are woodworking and stoneworking shops. An auditorium is the site of lectures, concert series, and musical productions. A chapel provides those residents who are unable or uninterested in going out to church services, to worship within the residential settings. A shuttle bus service runs twice a day, six days a week, taking residents to shopping centers and community events.

While the cottages are furnished with kitchens and the apartments with kitchenettes, most of the residents eat at least one meal a day

in the large dining area. A smaller dining area is reserved for those who are particularly incapacitated or restricted to special diets.

Of particular interest is the use of a great number of college-age men and women as staff and assistants. While there are fully trained nurses and personnel on hand, the majority of the staff are young, basically untrained students. Even the administrator is less than thirty years of age. Conversations with various residents suggested that they greatly enjoy their interactions with the young staff members who appear cheerful, helpful and particularly enthusiastic. It is possible that interaction with young staff members provides the residents with sources of encouragement often lost in a totally age-segregated environment.

Interviews with the administrator and staff revealed attitudes of great awareness concerning typical stereotypes of old age. The terms "aged" and "nursing home" are seldom heard. The administrator described his feelings by saying that he makes no assumption that an older person should become a recluse or live at an activity level lower than that prior to retirement. He characterized the general organization of the residence as "fluid, with no cut and dried rules." He stated that his desire was to provide a wide choice of opportunities for experience and activities, with a variety of activities available every day and every evening.

The attitudes of the residents were remarkably optimistic. Having visited and observed within several dozen residences for the aged, the researcher was particularly impressed with the high morale of nearly all of the individuals living in Residence A. Not one in-



dividual was questioned who did not present a positive attitude toward the residence. The majority of the individuals contacted were engaged in some activity--some walking on the grounds, working in the gardens, sewing, reading, or watching television. One man answered his apartment door wearing a large apron and smelling of paint. He indicated in his apartment where he had changed one of his rooms into a small woodworking shop. He was presently painting a bookshelf that he was making for a neighboring resident. He asked the interviewer to stop by the hobby shop to look at the donkey and cart he had recently finished. Some of the residents were so busy that the researcher felt somehow guilty about taking their time for the interview. Other residents were so often engaged in activities away from their apartment that there was some difficulty in finding them at home. As the researcher lives within a mile of Residence A, a few further observations are possible. Previously interviewed residents are often met by the researcher in local grocery stores, department stores, post offices and even a nearby university where some of the elderly residents have decided to resume the education that they had never been able to finish. The overall impression of Residence A is one of older individuals who have found new opportunities for leading an active, self-fulfilling existence.

#### Residence B

Residence B, a church operated facility, was the oldest, most established residence used in the present study. Established in 1956, Residence B includes various residential structures, including: apartments, cottages, and a nursing center. Potential residents are permit-

ted to choose a suitable location within the land adjoining Residence B where they can have the cottage of their choice constructed as part of the retirement community.

Similar to Residence A, admission to Residence B requires an initial "founder's gift" as well as monthly charges. The sponsoring churches maintain a "Mother's Day Fund" as a fund for those aged church members who are financially unable to make the initial "founder's gift". Thus, special arrangements are made for those individuals who are not financially independent, and portions of their social security or welfare checks are used for monthly payments.

Similar to many age-segregated residents, Residence B has a pre-dominance of women residents. Approximately two-thirds of the two hundred residents are women. However, staff members report an increase in the proportion of men. The explanation for the increase includes a growing satisfaction with the facilities of Residence B as being particularly suitable in structure and activities for older men.

The physical facilities of Residence B include dining halls, lounges, game rooms, hobby rooms and a physical therapy area. Activities are geared to both male and female interests. Lounge arrangements appear to be conducive to frequent use. Furniture arrangements include both closely arranged chairs for easy interaction and open table spaces where wheelchair patients can easily join in the activities. Kitchenettes are provided in the various lounges as an encouragement for resident-originated social gatherings. Hobby shops and workshops invite the participation of both men and women.

Interviews with the full-time activity director revealed professional ability and sensitive attitudes toward the aged residents.

She expressed much concern that the activities provided by the residence be attractive and helpful to the majority of the residents. Particular effort is made to involve most of the residents in some form of activity. The activity director schedules a variety of individual and group activities. There are three general meetings during the week, Sunday School, Sunday Vespers and a Friday evening assembly. Birthday dinners, parties, picnics, book reviews and table games are all part of typical weekly scheduled activities.

Physical structural arrangements allow for easy accessibility by wheelchair residents. Elevators are large and easy to operate from a wheelchair level. Gently sloping ramps also accommodate the wheelchair resident or individual using a walking device.

Systematic observation provides the impression of optimistic and active residents. Lounges and workshops are in frequent use. Residents can often be observed at work in the surrounding gardens. Both individual and group flower beds and vegetable gardens are provided in which the residents are encouraged to work. Residents are also provided with transportation to various community services and activities. The attitudes of most residents interviewed revealed optimism and particular pride in their surroundings. Residents often insisted on giving the researcher a tour of the lounges, gardens and facilities. Resident B appeared to promote high levels of meaningfulness, satisfaction and activity.

## Residence C

The bed capacity of Residence C was approximately one hundred. During the time of the research there were eighty-seven residents including fifty-seven women and thirty men. Sixty percent of the residents were on some form of welfare assistance. The building was constructed in the form of a star with four wings. Two of the wings were reserved for the less ambulatory residents. At the intersection of the four wings was the dining area, lounge, and nurses station.

The first impressions upon entrance into Residence C included an awareness of odors characteristic of many homes for the aged. The smell was pungent and repulsive. The main front entrance opened onto the nurses station. Aged residents, some barefoot and dressed in rather shabby robes, were seen wandering about the area of the nurses station. The wandering behavior appeared to be resultant from little to do. Several individuals were observed sitting in the small lounge adjacent to the dining area. They were seated apart and were engaged in no apparent activity for long periods of time. Very little conversation was heard.

Rectangular-shaped lounges occupied the end of each of the four wings, several with television sets and card tables. Although there was seating in each sufficient for twenty people, lengthy observation revealed infrequent use. For instance, over several hours in one afternoon, one lounge was only occupied by two individuals. A lady in a wheel chair sat alone in front of the television set. At the far end of the lounge, another lady sat quietly hand-stitching a piece of material. The chairs in the lounges tended to be arranged in a wide

square pattern around the sides of the room. There were no closely arranged seating patterns or small circular chair arrangements which might have been more conducive to interaction between residents. Another negative feature of the lounges in the researcher's view was the lack of any bathroom facilities in the vicinity of the lounges. It would seem that the private rooms offered greater convenience.

Observations tended to affirm this, as the greater portion of residents tended to spend most of the day in their rooms. The doors were usually ajar and residents could be seen sleeping, sitting quietly, or engaged in individual activity such as sewing or reading the newspaper.

The administrator had hired a community worker as part-time activity director. The hobby room was kept open only during the three afternoons on which the activity director was there to supervise. The hobby room was filled with displays of an assortment of small dolls, potholders and similar items which had been fashioned from such simple materials as cloth, soap bottles, milk cartons and pop bottle caps. While the activity director was describing to the researcher the projects, she mentioned that about fifteen to eighteen of the eighty-seven residents used the hobby shop to any extent. She noted that all of the participants were women, as none of the men appeared interested. A glance at the types of projects gave the researcher the impression that there was little in the way of activities geared to attract the interest of men. The hobby shop presents a bazaar once a year. The money from any sold trinkets is used to buy further supplies for the hobby shop. Other than the hobby shop, there appeared to be few staff-involved sources of activities for the residents.

Further impressions were derived from casual conversations with residents. One seventy-two year old lady, sitting listlessly in her room, remarked, "I can't do a thing. My eyes bother me a lot. I use to do quilts but I just don't do anything anymore. This is my third roommate. The first two passed away." Another resident explained the reason for her move into Residence C, "The doctor didn't want me to stay alone and I didn't want to stay with my two daughters. I figured that I have lived my life and had my fun. I didn't want to be a burden to my children so I made up my mind that the home was the best place for me." A lady sitting in the lounge answered my questions about whether the staff encouraged her to become involved in any activities. "They don't try to get the patient to do anything here. They take me to church or some activities if I ask them but I hate to ask them too much." While the expressed attitudes of the administrator and staff were that activity was greatly encouraged for the residents, the real behavior, as observed, appeared to be quite in contrast. The researcher approached the nurses station and inquired of the nurse on duty concerning the proportion of males to females. Although she was apparently occupied, she most courteously stopped to count the number of patients. During the course of a fifteen minute conversation with her, however, several residents asked her questions. One resident explained that she was about out of toilet tissue and wondered if she might walk down to the supply room to get a new supply. Another lady described her problem in that she was changing the sheets on her bed and discovered that she was missing a clean pillowcase. She wanted to go down the other wing to the linen room and pick up a pillowcase so that she could finish the job she had started. In both instances, the nurse in a rather con-

descending manner asked the residents to return to their rooms saying "that's too far for you to walk. You wait and someone will bring them for you after while." Both residents appeared to be fully capable of walking. The attitude of the nurse seemed to foster dependence of the residents on the staff member, probably with the thought that residents wandering through the halls were an added nuisance.

#### Residence D

During the initial visit to Residence D, the researcher walked slowly through the halls trying to receive some impressions of the general attitudes and feeling tones of staff and residents. A few residents were wandering through the halls, some in wheel chairs. As the doors to the rooms were nearly all wide open it was easy to observe resident behavior. There appeared to be no attempt on the part of the staff to segregate residents, either by sex or health conditions. A resident who was ill was lying half naked on her bed. A staff member was apparently changing the resident's clothes. There was no attempt to provide the resident with privacy. Other residents, both male and female, were walking freely past the room. Such observations tended to emphasize institutionalized feelings in the residence. It seems quite likely that these conditions would affect the resident who was neither sick nor dependent by necessity.

Residence D is a relatively new operation which began seven years ago. It presently houses seventy individuals, eighty percent of which are women and eighty percent of which are on welfare. Before the reader makes the assumption that the residence is an example of unregulated housing for the aged, it should be noted that the residence has been

given a very high classification rating by state examiners. It appears that classification is based primarily on material provisions such as medical trays and fire extinguishers, rather than on social and psychological characteristics of the residences.

At the time of initial contact, there was no arts and crafts room in the residence. Contact a year later revealed a newly built crafts room, still barren, however, as it had not yet been supplied with materials. Activities arranged for the residents were minimal. A few church groups would visit each week to present a service. Residents had to depend completely on their own resources in order to remain active. A few were observed sewing, reading or watching television. During all visits, the lounges appeared to be used little by the residents.

During the final visit to Residence D, the researcher observed a great deal of expansion as apartments, rooms, lounges, and offices were being built in a new addition. The administrator was expressing her desire to change the general atmosphere of the residence to one of greater cheerfulness and activity. She expressed her plans to hire an activity director and to organize a few activities for the residents. She further expressed the difficulties she had encountered in hiring staff whose attitudes were more encouraging of activities by the patients, rather than merely service-oriented. She stated that the staff had to initiate activities or the residents did not get involved, and most staff members did not want to bother with it. "If we can get them out of their rooms," she said, "they do one hundred percent better." The need for activity was obviously becoming a realization in Residence D.



### Summary

The theoretical model of the present study is based on the assumptions of labeling theory, including the premise that societal labels of an individual are often incorporated into self-labels. The assumption is made that social structures, particularly residential social structures for the aged, have a potential impact on the self-concept and, correspondingly, on the behavior patterns of the aged. A residential social structure which labels the individual as useful and encourages him to engage in leisure-activities may influence the individual's self-concept and behavior in a positive manner. Likewise, the individual who lives within a residential social structures possessing negative stereotypes of the aged and condoning passivity may influence the aged individual's self concept and behavior in a negative manner. Subjective impressions of the four residences through interviews and direct observation tended to verify these hypotheses. Residences which encouraged leisure-activity tended to have active, optimistic residents who reflected a high sense of meaningfulness, purpose in life, perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance. On the other hand, residences which did not encourage activity seemed to be populated with passive and pessimistic residents. The differences in attitudes and behavior appeared much more obvious in those residents who had been living in each residence for some length of time. Chapter X, Final Considerations, will provide further analysis of the hypotheses in terms of the qualitative data.

Since social scientists tend to hold greater regard for statistical analysis of data, the following chapter will attempt to test the hypotheses through quantitative procedures.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HYPOTHESIS EVALUATION:

#### QUANTITATIVE DATA

##### Introduction

The prominence of statistical analysis in the social sciences as a means of hypothesis-testing is incontestable. The actual statistical tests are made in terms of the concepts as they have been operationally defined. The quantified material derived by the questionnaires as described in Chapter VI will provide the data for the statistical analysis of the hypotheses.

The first four hypotheses to be tested are concerned with the direction and degree of change in a sample at two points in time. The correlated data model of the t test is designed to make a means comparison in a simple "before-after" design where the same individuals are compared before and after an experimental variable was introduced.

The greater part of the data presented in the questionnaires (with the exception of some of the demographic items) is in the form of attitudinal scales and thus is best characterized as ordinal data. Although measurement of the dependent variable is most accurately defined as ordinal data (and therefore suggests the use of non-parametric statistics), the t test is a more robust statistic than the nonparametric alternatives. In addition, non-parametric tests have internal logical problems, and past experience together with some research (c.f.

Hsu and Feldt, 1969) suggest that roughly comparable results are obtained from either.

The level of significance will be set at .05, as has traditionally been used. The first hypothesis requires a two-tailed test, while the second, third and fourth hypotheses require one-tailed tests.

The final two hypotheses require a measure of association. The data is of both the interval-level (on the activity scores) and the ordinal level (purpose in life scale, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance items). The Pearson correlation, as a stronger test, was chosen as the statistic for testing association. The coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) is used to measure the relationship between two variables when both are continuous and the relationship is linear. The significance of Pearson correlation can involve four interpretations: (a) direction, (b) substantive significance, (c) statistical significance, and (d) explained variation.

The remainder of the chapter will be devoted to the specific tests of each hypothesis. There will be no attempt in this chapter to discuss the implications of the findings. Such implications will be discussed in Chapter X.

#### Evaluation of Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one states: Retired individuals having a highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity will maintain a highly meaningful existence. The results of  $t$  are presented in Table VI. The means for the pretest/post-test of purpose in life were 121.12

TABLE VI

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>1</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY THREE VARIABLES (HIGH MEANING AT ENTRANCE)

Variables		Pretest	Post-test
<u>Purpose in Life</u> (N=25)			
Mean		121.12	122.04
Sigma		9.68	12.95
r=.17	t=.31	df=24	P > .05
<u>Perceived Usefulness</u> (N=22)			
Mean		6.52	6.00
Sigma		.51	.87
r=.30	t=3.16	df=21	P < .05
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance</u> (N=27)			
Mean		6.70	6.44
Sigma		.47	.75
r=-.36	t=.48	df=26	P > .05

and 122.04 respectively. The calculated t value was .31. The mean for the pretest of perceived usefulness was 6.52; the mean for the post-test on perceived usefulness was 6.00, with a t test of 3.16. Means of 6.70 and 6.44 were found for the pretest and post-test of perceived self-reliance, with a calculated t of .48. As hypothesized, there was no significant difference between the pretest and post-test for the Purpose in Life (PIL) scale or perceived self-reliance. The test in difference on perceived usefulness, however, was significant at the .05 level and in the opposite direction as the theoretical model would suggest.

#### Evaluation of Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states: Retired individuals having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity will increase in their sense of meaningful existence. The results of t for each of the three variables are presented in Table VII. The means of 95.83 (Pretest PIL) and 109.22 (post-test PIL) resulted in a t test of -3.11, showing a change in the hypothesized direction. The means of perceived usefulness (4.36 on the pretest and 5.00 on the post-test) suggest a change in the hypothesized direction with a t value of -1.66. Perceived self-reliance with means of 4.27 and 6.00 had a calculated t value of -4.86. The tests found two of the three variables (PIL and perceived self-reliance) to be significant as hypothesized at better than the .05 level. Although the second variable (perceived usefulness) showed change in the expected direction, the amount of change did

TABLE VII

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>1</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY THREE VARIABLES (LOW MEANING AT ENTRANCE)

Variables	Pretest	Post-test
<u>Purpose in Life (N=18)</u>		
Mean	95.83	109.22
Sigma	6.72	15.01
$r = -.31$	$t = -3.11$	$df = 17$
		$P < .05$
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=14)</u>		
Mean	4.36	5.00
Sigma	.75	1.36
$r = .14$	$t = -1.66$	$df = 13$
		$P > .05$
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=15)</u>		
Mean	4.27	6.00
Sigma	1.10	.66
$r = -.19$	$t = -4.86$	$df = 14$
		$P < .05$

not quite reach the .05 level of significance.

#### Evaluation of Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states: Retired individuals having highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will decrease in their sense of meaningful existence. Table VIII presents separately the results of t for each of the three measures of the sense of meaningful existence. The means for PIL were 113.89 and 85.44 with a resultant t of 13.75. Perceived usefulness provided means of 6.45 and 4.30. The t test results of 10.25 represented a significant change in the expected direction. Finally, the means of perceived self-reliance (6.36 and 4.50) had a t value of 14.28. The t test for all three measures--the PIL, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance--were significant at better than the .05 level.

#### Evaluation of Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four states: Retired individuals having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will have a lowered sense of meaningful existence. The results of t for the three variables indicating a sense of meaningful existence are presented in Table IX. A calculated t value of 8.99 was found for PIL with a pretest mean of 93.70 and a post-test mean of 78.44. The means for perceived usefulness were 4.64 at pretest and 3.84 at post-test,

TABLE VIII

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>2</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY THREE VARIABLES (HIGH MEANING AT ENTRANCE)

Variables		Pretest	Post-test
<u>Purpose in Life (N=18)</u>			
Mean		113.89	85.44
Sigma		7.15	5.15
r=.55	t=13.75	df=17	P < .05
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=20)</u>			
Mean		6.45	4.30
Sigma		.51	.92
r=.24	t=10.25	df=19	P < .05
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=22)</u>			
Mean		6.36	4.50
Sigma		.49	.67
r=.45	t=14.28	df=21	P < .05



TABLE IX

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE, SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY THREE VARIABLES (LOW MEANING AT ENTRANCE)

Variables	Pretest	Post-test
<u>Purpose in Life (N=27)</u>		
Mean	93.70	78.44
Sigma	5.79	8.75
$r=.32$	$t=8.99$	$df=26$
		$P<.05$
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=25)</u>		
Mean	4.64	3.84
Sigma	.70	.85
$r=.11$	$t=3.84$	$df=24$
		$P<.05$
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=23)</u>		
Mean	4.61	3.87
Sigma	.50	.81
$r=.51$	$t=4.98$	$df=22$
		$P<.05$

and the t value was 3.84. Perceived self-reliance had means of 4.61 and 3.87 with a t test of 4.98. The tests for significance of PIL, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance were significant at greater than .05 level, in the hypothesized direction.

#### Evaluation of the First Four Hypotheses Using Retrospective Data

##### Hypothesis One

Using retrospective data, hypothesis one was tested with perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance as the indicators of a sense of meaningful existence. The retrospective mean for perceived usefulness was 5.31 and the post-test mean was 6.00, with a t test of -3.62. The retrospective mean of perceived self-reliance was 6.30. The post-test mean was 6.60. The resulting t test was -1.37. While the pretest/post-test results found changes in the hypothesized direction for both variables, only the t for perceived usefulness was significant at the .05 level. The results are listed in Table X.

##### Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two was tested using retrospective data. The results of t on the pretest/post-test scores for sense of meaningful existence are provided in Table XI. The means of perceived usefulness were 3.67 and 5.22, with a calculated t value of -3.5. Perceived self-reliance had a mean of 4.53 (retrospective) and 5.80 (post-test). The t test was -4.72. Both of the variables; perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance, proved to be significant, in the hypothesized direction, at better than a .05 level of significance.

TABLE X

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>1</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY TWO VARIABLES (HIGH MEANING IN RETROSPECT)

Variables		Retrospective	Post-test
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=16)</u>			
Mean		5.31	6.00
Sigma		.70	.89
$r = .30$	$t = -3.62$	$df = 15$	$P < .05$
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=10)</u>			
Mean		6.30	6.60
Sigma		.48	.70
$r = .36$	$t = -1.37$	$df = 9$	$P > .05$

TABLE XI

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>1</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY TWO VARIABLES<sub>1</sub> (LOW MEANING IN RETROSPECT)

Variables		Retrospective	Post-test
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=9)</u>			
Mean		3.67	5.22
Sigma		.50	1.20
$r = -.06$	$t = -3.5$	$df = 8$	$P < .05$
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=15)</u>			
Mean		4.53	5.80
Sigma		.52	.01
$r = .21$	$t = -4.72$	$df = 14$	$P < .05$

### Hypothesis Three

The retrospective test of hypothesis three is described in Table XII. A calculated  $t$  value of 0 was found for perceived usefulness with both retrospective and post-test means of 3.40. Perceived self-reliance, with means of 4.14 and 3.86, had a  $t$  of 1.23. The test for a lowered sense of meaningful existence did not prove to be statistically significant. Neither the  $t$  for perceived usefulness nor perceived self-reliance resulted in significant changes at the .05 level.

### Hypothesis Four

The test of hypothesis four, using retrospective data, is presented in Table XIII. The means of perceived usefulness were 5.18 and 4.41, with a  $t$  of 3.48. Perceived self-reliance with a retrospective mean of 6.00 and a post-test mean of 5.13 had a calculated  $t$  value of 2.96. Perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance were tested at pretest and post-test with  $t$ . The results were significant at .05 for both variables.

### Evaluation of Hypothesis Five

Hypothesis five states: The indicators of meaningful existence (purpose in life, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance) will be positively related together. Using Pearson correlation ( $r$ ), each of the three variables indicating sense of meaningful existence were related together, as shown in Table XIV. The direction in each case was positive; thus, as one variable increases, the other increases. The correlation coefficients, ranging from .80 to .84 show high or marked relationships for each of the pairs of variables. With 133 de-

TABLE XII

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>2</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY TWO VARIABLES (HIGH MEANING IN RETROSPECT)

Variables		Retrospective	Post-test
<u>Perceived Usefulness (N=17)</u>			
Mean		5.18	4.41
Sigma		.39	.94
r=.28	t=3.48	df=16	P < .05
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance (N=8)</u>			
Mean		6.00	5.13
Sigma		.00	.84
r=.00	t=2.96	df=7	P < .05

TABLE XIII

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE<sub>2</sub> SAMPLE'S SENSE OF MEANINGFUL  
EXISTENCE BY TWO VARIABLES (LOW MEANING IN RETROSPECT)

Variables		Retrospective	Post-test
<u>Perceived Usefulness</u> (N=5)			
Mean		3.40	3.40
Sigma		.55	.89
r=.49	t=0	df=4	P > .05
<u>Perceived Self-Reliance</u> (N=14)			
Mean		4.14	3.86
Sigma		.95	.86
r=.55	t=1.23	df=13	P > .05

TABLE XIV  
CORRELATION MATRIX FOR THE INDICATORS OF THE  
SENSE OF MEANINGFUL EXISTENCE

		1	2	3
Purpose in Life	1	-	.80*	.84*
Perceived Usefulness	2		-	.84*
Perceived Self-Reliance	3			-

\*df=133, significant,  $P < .05$



degrees of freedom, an  $r$  of .17 is considered significant. Therefore, all correlation values are statistically significant at better than the .05 level.

#### Evaluation of Hypothesis Six

Hypothesis six states: The level of leisure-activity will be positively related to meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and c) perceived self-reliance. The Pearson  $r$ 's are presented in Table XV for each of the leisure-activity items separately and the leisure-activity total correlated with PIL, perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance. The direction of each correlation was positive and ranged from .42 through .67. These correlation coefficients show a moderate relationship. Statistically, with 133 degrees of freedom, all of the correlations can be considered significant at better than .05.

#### Summary

The results of the main hypotheses by which the theoretical model was tested can be summarized graphically in figure 2. In hypotheses 2, 3, and 4, changes are confirmed in the hypothesized direction. In only two subparts of  $H_1$  (perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance) were changes found in a direction other than that expected. However, only one of these changes (perceived usefulness) was sufficient to be statistically significant.

TABLE XV  
 CORRELATION MATRIX FOR INDICES OF ACTIVITY AND  
 INDICATORS OF SENSE OF MEANINGFUL EXISTENCE

		Purpose in Life 1	Perceived Usefulness 2	Perceived Self-Reliance 3
Solitary Leisure-Activities	1	.53*	.48	.50
Group Leisure-Activities	2	.54	.44	.44
Church Activities	3	.45	.42	.42
Activities Total	4	.67	.59	.60

\*With  $df=133$ , an  $r$  of .17 is significant at .05 level.

Residential Social Structure<sub>1</sub>--  
Encourage Leisure-Activity

Residential Social Structure<sub>2</sub>--  
Do Not Encourage Leisure-Activity

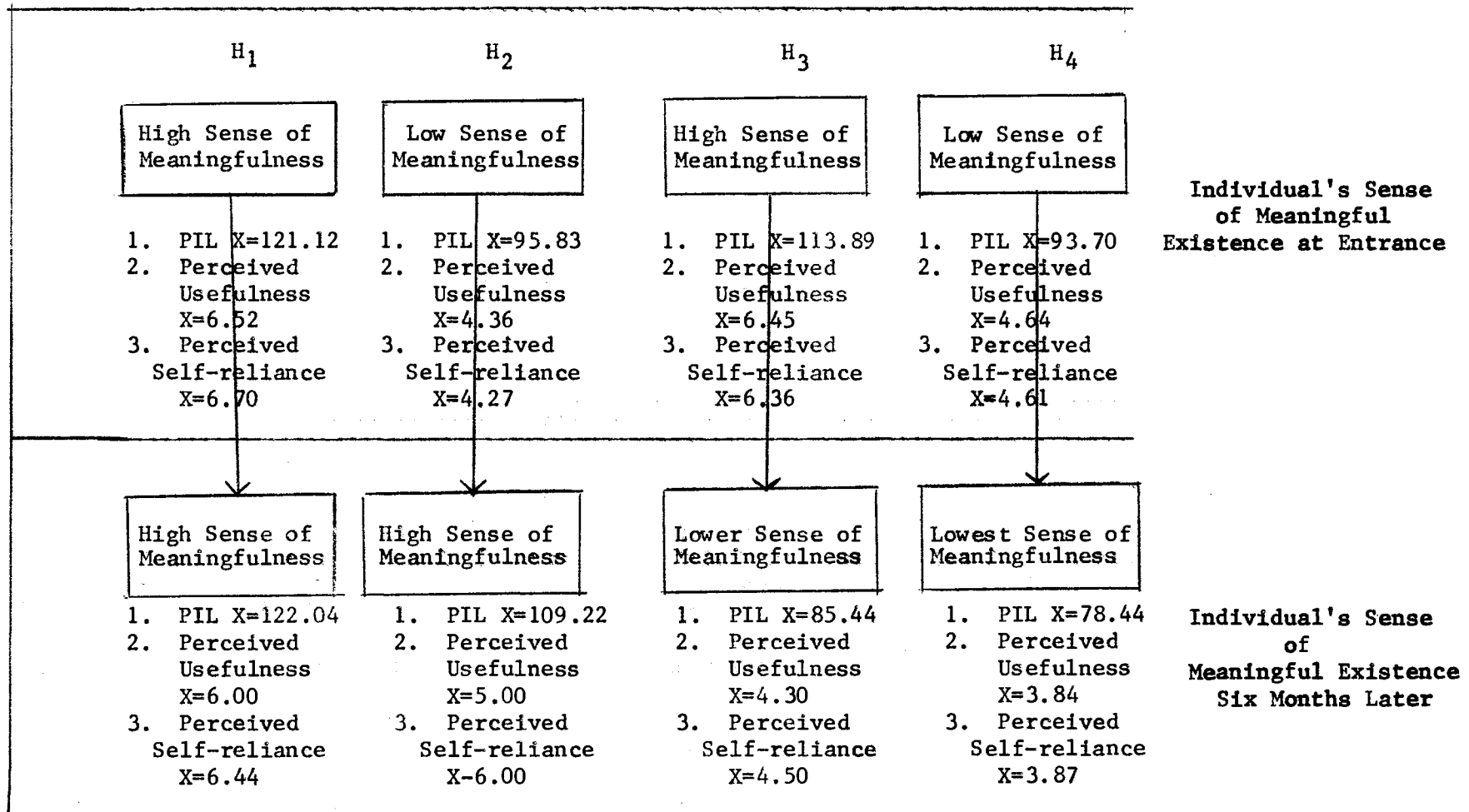


Figure 2 Research Design for Pretest/Post-test Comparison

## CHAPTER IX

### FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

#### Introduction

Much of gerontological research and literature has been devoted to investigation of the relationship of certain independent variables (i.e., sex, marital status, educational background) to such dependent variables as morale, self-concept, and adjustment in old age. Although the present study has limited its analysis of independent-dependent variable relationships to specific hypotheses, the data obtained by the questionnaires provided extensive demographic material. In addition to the purpose in life items, activity items, and self-concept semantic differential items, which represented dependent variables, the questionnaire included items measuring the concept of anomy. The following section will explore the relationships between twenty demographic variables and PIL, perceived usefulness, perceived self-reliance, anomy, activity total, and semantic differential scales.

#### Purpose in Life

The Purpose in Life scale was designed to measure the degree to which a person experiences a sense of meaning and purpose in life. The scale was designed to test Viktor Frankl's thesis (Crumbaugh, 1968:74) that when meaning in life is not found, the result is existential frustration (or among mental patients, noogenic neurosis). Due to the

existential nature of Frankl's conception of meaning, the Purpose in Life scale has been compared to personality variables and such scales as anomie. Little attempt has been made to compare the PIL items to demographic variables. The results of such a comparison in the present study are presented in Table XVI. With 133 degrees of freedom, a correlation of .17 is required for significance at the .05 level. As indicated by Table XVI, a high PIL correlates positively with a high level of education (.43), a higher level occupation (.49), better health (.45), better health in comparison with others (.44), independent sources of income (.56), higher total estate value (.45), personal choice of residence (.65), positive attitude toward residence (.77), frequency of solitary activities (.52), frequency of group activities (.45). Previous research findings have indicated a significant relationship between PIL and religiosity (Acuff and Gorman, 1968:115). While frequency of church activities (.45) and increased importance of religion (.26) are significantly related to PIL in the present study, belief in life after death is not significant (-.02). The younger the individual, the higher his PIL tends to be ( $r = -.26$ ). Disrupted marital status through widowhood, divorce, or separation are associated with lower PIL scores (-.24). Finally, both family visits (-.38) and communication with family (-.12) are negatively related to PIL. These findings may support the research of Martin (1973:224-227) discussed in Chapter IV, in which he suggested that life satisfaction of the aged was increased with withdrawal from the extended family.

TABLE XVI

A CORRELATION MATRIX OF ATTITUDINAL  
SCALES AND DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

	Purpose in Life	Perceived Usefulness	Perceived Self- Reliance	Anomie	Activity Total	Self Concept
Education	.43*	.38	.37	-.38	.29	.42
Age	-.26	-.25	-.25	.25	-.19	-.27
Occupation	.49	.42	.46	-.41	.37	.50
Health	.45	.40	.47	-.42	.41	.53
Health Comparison	.44	.41	.50	-.38	.41	.53
Income	.56	.44	.51	-.44	.46	.56
Total Estate Value	.45	.36	.46	-.39	.26	.47
Marital Status	-.24	.21	-.24	.21	-.02	-.22
Reason for Residence	.65	.47	.65	-.49	.57	.65
Family Visits	-.38	-.24	-.28	.28	-.37	-.33
Communication with family	-.12	.01	.01	.06	-.09	-.02
Attitude toward Residence	.77	.61	.68	-.64	.60	.71
Solitary Activities	.52	.48	.50	-.41	.83	.52
Group Activities	.54	.44	.43	-.39	.74	.51
Church Activities	.45	.42	.41	-.42	.65	.45
Religious Importance	.26	.10	.14	-.22	.28	.17
Belief in After-Life	-.02	-.16	-.15	-.01	-.03	-.09
Perceived Usefulness	.79	-	.84	-.70	.59	.90
Perceived Self- reliance	.84	.84	-	-.74	.60	.92
Purpose in Life	-	.79	.84	-.85	.67	.91
Anomie	-.85	-.70	-.74	-	-.53	-.82
Activities Total	.67	.59	.60	-.53	-	.66
Semantic Differential	.91	.90	.92	-.82	.66	-

With 133 df, an  $r$  of .17 is significant at the .05 level.

### Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness has been related in the theoretical model to the sense of meaningful existence. The correlations follow the same pattern as those found between PIL and the demographic variables as seen in Table XVI. Perceived usefulness is positively related to increased education (.38), higher status occupation (.42), better health (.40), better health in comparison with others (.41), independent sources of income (.44), higher estate value (.36), personal choice of residence (.61), frequency of solitary activity (.48), frequency of group activity (.44) and frequency of church activities (.42). Perceived usefulness related positively to increased importance of religion (.10) and negatively to belief in life after death (-.16) although neither were statistically significant relationships. Younger age and a married status are related to higher perceived usefulness. Communication with one's family is not related to perceived usefulness (.01), but increased family visits is negatively related (-.24) to perceived usefulness.

### Perceived Self-Reliance

In similar fashion, perceived self-reliance is associated with the demographic variables (Table XVI). Higher education (.37), higher status occupation (.46), better health (.47), better health in comparison with others (.50), independent sources of income (.51), increased estate value (.46), personal choice of residence (.65), positive attitude toward residence (.68), increased solitary activity (.50), increased group activity (.43), and increased church activity

(.41) are related to perceived self-reliance. Increased importance of religion is positively related to perceived self-reliance (.14) and belief in life after death (-.15) is negatively related to perceived self-reliance, although neither relationship is statistically significant. Younger age (-.25) and a married status (-.24) are also significantly related to perceived self-reliance. Family visits are negatively related (-.28) to perceived self-reliance but communication with the family (.01) has no significant relationship with perceived self-reliance.

#### Anomy

Research has examined the influence of both social and personality factors to the concept of anomy (Robinson and Shaver, 1969:168). Durkheim (1951) and Merton (1965) treat anomy as a property of the social structure. McClosky and Schaar (1956) approach the problem from a psychological viewpoint, studying personality types as they relate to anomy. The present study identifies a highly significant negative relationship between anomy and the sense of meaningful existence as indicated by Purpose in Life (-.85), perceived usefulness (-.70), and perceived self-reliance (-.74). Anomy is also negatively related to the activity total (-.53) and the self-concept semantic differential (-.81). Anomy is positively related to increasing age (.25), disrupted married status (.21), and frequency of family visits (.28). The correlations between anomy and frequency of communication with family (.06) and belief in life after death (-.01) are too small for significance. Anomy is negatively related to increased education (-.38), higher status occupation (-.41), better health (-.42), better health in comparison with others (-.38), independent sources of income



(-.44), higher estate value (-.39), personal choice of residence (-.49), positive attitude toward residence (-.64), frequency of solitary activity (-.41), frequency of group activity (-.39), frequency of church activity (-.42), and increased importance of religion (-.22).

#### Activity Total

The theoretical model proposed in Chapter V suggested that meaning in modern society is essentially acquired through work-activity in the pre-retirement period and through leisure-activity in post-retirement. Logically, then, increased leisure-activity should be related to the demographic variables in similar fashion as the indicators of meaningful existence (PIL, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance). The correlations derived from the present study verify this assumption as indicated in Table XVI. The only significant negative relationships are with anomy (-.53), age (-.19), and family visits (-.37). Although the activity total is related negatively with disrupted married status (-.02), communication with family (-.09) and belief in life after death (-.03), the correlations are too small to indicate a significant relationship. The activity total is significantly related to education (.29), occupational status (.37), perceived health (.41), comparison of health with others (.41), income (.46), total estate value (.26), personal choice of residence (.57), attitude toward residence (.60), and importance of religion (.28).

### Self-Concept Semantic Differential

An individual's self-concept may be thought of as multidimensional (Sherwood, 1965). According to this view, an individual positions himself according to many criteria such as height, weight, age, intelligence and occupational status. Each of these has an associated evaluative scale by which the individual judges his worth. Thus self-concept (tested on a semantic differential scale) may be related to certain demographic variables. As might be expected, self-concept is positively related to education (.42), occupational status (.50), health (.53), health compared with others (.53), independent sources of income (.56), estate value (.47), personal choice of residence (.64), attitude toward residence (.71), solitary activity (.52), group activity (.51), church activity (.45) and importance of religion (.17). Both communication with family (-.02) and belief in life after death (-.09) show slight negative relationships with self-conception. Self-concept appears to drop with increasing age (-.27) and with disruption of married status (-.22). Once again, increased family visits seems to have a detrimental effect on the aged--in this instance, on the self-conception. Perhaps family visits are perceived by the aged as being obligatory or perhaps they serve as reminders of better circumstances.

### Summary

The theoretical model has limited the present study to the testing of specific variables. The data made available through the questionnaire has provided much additional information. The previous discussion has indicated a few of the potential areas for related investigation. The anomy items appear to be consistently related in a

negative fashion to the sense of meaning, activity total and self-concept. The effects of family visits have a consistently negative relationship with the same scales. These findings suggest the need for further research and theoretical formulations, particularly in a re-evaluation of the relationship between the older person and his family.

## CHAPTER X

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Introduction

The goal of the present study has been an application of the labeling perspective in an attempt to understand and predict the behavior of the retired individual. As the proportion of aged in modern society increases, the changes which constitute a problem to the retired individual become more of a concern to the society as a whole. Loss of functional work roles (i.e., occupational retirement, loss of child-rearing roles, loss of spouse) may greatly affect an individual's sense of meaningful existence. A continued sense of meaningful existence may then be dependent on the replacement of the lost work-activity with leisure-activities. If one assumes that an individual's attitudes and behavior are affected by the social structure in which he exists, then his engagement in leisure-activities may be dependent on the physical and social characteristics of the social structure.

Although the impact of social structures could be examined on many levels, the research was designed to measure the effect of specific residential social structures. As the "life-space" of the retired individual tends to narrow (due to health, economics, etc.), the residence may become an essential factor in behavior motivation of the aged resident.

The labels placed on the aged by the residential social structure

may be evidenced particularly by their encouragement or lack of encouragement of leisure-activities. Structural arrangements, staff attitudes, and scheduled activities are some of the components by which a residence can be evaluated as encouraging or discouraging of leisure-activities.

The implementation of such a research design entails many complications and limitations. A design was conceived which would include three methodological techniques, including questionnaires, interviews and simple observational procedures. Procedures included the use of retrospective data and a panel study. Using interviews and observational techniques, the residential social structures were selected. Then with the use of a questionnaire, demographic and attitudinal data were elicited from residents--with a pretest at entrance and a post-test after a six month interval. The results were tabulated and statistically analyzed. Due to the variety of measurement techniques, the data was analyzed in both qualitative and quantitative forms. Before an interpretation of these findings, it seems appropriate to elaborate some of the limitations of the study.

#### The Research Design in Retrospect

The longitudinal panel technique was selected to test attitudinal change over time. Although the panel technique has certain advantages in using the same individuals for both pretest and post-test, there are also inherent limitations. Once an individual has responded to a questionnaire including, for instance, items relating to purpose in life and self-concept, he is sensitive to these areas. He may give considerable thought to the concepts eluded to in the pretest question-

naire. By the time he is administered the post-test questionnaire six months later, his awareness of the topics being evaluated may have affected his responses.

The research design did not allow for a control group. The respondents of both residential social structures<sub>1</sub> and residential social structures<sub>2</sub> could be described as the experimental groups. A control group would have provided a base against which to measure the experimental groups. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis may identify a change in attitudes. Without a control group, however, the researcher cannot positively ascertain that the changes are related to the independent variable of residential social structures. Intervening variables may have affected the outcome.

As noted in the discussion of methodology, the sampling procedure was extremely limited. Due to the time limitations produced by the research design requiring new residents, the only qualifications for choice were that the individual be a new resident (two weeks or less) of one of the selected residences and that the individual be willing to respond to the questionnaire. In drawing inferences about the characteristics of populations from sample statistics (i.e., the *t* test), the assertion is frequently made that the sample should be drawn at random from the population. Forms of modified random sampling, such as stratified random sampling, are sometimes used. Obviously, the sample used in the present research can in no way claim randomness.

Other limitations were imposed by the nature of sample selection. Time became a crucial factor as the admission of new residents was at times infrequent and a six-month time span was required before the re-

spondents could be retested. Therefore, the size of the sample was smaller than originally desired. Forty-three individuals were given both pretests and post-test from residential social structures<sub>1</sub>. There were forty-five respondents given both pretests and post-tests after residing in residential social structures<sub>2</sub>. An additional forty-seven residents were given retrospective questionnaires, providing a total sample of one hundred and thirty-five respondents. When the sample was categorized to fit the selected hypotheses, the sample size for purposes of statistical analysis were on occasion as small as five. Statistical significance is extremely difficult to attain with four degrees of freedom.

The methodological technique of questionnaires has certain limitations when used with an aged sample. Due to certain impairments (i.e., poor vision) a large percentage of the questionnaires required lengthy administration by the researcher. While this procedure allowed for fairly standardized interpretation of the items, the length of time required for administration was at times a limitation in itself. In addition, most of the attitude scales used in the questionnaire had not been designed with aged samples in mind. The vocabulary, wording and scaling procedure were at times confusing to the respondents and may have affected the analysis.

It should be noted that since sixty percent of the questionnaires were administered by the researcher, there was no difficulty of low rates such as that found with mailed questionnaires. Furthermore, where the individuals were capable of self-administration, the return rate was one-hundred percent. Such a return rate is exceptionally high and might be worthy of analysis in itself.

The samples from both Residential Social Structures<sub>1</sub> (RSS<sub>1</sub>) and Residential Social Structures<sub>2</sub> (RSS<sub>2</sub>) were comparatively similar at entrance in terms of purpose in life (with a mean of 108.48 in RSS<sub>1</sub> and 5.55 in RSS<sub>2</sub>), and perceived self-reliance (with a mean of 5.48 in both types of residences). An evaluation of the demographic items presented in Table I, however, reveals considerable differences between the two samples. The highest category in education for RSS<sub>2</sub> was elementary school (52.2 percent) and for RSS<sub>1</sub>, it was college graduate (36.8 percent). The highest occupational category for RSS<sub>2</sub> (43.3 percent) was unskilled worker and for RSS<sub>1</sub> (27.3 percent) was the professional. A higher percentage of RSS<sub>2</sub> perceived their health as poor (22.7) while 29.4 percent of RSS<sub>2</sub> perceived their health as excellent. Source of income and total estate value revealed the sample from RSS<sub>1</sub> to be at the financial advantage. The research design would have certainly allowed for better control had the samples been alike on all demographic variables. The basis for these differences is primarily finances. Those who have had a higher education, and thus a higher status job, also have more independent sources of income. The individual who has financial security can more easily afford to move into a residence where the physical and social conditions present favorable labels of the aged.

In a more specific evaluation of the questionnaire, several limitations should be noted. A definite drawback to the data analysis was the lack of any information on frequency of activity at the time of entrance into the various residences which would have allowed for further comparisons. The research also might have benefited from a more specific categorization of types of activities.



Although interview and observational techniques were used to evaluate the staff of the various residences it might have been beneficial to administer a questionnaire with items on attitudes toward the aged. Analysis of such questionnaires could have been used to supplement qualitative analysis of staff attitudes and behavior. Keeping in mind the limitations of research design, sampling procedure and questionnaire design, the following section will be an attempt to interpret the qualitative and quantitative findings.

### Interpretation of Findings

In an attempt to evaluate the findings of the present study, both quantitative and qualitative data will be brought together to provide insights into the hypotheses presented in the theoretical model. Each hypothesis will be considered separately and discussed as it provides information concerning the nature of social structural labeling and self-labeling of the aged.

#### Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis of the present study expected the retired individual having a highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity to maintain a highly meaningful existence. Simple observational procedures seemed to support this hypothesis.

Interviews and observation in Residence A revealed a proportion of active new residents. Attempts to make initial contacts led the researcher occasionally on wide searches. The new residents might be

found in the back yard of their cottage breaking soil in order to begin a garden, or trimming hedge, or directing movers as to where certain pieces of furniture should be placed. Later contacts revealed similar levels of activity. Some individuals were so active that the researcher had difficulty in locating them for the final interview.

Impressions from Residence B included new residents having a remarkable sense of pride in relationship to their apartment and living surroundings. Several new residents insisted on giving the interviewer a tour of the lounges, dining rooms and gardens. Later contacts indicated general continuity in the activity levels and an increase in activity as some individuals became settled in their new surroundings and discovered the activity resources available to them. It should be noted that a few individuals who entered the residences with high morale and relatively high activity levels were found to have lowered in morale and activity levels. As indicated in the discussion under limitations, the research design does not provide for a test of intervening variables between pretest and post-test. By the way of example, a women interviewed in Residence A experienced a tragedy shortly after entrance into the residence. Her husband was in an accident and lost both of his legs. His larynx had previously been removed in a cancer operation, and he communicated with her by rasping noises and sign language. At the time of final contact, the women appeared upset and depressed. The burden which her disabled husband presented had apparently affected her morale and opportunity for activity.

An analysis of quantitative data did not provide consistent support of the first hypothesis. Although the means and t tests of purpose in life and perceived self-reliance did not reveal a signifi-

cant t value which verifies the hypothesis of no change in the sense of meaningful existence, perceived self-reliance had a slight mean change in a negative direction and a negative correlation. The existence of a negative correlation, when the hypothesis expected a positive one, suggests that although results may generally adhere to the hypothesis, there has not been a uniform change.

Further implications of the lack of consistent changes in a uniform direction are evidenced by the variation. Standard deviations of all the hypotheses range from .47 to 15.01. A reevaluation of Reisman's types of reactions to aging as presented in Chapter II may suggest that, although the greater number of individuals may fall into the "adjusted" category where the social structure is of potential influence, the "autonomous" and "anomic" individuals may exist within any social structure. The presence of such individuals in the residences being evaluated, as suggested by negative correlations and large standard deviations, could affect the empirical findings.

Perceived self-reliance did not support hypothesis one, as the direction of the change was in a negative direction with a significant t value. By way of explanation, it might be noted that the activity levels and other indicators of meaningful existence were so high that, even with a drop in one of the categories of response (perceived usefulness), the sense of meaning remains at a comparatively high level.

In conclusion, although the qualitative data and most of the quantitative data tend to support the hypothesis, the findings were not totally consistent. The greatest discrepancy appeared to be in the measurement of perceived usefulness. Possibly purpose in life and

self-reliance are easier feeling-states to maintain with aging than is a sense of usefulness.

### Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two predicts that the individual having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which encourages leisure-activity will increase in his sense of meaningful existence.

Personal impressions derived from interviews and observation suggested that in both Residences A and B many individuals who appeared low in activity levels at entrance became involved in a much higher degree of leisure-activity. Some individuals had moved from very isolated independent residences where without availability of transportation, access to many activities was severely limited. At entrance into the residence, the individual may be unaware of the range of activities available to him. During six months of residence, however, he is informed of the opportunities available and may be encouraged to become involved. Within the residence he finds hobby shops, woodworking materials, libraries, auditoriums in which lectures, musical and dramatic productions, and religious services are held--all within easy accessibility. He further discovers that buses are available to transport him to community functions and that neighboring residents still driving cars are willing to include him in their trips to shopping centers, grocery stores and the post office. As a result, the types and frequency of activities in which he engages are likely to increase.

Quantitative analysis appears to support the hypothesis. The

means of all three indicators of meaningful existence (purpose in life, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance) showed changes in a positive direction. In two of the three categories (purpose in life and perceived self-reliance), the change was significant at the .05 level. It should be pointed out, however, that the same two categories had negative correlations, suggesting that although the changes were in the right direction, the changes were not uniform. Some individuals either remained the same or decreased in their sense of meaningful existence. Thus both qualitative and quantitative analysis appear to support the hypothesis expecting an increased sense of meaningfulness after residence in a social structure which encourages leisure-activity.

### Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis expected that the retired individual having a highly meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness, and then c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will decrease in his sense of meaningful existence.

Observation of new arrivals in Residences C and D identified a proportion of individuals with relatively high morale. The impetus for the move from independent homes had often been at the urging of doctors and family because of health impairments. Many of the new residents remarked that "they would only be living here for a short time and then they would be returning to their homes." Their attitudes included hope and plans for return to earlier life styles. With later contacts, many of the individuals seemed to have lost hope of returning to an in-

dependent residence. They frequently expressed dislike of their surroundings and boredom from a lack of activity.

Quantitative data reinforces these observations in a uniform and statistically significant change from a high sense of meaningful existence to a lowered evaluation. In each of the three categories, purpose in life, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance, the means became significantly lower and the positive correlations suggested consistent changes.

In conclusion, both the qualitative data and quantitative data strongly supported the third hypothesis, expecting a lessened sense of meaningful existence after residence in a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity.

#### Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis four predicts that the retired individual having a low sense of meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness and c) perceived self-reliance upon entrance into a social structure which does not encourage leisure-activity will maintain a low sense of meaningful existence.

A considerable number of the new admissions to Residences C and D appeared in interview and observation to portray low self-conception, low morale and little sense of meaningfulness. Societal labels of many homes for the aged have described them as "halfway houses somewhere between society and the cemetery" (Pryor, 1970:15). If these labels have been incorporated into the attitudes of older people, then their attitudes upon entry into residences for the aged is liable to be one of lethargy and depression. Homes for the aged may be considered a "last

resort" where one goes, not to start a new exciting life, but to simply wait for death. As the researcher wandered through Residences C and D observing and taking notes, she received the impression both from staff and residents' actions that the residents were expected to generally remain quiet and detached. Activity was at no time encouraged in the researcher's presence and very little activity was ever visible during observational periods. At the time of reinterviewing, residents appeared to have few goals for expectation of future happiness. They spoke of themselves in negative terms, as no longer being able to see well or to engage in activities which they had enjoyed in earlier life.

Statistical analysis revealed considerable changes in the predicted direction. The means on PIL, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance were, in fact, the lowest at post-test of all groups of residents interviewed. The correlations and t test results suggested consistent negative changes which were statistically significant at the .05 level. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data seemed to support the hypothesis that individuals residing in social structures which do not encourage activity, having entered the residence with a low sense of meaningfulness, will come to have a lower sense of meaningful existence.

#### Retrospective Data--Analysis of First

##### Four Hypotheses

A brief discussion of the retrospective data, which used perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance as the indicators of meaningful existence, would be appropriate here. While the retrospective data indicated consistent changes in the hypothesized directions,

three of the eight t values were not significant at the .05 level. The explanation should include a consideration of the small sample size which ranged from 5 to 17. With so few degrees of freedom, an extremely large t value is required for significance. The results, however, tend to lend some support to the use of retrospective data as a potentially valid technique in the social sciences.

#### Hypothesis Five

The fifth hypothesis predicted that the indicators of meaningful existence (purpose in life, perceived usefulness, and perceived self-reliance) would be positively related together. It is particularly difficult to verify this hypothesis through observational techniques. It can be noted that in interviews, and informal conversations with the residents, various attitudes and self-conceptions appeared to be related together. Morale, life satisfaction, optimism, and self-evaluations of usefulness, independence, and self-reliance seemed to relate together, so that an individual who expressed positive feelings about one of these areas of his life, also tended to be positive about the other areas, and vice versa.

The statistical data verified the hypothesis with high correlations of .80, .84, and .84. With 133 degrees of freedom, the correlation needed only to be .17 in order to be significant at the .05 level. In conclusion the limited qualitative data and, very impressively, the quantitative data seemed to support the hypothesis that the indicators of a sense of meaningful existence (purpose in life, perceived usefulness and perceived self-reliance) are related together positively.



### Hypothesis Six

The final hypothesis expected the level of leisure-activity to be positively related to meaningful existence as indicated by a) purpose in life, b) perceived usefulness; and then c) perceived self-reliance.

Observation and interviews provided the impressions that the aged made many connections between activity or lack of activity and their general sense of meaningfulness and usefulness. Complaints of boredom, having nothing to do, or being unable to perform certain activities were often accompanied by self-evaluations of uselessness or dependence. The staff at Residence C was observed as discouraging activity on the part of the residents and discouraging self-reliance. "Just go back to your room and someone will bring you a pillowcase. It's too far for you to walk." The administrator of Residence D was relating to the researcher her problem in hiring staff who would encourage the residents to be active. She was aware of the attitudinal changes which could be generated by simple activities. "If we can just get them to leave their rooms and eat in the dining room, they do one-hundred percent better." One resident spent most of his day in solitude in a large end room where the patients were taken on occasion for a tub bath. He told the researcher that there was little for him to do. He liked to stay in the room and help lift people into the tub when additional strength was needed, because it was the only way he could feel useful.

Statistical analysis supported the hypothesis with correlations significant at the .05 level in each case. Purpose in life correlated with the activities total at .67. The correlation between perceived usefulness and activity was .59, and between perceived self-reliance

and activity was .60. The theoretical model had assumed that leisure-activity was an essential source of meaningful existence in retirement. Both qualitative and quantitative data tend to support this hypothesis.

#### Final Conclusion

The main impetus of the present study has been an attempt to re-search the implications of social structural labeling and self-labeling of the aged. Both qualitative and quantitative procedures were utilized to test the influence of social structural labeling (operationalized specifically in terms of encouragement or discouragement of leisure-activity by residential social structures) on self-labeling of the aged (operationalized through perceptions of one's life as meaningful, purposeful, useful, and self-reliant). Both qualitative and quantitative data suggested that the social structural labeling does have an impact on the self-labels of the aged. While the research project has many inherent limitations, the findings may be considered as indicative of the need for further research and implementation of positive labels by specific residential social structures and societal social structures in general.

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**APPENDIX A**

**PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE**





20.	I have discovered:								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
	no mission or purpose in life			(neutral)		clear-cut goals and a satisfying life purpose			
21.	Active	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Passive
22.	Useless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useful
23.	Self-reliant	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Burdensome
24.	Held in high regard by others	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Held in low regard by others
25.	Poor health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent health
26.	Hold myself in high regard	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Hold myself in low regard

**APPENDIX B**

**POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE**



## POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time Involved \_\_\_\_\_

To Be Answered by Interviewer Alone

## 1. Sex

Male	1
Female	2

## 2. Race

Negro	1
Caucasian	2
Indian	3
Other	4

Case History Variables

## 3. How many years have you lived at your present address?

Less than a year	1
1 year	2
2 years	3
3 years	4
4 years or over	5

## 4. How much education have you had?

Elementary school	1
High school	2
Some college	3
College graduate	4
Other type of school	5

## 5. What year were you born in? (How old are you?)

1911-1915	(59-55)	1
1906-1910	(64-60)	2
1901-1905	(69-65)	3
1896-1900	(74-70)	4
1891-1895	(79-75)	5
1886-1890	(84-80)	6
1881-1885	(89-85)	7
1875-1880	(95-90)	8

6. What was your major occupation before retirement?

Unskilled worker, farmer, laborer	1
Semiskilled worker (machine operator)	2
Service worker (policeman, fireman, barber)	3
Skilled worker or craftsman (carpenter, plumber)	4
Salesman, bookkeeper, secretary, office worker	5
Owner, manager, partner of small business; lower level gov. official, military commissioned officer	6
Professional (B.A. degree--engineer, secondary schoolteacher)	7
Owner, high-level executive-large business	8
Professional requiring advanced college degree--(doctor, lawyer, professor)	9

7. How would you rate your health at the present time?

poor	1
fair	2
good	3
very good	4

8. How would you compare your health with others your age?

poor	1
fair	2
good	3
very good	4

9. What is your present source of income? (Can check more than one)

welfare	1
medicare	2
support from family	3
social security	4
retirement pension	5
savings	6
other	7

10. Would you estimate your total estate value (properties, savings, investments, stocks, bonds, etc.) to be:

Less than \$25,000	1
\$25,000-\$50,000	2
\$50,000-\$75,000	3
over \$75,000	4

11. What is your present marital status?

single	1
married	2
widowed	3
divorced	4
separated	5
remarried	6

12. Why are you living here?

Someone made you come here	1
No place else to go	2
You wanted to come here	3
Combination	4

13. How often do you see some of your family or close relatives?

Never	1
Less than once a month	2
once a month	3
once a week	4
once a day	5

14. How often do you communicate with some of your family or close relatives either by telephone or by mail?

Never	1
less than once a month	2
once a month	3
once a week	4
once a day	5

15. Do you like staying here at this residence?

definitely no	1
mildly no	2
neutral	3
mildly yes	4
definitely yes	5

16. How much time do you spend with hobbies, games, parties or related activities? (alone)

less than 1 hr./day	1
1 hr./day	2
2 hr./day	3
3 hr./day	4
more than 3 hr./day	5









APPENDIX C

RETROSPECTIVE SELF-CONCEPT

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL



## RETROSPECTIVE SELF-CONCEPT SEMANTIC

## DIFFERENTIAL ITEMS

How did you feel about yourself when you first came to live here:

56.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Active						Passive
57.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Useless						Useful
58.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Self-reliant						Burdensome
59.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Held in high regard by others						Held in low regard by others
60.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Poor health						Excellent health
61.	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Hold myself in high regard						Hold myself in low regard

VITA

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