INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY IN MULTI-UNIT HOUSING

INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY IN MULTI-UNIT HOUSING: A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS AGEISM

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Lay Abstract

Ageism, the negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination related to age, preys on fears about vulnerability in later life. Intergenerational contact is a strategy found to redress ageism and age-segregation in geographic places. The scholarly literature is primarily focused on structured intergenerational (IG) programs in neighbourhoods, with limited studies of informal IG community in a residential setting. This study was conducted in a high-rise condominium in Toronto, Ontario. The thesis asks: How did intergenerational community with neighbours begin, and how is it sustained, nourished and maintained? Using focus group and research feedback session, it explores the ways residents value IG community, issues and challenges in the building and the roles generational cohorts play. Thematic analysis of the data presents us with psychosocial benefits of IG community for individuals and socio-environmental benefits for the community. This study contributes to the current social gerontological literature on intergenerational practice and housing, with a focus on organic IG development and age integration.

Abstract

Intergenerational contact is a strategy found to redress ageism and age-segregation in geographic places. The scholarly literature is primarily focused on structured intergenerational (IG) programs in communities and neighbourhoods, with limited studies of informal IG community in a residential setting inclusive of people of all ages. This study explored how intergenerational contact is seeded, nourished and sustained in the context of a high-rise building, and the structures required to facilitate organic intergenerational community. It responds to a knowledge gap on the process and experiences of age integration in IG housing, and the exclusion of young and middle-aged adults in research in the field. This thesis reports on a qualitative study using community based participatory action research (CBPAR) methodology. The research site was a high-rise condominium building in Toronto, Ontario with nine years of sustained IG initiatives. There were nine research participants ranging from 10 to 80+ years. One focus group was conducted and after a preliminary thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), initial themes were shared with participants in a follow-up research feedback session as a prompt for further discussion. Analysis of the transcripts generated five key themes: foundational structures; growing and cultivating IG community; benefits and outcomes of IG community; the roles of generational cohorts; and residents of the building who are missing from IG community. Participants highlighted the psychosocial benefits of IG community for individuals, such as community and volunteer engagement, sense of community and caring, and social skills development, and the socio-environmental benefits for the community, such as respect and care for common areas and a greater acceptance of diversities. Consistent with the literature, young adults were missing from this IG community. This study contributes to the current social gerontological literature on intergenerational practice and housing, with a focus on organic IG

development and age integration. The results can inform future research exploring social connectedness and belonging with contributions to the empirical, methodological, and theoretical literature on IG practice and community.

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Introduction

In 1969, Robert Butler (2009) coined the term ageism to capture the negative stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination related to age. Ageism preys on fears about vulnerability in later life, including dependency and frailty; some researchers claim these fears are associated with incidences of elder abuse, neglect and abandonment (Butler, 2009). While the gift of a longer life should provide opportunities for personal growth, deepening interpersonal connections and meaningfulness of life, the marginalization of older people hinders them from fully contributing and participating in their community and society (Achenbaum, 2015).

In an attempt to address ageism in geographic places, in 2010 the World Health Organization Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities sought to connect cities, communities and organizations "to make communities a good place in which to grow older" (Krug et al. 2023, p. 2). An 'age-friendly community' is defined as a community which has barrier-free universal design, and promotes the qualities of diversity, inclusion and cohesion (Krug et al. 2023, p. 2). Age-friendly communities may have served to lessen the physical barriers and create better access for older persons, but negative attitudes and stereotypes related to age and ageing continued to exist.

In 2021, the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) published an article in the medical journal *The Lancet* declaring ageism a social determinant of health (Mikton et al. 2021). It states that it is essential that we change "how we think, feel, and act towards age and ageing" (Mikton et al. 2021). The authors cite the W.H.O. Global Report on Ageism (de la Fuente-Núñez & Mikton, 2021) in noting that 1 out of 2 individuals globally have ageist attitudes against older persons thereby emphasizing the prevalence of this social determinant of health and its negative impacts on the health and well-being of older people. The report recommended three evidence-

based strategies to reduce ageism: policy and law, intergenerational (IG) contact and education (Mikton et al. 2021). Krug et al. (2023, p. ix) argued that when people are categorized by "age" it can divide and segregate individuals, creating "injustice, harm and lack of solidarity across generations" with negative impacts such as social isolation and loneliness. Age segregation promotes ageism towards the other (generations) and discourages collaboration with people of all ages. Mikton et al. (2021) propose that IG contact is an intervention that works to reduce ageism against older people and younger people alike. Thus, IG practice may be a strategy to redress age segregation and loneliness, specifically in communities and neighbourhoods.

Brown and Henkin (2014) propose a framework for communities that are 'good for growing up and for growing older' which parallels Hatton-Yeo's (2010) concept of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' as good for people of all ages. IG practice brings together people of different ages, within and beyond family, in purposeful activities which promote understanding and respect, wherein these interactions contribute to better-connected and inclusive communities (Krug et al., 2023; Ayala et al., 2007; Hatton-Yeo, 2015).

In their report, "An Examination of the Social and Economic Impacts of Ageism" Lagacé et al. provided data about initiatives to address ageism in Canada (2022, p. 24, Table 3.1). There was a total of 122 initiatives across Canada of which 34 were IG or age-friendly programs; 25 programs (74 percent) were coordinated by organizations involving older persons, eight (24 percent) were coordinated by governments, and one (0.03 percent) coordinated by academia. Lagacé et al. (2022) argued that the IG programs only targeted youth and older adults, thereby excluding young and middle-aged adults. This suggests that in Canada the concept of 'intergenerational' continues to undergo a shift in meaning from interactions between young and older persons to include people of all ages.

Intergenerational activities can bring people together in mutually beneficial ways to develop sustainable communities such as offering mutual learning, providing a sense of safety and belonging, and increased social connectedness and social cohesion. Brown and Henkin (2014) note that an all-ages approach to community development can foster social capital as well as promote public will to address civic issues that impact individuals of different generations.

Several barriers have, however, been identified to explain the lag between practice and policy including: the lack of research evidence regarding the effects of IG practice at the community level (Melville & Bernard, 2011, cited by Buffel et al. 2014, p. 1790), the lack of recognition of older adults' leadership to coordinate and facilitate IG community (Melville & Bernard, 2011), and the lack of support(s) for 'how-to' knowledge of IG community development (Melville & Bernard, 2011). It is evident that there are challenges and barriers between micro-, meso- and macro-level systems regarding intergenerational community which allow age-segregation and ageism to persist.

My research project explored the development of an informal IG community in a high-rise building in Toronto, Ontario. I aimed to understand how IG community with neighbours begins, and how it is nourished and sustained. In my discussion I consider how these social processes can be seen to address ageism, social isolation and loneliness.

Several terms used in this thesis require definition and analysis. In the next sections, I consider the terms older, ageism, intergenerational, and intergenerational practice, and summarize their relevance to my research. The theoretical concept of 'community' will be defined and examined later in the thesis.

Who Is an Older Person? Defining "Older"

In 1979, Janet Roebuck (p. 416) explored the concept of ‘older’ and ‘old age’ and found that since there was "no physiological basis for a sound, clearcut definition of old age”, social scientists and other researchers involved in the study of aging accepted the government’ "pension age" or "retirement age" as the convenient dividing line between “mature adulthood and old age” and which society in general has also accepted.

Taking a historical perspective, Roebuck (1979, p. 417) notes that before the 19th century, old age was related to being able-bodied and the ability “to function” rather than a measurement in years lived. Those who were considered “aged were those who were too infirm, frail, and suffering incapacities of body or mind” to remain independent and self-sufficient, and those who appeared old (Roebuck, 1979, p. 417). There was an assumption that people could either be advancing in years, or incapable of supporting themselves, but when the two aspects came together that the individual was then considered old (Roebuck, 1979).

In Canada, people are generally deemed ‘seniors’ when they reach retirement age, that is 65 years of age, where age is the most common benchmark for retirement (Government of Canada, 2022). When adults turn 65, they can access senior-specific governmental income supports such as Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

The Canadian government categorizes three age subgroups of older adults to distinguish between younger and older seniors and their differing health experiences, interests and lifestyles (Government of Canada, 2022). These three subgroups are people aged 65 to 74, people aged 75 to 84, and those aged 85 and over. In addition to seniors, individuals aged 55 to 64 are seen as people who “are on the way to becoming seniors” (Government of Canada, 2022).

In 1974, Neugarten explored age groups in the United States, with particular attention to the category of ‘young-old’. While acknowledging ageism, she noted that individuals who are

55-75 years of age are considered young-old which is a time when they transition to retirement with changing responsibilities. Neugarten (1974) proposed that the young-old age group may have a need to find a sense of purpose and meaningful use of their time, to cultivate opportunities for both personal development and community participation. Furthermore, Neugarten (1974, p. 187) saw the young-old as having "enormous potential as agents of social change in creating an age-irrelevant society and in thus improving the relations between age groups." Neugarten (1974) states that the age group of old-old persons over 75 years often have their health status and care needs determine their wellbeing. While Neugarten's research made important contributions, it also has limitations, as this emphasis on health status obscures what people over 75 are contributing and providing to their families, communities, and society.

In their study examining the relationship between age and changes in health and wellbeing, Cohen-Mansfield et al. (2013) looked at people of 'advanced old age' and examined the health, wellbeing, and function of people who they categorize as "old" (ages 75-84), "old-old" (85-94), and "oldest-old" (95+). They note that this latter category has been referred to as "the fourth age," since it exceeds the normal life span (Baltes & Smith, 2003), yet they identify that there is an inconsistent use of age-categorization terminology in the research. Cohen-Mansfield et al. (2013) note that the category of "old-old" has varying ages and may refer to individuals over 75 years of age (Ferraro, 1980; McCrae et al, 2008), 71-80 year olds (Kvavilashvili et al, 2008), or over 85 years of age (Yates et al, 2007). Similarly, this category of "old-old" appears to overlap with the category of "oldest-old" which may refer to persons over 80 years of age (Chou & Chi, 2005; Haynie et al, 2001) and 85 year olds (Stek et al, 2004). Their findings indicate that age categories whether young-old, old, old-old, or oldest-old, are arbitrary,

determined by economic and political changes, population ageing and subjective perspectives on aging (Cohen-Mansfield et al., 2013).

For the purpose of my research study, I have used 65 years of age and upwards as the benchmark for older adults, which is in accordance with the Canadian government guidelines for retirement (Government of Canada, 2025).

Defining and Examining Ageism

Butler (1980) likened ageism to other forms of bigotry such as racism and sexism, defining it as a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old, manifested as attitudes, behaviours, and institutional practices and policies directed towards older adults (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018).

In their introduction to the concept and origins of ageism, Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018) propose that aging is not solely a biological process but rather that it is influenced by social and cultural factors. In addition to social networks of friends, family members, neighbours, colleagues and acquaintances, the country or nation where we live can shape the economic and social structures that support (or fail to support) aging through old-age pensions, health and social services (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018). As a result, the authors suggest that society can make unwarranted assumptions about older people as a (social) group, assumptions which fail to take into account how the social context shapes or defines aging, what it means to 'grow old', and the experience of 'being old' during the life course (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p. 1).

The assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that people have about aging can also shape it. Older people may be spoken of as a category, in generalizations, and not as individuals with differing experiences, demographics and perspectives. Similarly, it is "the" process of aging that

is presented rather than the many unique pathways that aging can take (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018, p. 1), and the diverse lives and living situations of older persons. Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018, p. 1) refer to this tendency to overgeneralize, neglecting the nuances and individual differences between older persons, and relating to older adults and aging with negative stereotypes as "ageism."

Other Versus Self-Directed Ageism

Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018, p. 3) note the more well-known manner in which ageism presents itself, other-directed ageism, is the way one (age) group treats another, but offer that there is also internalized ageism, or as Levy (2001, p. 578) puts it, the "enemy within". According to Levy (2001), ageism is often directed at one's self, and can be implicit, occurring with little awareness or intention yet having impacts on the social interactions and perspective-taking of each individual. Notably, ageism can be harmful to older individuals themselves, as ageist beliefs may lead an older person to act according to expected norms and behaviour such that ageism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy for the older person too.

Three Levels of Ageism: Micro, Meso and Macro

Ageism is widespread and prevalent in the aspects of daily life: home, school, work, recreation and leisure, health care and retail, and in public spaces (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018). It can present itself at an individual level, at an organizational level such as regulations, and at a societal level in terms of expectations, norms, and cultural values (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018).

Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018) proposed three levels of ageism: the micro-level, which is focused on the individual (thoughts, emotions, actions); the meso-level, which is concerned with groups, organizations, and other social entities (e.g., communities or domains of work or

health care services); and the macro-level, which relates to cultural norms or societal values (e.g., political regulations).

Ageism and Intersectionality

Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018) suggest that ageism is one of several mechanisms creating societal inequality, similar to inequalities stemming from gender, race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. They propose that looking at several mechanisms together can offer a more 'nuanced picture' of ageism rather than a uni-dimensional approach and recommend examining ageism from an intersectionality perspective (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018). Furthermore, the authors note how intersectionality theory highlights the intersection of several factors including age, gender, race, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, and/or other factors which results in discrimination (Boggs et al. 2014; Krekula 2007; Marcus and Fritzsche 2015). In my thesis, I was especially interested in self-directed and other-directed aspects of ageism. As I discuss in the results section, my research examines the benefits of IG initiatives to influence other-directed ageism and mitigate negative stereotypes about people of diverse ages.

Defining 'Intergenerational' and Intergenerational Practice

In her dissertation, Hatzifilalithis (2022) notes that there are more than 25 concepts related to 'intergenerational' including intergenerational learning, relations, practice, and intergenerational trauma. The term 'generation' is referred to in daily vernacular as a way to make sense of similarities and differences between age groups in society, and for individuals to locate themselves and others within a time period (Hatzifilalithis, 2022; Biggs, 2007). Furthermore, individuals born within a given period in history, approximately thirty years, would belong to the same generation. However, as Hatzifilalithis (2022) argues, there is no foundation in any discipline for this assumption or claim that individuals within the same generation would

be similar but that grouping individuals helps to categorize rather than differentiate and allow for difference. These categories serve a purpose in creating a structure with which to make sense of social and cultural changes, becoming an organizing principle for life and the life course. However, Bengston and Settersten (2016) argue that it is unlikely that we can attribute differences between people of varying ages to generational characteristics or traits, and vice versa.

Biggs and Lowenstein (2013) coin the concept "generational intelligence" to encourage discussion of the social, economic, cultural and political values of different generational cohorts, and how this information can help make sense of the world. Hatzifilalithis (2022, p. 37) proposes that this can help to lessen intergenerational conflict and promote solidarity, by encouraging *"*a more mutual approach to intergenerational encounters and is a reflective and consciousness building idea."

The term 'intergenerational' has previously been defined as interactions between children and older adults, however, in the past decade, this definition has started to shift to mean multi-generational interactions and relationships between people of all ages such that young adults and middle-aged adults are included (Hatton-Yeo, 2015; Krug et al. 2023).

In their review of literature on intergenerational practice, Springate et al. (2008, p. 4) note that there is no uniform definition of intergenerational practice (Granville, 2002; Raynes, 2004). However Springate et al. (2008) refer to a definition provided by Hatton-Yeo (2006) who suggests intergenerational practice as "purposeful activities which are beneficial to both young people (normally 25 or under) and older people (usually aged over 50)." Their review determined three aspects to intergenerational practice: the age of participants, the distinction

between multigenerational and intergenerational, and the importance of non-kin, non-familial relationships in intergenerational practice.

Hatton-Yeo's (2015) definition of intergenerational practice from the Beth Johnson Foundation (2001) incorporates benefits to the community in addition to the participating individuals,

> Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them.

Subsequently, Hatton-Yeo (2015), reflected on the meaning of intergenerational practice and shared that he has shifted towards a multi-generational approach based on the perspective that people of different generations have varying abilities and strengths to offer which are of value to individuals and to their communities, and helps them achieve their own solutions. Hatton-Yeo (2015) corroborates Springate et al.'s (2008) assertion that it is not possible to have a single definition for intergenerational work, proposing that it is the experience of shared activities to improve the lives of people of all ages and their communities that is relevant. I use this perspective in my thesis, and employ 'intergenerational' as it is defined by Hatton-Yeo (2015) referring to an approach that includes people of all ages or multigenerational.

Literature Review

My goals with my literature review were to explore scholarly and grey materials on intergenerational community in high-rise buildings, and the practices that create and sustain it. In consultation with the McMaster graduate librarian I identified these components of a search strategy:

Published in a peer-reviewed English-language journal; reported non-kin intergenerational interaction, community or neighbourhood setting; interventions including community building, relationship building and volunteering; and high-rise building across housing models (co-operative, condominium, market rental and social housing). The McMaster librarian helped organize a search strategy with multiple key words using MESH terms: "intergenerational housing," "intergenerational housing model,"" intergenerational communit*," "intergenerational housing communit*,"" intergenerational interaction," "intergenerational connections" and "intergenerational building." This only found one, by Mo et al. (2023), so we excluded the specific requirement of a high-rise building, and the setting was left more broad, to include neighbourhoods and communities.

Due to their global focus on social health and aging research, the following databases were chosen for peer-reviewed literature search: AgeLine EBSCO, CINAHL-Nursing and Allied Health, PsychInfo, Social Science Abstracts, and Web of Science.

The final results of the scholarly literature search were a total of five academic peer-reviewed journal articles that discussed non-kin intergenerational community in neighbourhoods (Kang, 2015; Mo et al. 2023; Nemoto et al. 2022; Zhong et al. 2020; Zhong et al. 2022). Only one study, Mo et al. (2023), focused on multi-unit buildings; these were subsidized housing with co-living arrangements such as shared living room and some meal preparation and organization of activities done together. The remaining four journal articles focused on intergenerational interactions, activities or programs in neighbourhoods and communities (Kang, 2015; Nemoto et al. 2022; Zhong et al. 2020; Zhong et al. 2022). Three were located in the US, one in Hong Kong, and one in Japan, with no research studies located in Canada.

I also hand-searched organizational and governmental websites for grey literature in the Canadian context. This surfaced rich data in four documents from community-based organizational reports and guidebooks pertaining to non-kin intergenerational community development in multi-unit housing in Vancouver, British Columbia (Hey Neighbour Collective and Happy Cities).

In the following sections of this literature review I first consider the five peer-reviewed articles identified through the focused search and related grey literature. I have attempted to, when possible, group results and insights into these themes: Impacts of Intergenerational (IG) Contact; Structured Intergenerational Interactions; Inclusion and Collaboration in Intergenerational Community; and Intergenerational Practices in Neighbourhoods. Where there was no overlap between the resources, I provided a summary of the resource. I then review the grey literature, focusing on the theme of Structural and Organizational Supports for IG Community; at the end of this section I include insights from the academic literature on this theme.

Finally, I consider literature related to my research question, drawing from my broader reading in the field, gathered under these themes: IG Community and Social Isolation, and IG Living: Co-Housing and Vertical Village.

Impacts of Intergenerational Contact

In their systematic literature review of intergenerational communities in the US, Zhong et al. (2020) noted that scholarly research on the impacts of intergenerational communities (especially on older adults' health-related outcomes) was sparse. They focused their review on the social interactions between older adults and different age groups, including health-related

outcomes for the older persons, with the intention that this information could assist age-friendly and intergenerational communities with planning for population aging (Zhong et al., 2020). Interestingly, all the intergenerational program participants were older adults and young adults/youth (younger than 25 years), without inclusion of middle-aged adults. The systematic review examined quantitative and qualitative studies focused solely on impacts on older adults and not on impacts on the younger participants or the community, therefore ageism was not addressed although it was mentioned in the introduction.

Nemoto et al. (2022) explored the impact of intergenerational contact on social capital in community-dwelling adults in a commuter city in the Tokyo metropolitan area where the community was defined as the broader neighbourhood rather than multi-unit housing. The participants ranged in age from 25-84 years, thereby excluding children and youth under 25 years. After a 3-year (2016-2019) community participation intervention, they found that frequency of intergenerational contact increased however there was no evidence of an intervention effect on social support, suggesting that the intervention itself may have been insufficient to enhance community-level mutual help. They made three recommendations to build (sustainable) mutual help relationships among community residents including: 1) people having regular contact with neighbours; 2) neighbours communicating their help needs; and 3) residents' offering their help to neighbour(s).

Structured Intergenerational Interactions

In their systematic literature review on intergenerational interactions and older adults' health-related outcomes in intergenerational communities, Zhong et al. (2020) found that all intergenerational programs in the reviewed studies were structured program interventions. There were three types of program interventions: 1) older adult volunteers providing services to

younger generations; 2) younger people providing services to older adults; or 3) older and younger individuals working, playing or learning as partners in activities (Zhong et al., 2020). The results indicated health benefits of intergenerational interactions for older adults including physical health, cognitive health, psychosocial health, social relationships (reduced social isolation), and self-reported well-being. Health-related behaviours related to intergenerational interactions included physical and social activity (Zhong et al., 2020). In their recommendations for future research and practice, the authors suggest the need to investigate intergenerational interactions in neighbourhood environments and non-program based intergenerational interactions such as those which occur more naturally in daily life and which are place-based (Zhong et al., 2020).

Following up from the systematic literature review, Zhong et al. (2022) conducted a study to explore the role of community social and physical environments on peer and intergenerational interactions of older adults over 65 years old in Texas, US, including the factors which predict interactions in the neighbourhood. The authors considered 'multi-layered determinants' for the social interactions of older adults (Zhong et al. 2022, p. 2). They found that environmental attributes relating to social factors, such as supportive services, social support, and neighbourhood age composition are important elements of intergenerational communities (Zhong et al. 2022). The authors assert that "intergenerational communities go beyond age-friendly communities, (and help) to create…community environments to promote social interactions across different generations and healthy living for people of all ages" (Zhong et al. 2022, p. 12).

Inclusion and Collaboration in Intergenerational Community

Although all five research articles had the term ‘intergenerational ’in their title, none had participants of all ages in their study. Kang (2015) had participants ranging from 4-60 years therefore no older adults; Mo et al. (2023) had adults who were 50 years and older, there were no children, youth, young or middle-aged adults; Nemoto et al. (2023) referred to community-dwelling adults aged 25-84 in their study, therefore not including children and youth; Zhong et al. (2020) examined intergenerational programs with young and old participants, thereby excluding young and middle-aged adults; and finally Zhong et al. (2022) explored the social interactions of older adults over 65 years for peer and intergenerational experiences. This may be due in part to the purpose of the researcher’s objectives as well as the changing definition and scope of ‘intergenerational ’and ‘intergenerational practice’ from focusing solely on interactions between younger and older individuals to the broader involvement of people of all ages.

Kang (2015) conducted a study in Western Massachusetts, with a community organization comprised of multigenerational volunteer organizers between the ages of 14-60 such as students, parents, educators and social workers, to examine intergenerational community organizing practices. Kang (2015) found that the experience of participants to engage in conversations and experiential activities together helped them to identify various barriers with diversity of perspectives as well as the ways in which societal messages inhibit participants’ self-esteem.

Kang (2015) notes three key learnings: (a) the important role of experiential-based learning and critical analysis for the process of (multigenerational) knowledge creation, (b) the growth of collective efficacy through a sense of connection and social connectedness, and (c) the need for a co-learner stance in cultivating intergenerational leadership. The author (2015) emphasizes the need for a collaborative intergenerational approach to working together where

youth and adults share decision-making processes, acknowledging that adults and youth bring unique skills and challenges. However, this study did not refer to the geographic site of the community and excluded older adults over 60 years of age.

Intergenerational Practice in Neighbourhoods

Mo et al. (2023) explored possible differences in the perception of intergenerational living in Hong Kong comparing three age groups under the umbrella term of "older adults". These three categories were the emerging old (aged 50–64), the young-old (aged 65– 79), and the old-old (aged 80 and above). In Hong Kong, the "emerging old" or "soon-to-be old" constitutes the largest age group in the city. This study examined viable aging-in-place options for older adults over 50 years to address concerns related to population aging (Mo et al. 2023, p. 2).

In emphasizing the importance of developing and strengthening non-kin social networks within neighbourhood settings, Mo et al. (2023) referred to the Chinese proverb of "遠親不如近鄰 (yuan qin bu ru jin lin)" [a good neighbour is better than a distant relative] (Miao et al., 2022, cited by Mo et al. 2023, p. 3) and called for further examination of how intergenerational practice may be incorporated in residential and neighbourhood settings. The authors noted that age segregation can "occur in everyday activity and recreational spaces, where particular sites…have acquired age-identities over time, inadvertently discouraging contact between different generations" (Mo et al 2023, p. 3), and suggest the creation of age heterogeneous and age-integrated social networks including site-specific intergenerational housing and intergenerational community engagement.

However, their study contradicts itself as the age range of participants is limited to older adults over 50 years of age which would create an age-segregated community of older adults, instead of an age-integrated community with people of all ages. The authors seem to have defined intergenerational in the (narrow) sense since at least two generations were included in their study, yet they did not include children, youth, young adults or middle-aged adults in their definition of intergenerational or aging in place.

Structural and Organizational Supports for Intergenerational Community

Whereas most of the scholarly literature focused on the IG residents and community itself, four resources from the grey literature search primarily offered prescriptive information about the structural supports that may promote the development of intergenerational community, specifically for multi-unit housing (Avery et al. 2023; Ching and Craig, 2023; HNC, 2022; HNC, 2023). These structural supports were presented using case examples of property management, housing operators, resident-led initiatives, and municipal government.

In their 2022 resource "Learning from the Community Connectors: Practice guide for implementing resident-led social programming in multi-unit rental housing", organization collaborators Happy Cities and Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) examine a program initiative in Vancouver, British Columbia called Community Connectors. It involved all levels of stakeholders including individual residents, housing corporations, social organizations, consultants, municipal and provincial government departments of housing and health, and academic researchers.

One property management company in the City of Vancouver, Concert Properties, participated in the project whereby staff supported residents as Community Connectors who would coordinate social activities with an intention to support those who were isolated, partner

with staff to develop communication systems and offer opportunities for others to help and share their skills. The program set out to foster social capital, with the recognition that this can be nurtured and grown over time with the right opportunities for positive social interactions. The key learnings indicated that multi-unit housing presents is an environment where residents' interest in getting to know their neighbours can be leveraged by property management and housing providers through social programming initiatives (HNC, 2022). Furthermore, social programming was found to be advantageous for property management as after only eight months of program implementation, and despite the set-backs of COVID-19, the property managers noticed "improved relationships between staff and residents, reduced conflicts between tenants, increased safety and belonging, and improved care of building property" (HNC, 2022, p. 36).

The Community Connectors program offered strategies and practices to promote connections between neighbours and cultivate social resilience with residents in multi-unit buildings, however makes no mention of intergenerational initiatives. A year later, their practice guide on "Landlord and Housing Operator-led Approaches to Growing Community in Multi-unit Housing", HNC (2023, p. 1) suggests that housing operators can have an integral function in providing opportunities for social interactions between residents by implementing initiatives and offering resources that create vital, connected and 'neighbourly' communities. Some of the reported benefits for housing operators included: Greater support from municipal governments that promote social cohesion; strengthened connections between vulnerable residents and community service providers; reduction in staff turnover, resident vacancy, property vandalism, and maintenance costs (safer buildings and higher staff satisfaction); and greater sense of belonging, pride, and care for property among residents (HNC, 2023, p. 2).

An HNC community partner and collaborator, Happy Cities (2023, p. 6) argues for age-friendly and socially connected multi-unit housing to 'age in the right place'. They note that one property management company, Concert Properties, demonstrated a strong interest in the social wellbeing of intergenerational communities (Avery et al. 2023, p. 6). All of Concert Properties buildings were rental apartments, with a mix of market, below-market, and social housing, and the building types varied from low-rise, mid-rise, to high-rise buildings. Concert Properties showed understanding for the need for intergenerational community, "it may benefit single or elderly residents to build relationships and interact with other neighbours. It could also be beneficial for new immigrants or people new to the city that don't have a lot of other family or friends locally" (HNC Practice Guide 2, 2023, p. 6).

Ching and Craig (2023) noted that residents who were more connected created a more resilient community. For example, neighbours can be the person who helps during an emergency so that investing in social connections between residents can be part of a risk management and emergency preparedness strategy for property management companies, tenants' associations and municipal governments (Ching & Craig, 2023). Craig (2023, p. 7) suggested that "one of the most effective and feasible roles for municipal governments in fostering social connectedness programming is to help interested housing operators, residents, or non-profit (organizations) unlock bureaucratic obstacles to doing social animation work." The author (Craig, 2023) further notes that local governments often lack the expertise or funding for social connectedness work, so it is critical to create a network of internal champions. According to City of Vancouver social planner Anur Mehdic, these efforts will result from the Social Planning Department (in municipal government) "embracing a collaborative leadership role across other local government departments" (Craig, 2023, p. 12).

Two academic articles (Kang, 2015; Zhong et al. 2022) discuss the need for structural supports in IG multi-unit housing along with several recommendations. Kang (2015, p. 128) argues that, "community health and resilience cannot be achieved by a top-down model where healthcare providers or researchers act as authorities who transmit expert knowledge to communities…(it) calls for a community-based model that seeks to develop collective efficacy and social cohesion from the ground-up."

In their research, Zhong et al. (2022) highlighted structural support for IG community in a broader sense with recommendations to provide incentives to housing developers choosing to build age-integrated residential developments in neighbourhoods. Their study suggested that most older adults consider the diversity of age groups, or age diversity, when choosing where to live and such preference is directly linked with significantly higher levels of intergenerational interactions (Zhong et al. 2022). The authors (2022) suggested collaboration between different sectors in order to nurture IG communities; organizations serving older adults and governmental agencies and departments. The authors (2022) state that this partnership model can help leverage supports to create naturally occurring opportunities for interactions between older and younger generations in and around their residences.

Intergenerational Community and Social Isolation

In my general reading on intergenerational community, I have been especially interested in its potential for easing social isolation. I searched for literature on this theme, beginning with definitions of social isolation including Roy et al. (2023, p. 139) who define social isolation as a "a state in which an individual objectively does not have enough interaction with others in that they do not have people in their lives to contact". Bezerra et al. (2021) define social isolation as a state in which individuals experience less social involvement than they would like with other

people, which interferes with their quality of life. Bezerra et al. (2021) notes that social isolation is related to an objective separation from other individuals, causing an absence of social interactions in an individual's daily life.

However, according to Roy et al. (2023) loneliness is a subjective feeling of not belonging or not having companionship. Roy et al. (2023) clarify that a solitary lifestyle alone is not an accurate indicator of social isolation; a person may be socially isolated and not experience loneliness and conversely, a person can experience loneliness although not socially isolated.

Roy et al. (2023) contend that there are certain protective factors operating at the level of community and society which may affect how much social isolation and loneliness (SI/L) will impact older adults. These protective factors can include marital status, housing, aging in place, socioeconomic status and the quality of one's relationships. Two studies (Lim et al. 2021, Seifert, 2020) highlight the impactful role of having close connections with neighbours; a global study conducted across the US, the UK. and Australia found that knowing at least six neighbours is associated with reduced loneliness through meaningful connection and small acts of kindness (Lim et al. 2021), while a study in Switzerland found that daily contact with neighbours facilitated greater attachment to neighbourhood and reduced loneliness (Seifert, 2020).

Bezerra et al. (2021) identified a more general concept of social isolation of older adults, linked objectively to the lack of regular contacts with people, whether they are family, friends or community members. In this case the individual, in daily life, interacts with fewer people than they prefer, has a decreased social network, and insufficient social support - emotional, informative and instrumental (Bezerra et al. 2021). The authors (2021) suggest that social isolation relates to the context of social organization; from this perspective, isolation does not refer to those who have voluntarily disconnected themselves, but to structural or systemic

barriers that hinder or prevent social connection.

Peters et al. (2021) state that intergenerational engagement, which they categorize as structured (intentional and organized) or semi-casual interactions between non-kin older adults and younger generations, is becoming a tool that may offer a benefit of reducing social isolation in older adults and which can benefit children and adults alike. Although it has potential for communities, Peters et al. (2021) note that there is a lack of strength and breadth in the evidence, and lack of IG programs with older adults living in the community.

One example is by Kahlbaugh and Budnick (2023) who conducted a study with young adults and older adults to examine the benefits of a 7-week, in-person intergenerational contact and educational program for younger and older individuals. The authors suggest that research on the benefits of IG contact can be grouped into three dimensions. The first is self-reported versus manipulated contact, the second is frequent (quantity) versus high quality contact, and the third factor is benefits for younger and/or older individuals (Kahlbaugh & Budnick, 2023). Their results indicated that an in-person program which involved share their memories, skills and values may have provided an opportunity to discuss experiences of aging and "to become more accepting of each person's time of life" (Kahlbaugh & Budnick, 2023, p. 150), thus potentially addressing ageist beliefs yet it is not clear how this might apply within an informal, unstructured intergenerational community.

Intergenerational Living: Co-housing and Vertical Village

In order to understand various contexts of intergenerational relationships, I broadened my literature search to include intentional intergenerational living. Intergenerational living which is intentional may be referred to as co-housing, a term used to refer to a collaborative housing model (Lang, 2020). In discussing co-housing communities, Zheng (2020) notes that they are

designed with the intention to support and promote intergenerational living which sets them apart from most residential developments.

Most co-housing communities incorporate fundamental principles: participatory planning, community-oriented design, shared common facilities, resident self-management, non-hierarchical organization, and separate household incomes (Bianchi and Costa, 2024; Zheng, 2020). The essence of co-housing is both in its structural and organizational elements and its social dimensions that promote intentional intergenerational communal living. Co-housing projects usually begin as a self-organized, participatory process, reflecting a bottom-up model, but they can also involve collaboration with institutional actors in a top-down model (Bianchi and Costa, 2024).

Interestingly in her 1974 dissertation, Wekerle introduced the concept of 'vertical village' as an unintentional process of community building. Wekerle (1974) examined the social world of multi-unit housing, focused on a high-rise building called the Carl Sandburg Village in Chicago, Illinois. Wekerle (1974, p. 4) proposed that a multi-unit residential environment may encourage its residents to identify as a "created community" and meet the functions of traditional neighbourhoods. Wekerle (1974) discusses an aspect of high-rise living that has implications for relationship between property management and residents/tenants. Multi-unit housing complexes tend to be owned by private corporations with residents and tenants having limited influence on management decisions that affect them. The concept of 'vertical village' does not appear to have been further researched or considered within the intergenerational housing or community literature. More generally, the distinction between intentional processes or informal/organic processes when cultivating intergenerational community in housing is not often made visible or transparent in the literature.

Research Objectives and Questions

My study focuses on how intergenerational relationships are seeded, nourished and sustained in the context of a high-rise building, and the structures required to facilitate organic intergenerational community. It responds to a lack of research on the process and experiences of age integration, and to the exclusion of young and middle-aged adults in studies in this area.

This research project aimed to investigate the organic development of intergenerational community where people live, in a study that included youth, young and middle-aged adults, and older adults. The main research question was: *How did intergenerational community with neighbours begin, and how is it sustained, nourished and maintained?* A subset of questions include:

1. What role(s) do (a) older adults, (b) middle-aged adults, (c) young adults, and (d) children play in intergenerational community development?
2. In what ways do people value intergenerational relationships in the building (to individual residents, families, building staff)?
3. What kinds of issues and challenges arise in intergenerational community in the building?

The nature of these questions lend themselves to a qualitative research paradigm since it "locates the observer in the world" where research takes place "in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3, cited by Creswell & Poth). Qualitative research practices make the world (more) visible, transform the world, and creating impact in the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is distinctive in using words as narratives as data, and analyses of language data into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Green & Thorogood, 2018).

Theoretical Perspective

Conceptualizing Community

In 1955 sociologist George Hillery published 94 definitions of 'community' and the only factor he found in common was they dealt with people, beyond that there was no consensus (Jewkes & Murcott, 1996; Macfarlane, 1977). Although the word 'community' is used in daily language with its meaning inherently understood, it remains nevertheless difficult to define. However, in their discussion of community development, Hustedde and Ganowicz (2002) point to three factors which are connected with and integral to community: structure, shared meaning and power. The authors link each of these features with a conceptual framework - the structure of community in society with structural functionalism; (shared) meaning within community with symbolic interactionism; and power of community with political economy theory. Due to the scope of this research proposal, each will be outlined albeit briefly.

In his theory on structural functionalism, Emile Durkheim uses the term 'collective consciousness' to describe widely held norms and values which determine acceptable behaviours of the members of a society (Brown, 2013, p. 24; Durkheim, 1893, by Thompson, p. 17). Durkheim posited that in order for a society to function well, it relies on these 'structures' to control individual ambitions and maintain a sense of social harmony or order (Brown, 2013, p. 24). This collective consciousness has characteristics which permeate a society; Durkheim stipulated that it does not change over generations, rather it connects generations, making collective consciousness independent and distinct from individual consciousness. Durkheim distinguishes these two types of consciousness where collective consciousness is common to all members and is not about oneself, it "is society living and acting within us"; whereas individual consciousness is what makes each person unique and different, "everything that makes us an

individual" (Durkheim, 1893, by Thompson, p. 24).

Sociologist Anthony Cohen (1985) presents a symbolic interactionist perspective in his interpretation of the meaning of community. He believes that the members of a group share a commonality which distinguishes them from other groups so that, 'community' provides a sense of similarity and difference. With this in mind, Cohen explores the nature of community from this element which he conceives of as a 'boundary' (Cohen, 1985, p. 12). For Cohen, the boundary defines a community; it determines its beginning and its end. It expresses the identity of a community similarly to the identity of an individual, and is activated by the individual needs for social interaction. This notion of boundary shifted the focus from outsiders (non-members) trying to understand the meaning of community to the meaning of community from the perspective of its members. Delanty (2010) notes that Cohen moved the focus of community from a type of social interaction connected to location to an interaction of meaning and identity.

Brennan and Israel (2013) observe that power and its role in social change are often at the core of political economy theory. The work of Marx is referred to in relation to those who hold power and control the major aspects of society at the expense of those who labour and are powerless. The authors believe that (the role of) community agency is central to the process; where local residents are empowered, lack of political will and mainstream mandates are challenged. Thus, community agency facilitates the development of collective capacity and the very essence of community. DeFilippis et al. (2010) contend that from the perspective of political economy, community is important since it represents the places of everyday life; where people live, eat, and care for each other. They are the places of daily shopping and various activities that sustain living. These activities take place though a complexity of government services, non-profit organizations, private sector companies, and voluntary, informal processes

which creates a tension that makes community a space in which "power and interests are shaped, and in which important social, economic and political conflicts occur" (DeFilippis et al., 2010, p. 16).

The three foundational elements of community and their associated theory – structure, and structural functionalism; (shared) meaning, and symbolic interactionism; and power and political economy – contain similar or complementary notions of community including: norms and values, boundary and membership, conflict and solidarity, social cohesion, social capital, and the collective consciousness of community. The relationship between individual and community is complex and intertwined; community serves individuals and individuals support community for their mutual wellbeing and functioning.

In the Discussion chapter I consider how the results of my study benefit from consideration of these various theories and concepts of community including norms, values, structures, conflict and solidarity.

Methodology

In alignment with the thesis focus on intergenerational community, this research study used a Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) so as to learn from and with participants who are engaged in intergenerational community development where they live. In the research literature, CBPAR is fundamentally related to Community-Based Participatory Research and Participatory Action Research, and will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

CBPAR seeks to generate positive, transformative change through engagement and collaboration with individuals who are directly affected by the issues being studied (Swanson & Leader, 2023), with this research focused on the impacts of intergenerational community on ageism and social isolation in a residential context. According to Israel et al. (2005), the goal of

CBPAR is to increase knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon and integrate the knowledge with practice and policy, promoting social change to improve the health and quality of life of its community members. Across all stages of the research process CBPAR involves community members, researchers and organizational representatives alike, such that it is a partnership approach to research in which all partners contribute expertise, share decision making and ownership (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020; Israel et al., 2005).

Israel, Eng, Schulz, and Parker (2005, pp. 7-9) present nine guiding principles for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), which include: recognition of community as a unit of identity, such that it is an entity itself; building on the strengths and resources which exist in the community; co-learning and capacity building among partners (and participants); focusing on ecological perspectives that tend to the determinants of health; dissemination of results to all partners and involves them in the dissemination of results, for example as co-authors of publications and co-presenters at meetings and conferences; and finally a long-term process and commitment to sustainability. This commitment can extend beyond a single research project, and although partners may reach point where they decide to no longer continue as a partnership, they retain a commitment to the relationships that exist and can be called upon in future should partners feel it is needed.

These guiding principles promote values of respect, collaboration, equity, inclusion, sustainability, life-long learning, within a trust-building process. In describing Participatory Action Research, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) present PAR as a learning process, where the benefits are the actual, concrete change(s) regarding: what people do, how people interact with the world and with others, what people mean and what they value, and the discourses in which people understand and interpret the world. The learning occurs as a “spiral of self-reflective

cycles" which include: planning a change, observing the action process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, replanning, acting and observing again followed by reflection as the cycle continues (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, pp. 563-564).

Participatory Action Research (PAR) can create communicative space between participants using a process of reciprocal inquiry to explore their understanding of a situation, for example ageism and intergenerational community (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The participants in collaborative PAR projects co-create an inclusive network in which the facilitator can be a contributing co-participant, potentially with particular knowledge or expertise that can be of help to the group (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Ontology and Epistemology

In Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) the fundamental beliefs about the nature of reality sees multiple realities existing simultaneously. The ontology of CBPR holds the view that people are capable of making changes in their lives. Since the goal of CBPAR is to involve and engage community members and partners throughout the process, the space which is created is one of relativism, wherein there are multiple perspectives of reality or truth**,** 'multiple constructed realities' rather than one reality or singular truth (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Moreover, truth changes with context, time or perspective.

Constructionism sees our 'ways of knowing' the world as connected to the world we live in (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, constructionist epistemology sees our knowledge of the world, and what we know of the world, ourselves and others (objects), as constructed or created (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Constructionist epistemology presents knowledge with co-created findings, with multiple ways of knowing (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 5), or in other words, "There are knowledges, rather than knowledge" (Braun & Clarke, p. 30). In this research study

we are co-constructing what intergenerational community means, the roles that each generation plays, their experiences, benefits and challenges in multi-unit housing. Knowledge is co-created and co-constructed. The data analysis focuses on exploring the realities produced within the data.

Defining Insider, Outsider and "the Space between"

Kerstetter cites Merton's (1972) framework on researchers' relationships with the communities they study, which he conceptualized as the Outsider Doctrine and the Insider Doctrine. The Insider Doctrine, wherein the researcher is of the community they study, proposes that outsider researchers will not have the capacity to understand a culture, situation or characteristic if they have not personally experienced it (Kerstetter, 2012, p. 99-100). Researchers who are insiders of a community can experience certain benefits: a sense of familiarity between researcher and participant(s), established relationships, trust with members, a sense of safety, and an appreciation of the nuances within the community.

As Milliken (2024) notes, "To do community-based research well you need time; time to establish relationships with people or at least consult with people if you are not part of the community or an insider." Then, being an Insider with a sense of being known and familiarity may present with cost and time-saving benefits. Finally, the Insider Doctrine proposes that Outsider researchers can have a more privileged and powerful status in society due to their affiliation with a university, higher education, research expertise, or demographic characteristic(s) such as socioeconomic status or race.

Conversely, the Outsider Doctrine perceives researchers who are not of the communities they study as "neutral, detached observers" (Merton, 1972), where outsider researchers are valued for their objectivity regarding the community they research. Merton (1972) conceptualized Outsider researchers who study communities different from themselves in one or

several characteristics as 'professional strangers'. Being different from the community they study can be an obstacle for researchers in different ways: to gain access into a community, to connect with community members, or to be granted "an *emic,* or insider's, view on how people live" (Eng et al. p. 77). This Insider's (emic) view is acquired knowledge, which comes from membership in a particular group, culture and society (Merton, 1972). As an outsider, researchers can raise questions and seek new understanding about the ways people live that a community's insiders may not recognize without outsider assistance (Merton, 1972).

In order to move past a strict "insider/outsider" dichotomy, Kerstetter (2012, p. 101) refers to Dwyer and Buckle (2009) who conceptualized the framework of "the space between" wherein all researchers are located somewhere within the space between complete insiders and complete outsiders. Kerstetter (2012, p. 101) further states that this is "usually characterized as a multidimensional space, where researchers' identities, cultural backgrounds, and relationships to research participants influence how they are positioned within that space." The researcher's identity tends to be relative, and can change depending on where and when the research is conducted, the personalities of researcher and participants, and the research topic (Kerstetter, 2012).

Situating Myself

Upon reflecting on where I align with each of these positions—Insider, Outsider and "the space between", there are several aspects in which I am an Insider: I live in the same city with its dense urban environment, and in Canadian society; I am a homeowner and resident in a (townhouse) community; and I am a single, middle-aged women such that I have experienced ageism, age-segregation and social isolation at various life points.

Yet there are several aspects in which I find myself an Outsider of this community: I am outside the boundaries of the geographic community as I do not live or work in their high-rise building or neighbourhood and am unfamiliar with its spaces and places; I am affiliated with a university as a graduate school researcher with access to academic resources and institutional power; my townhouse community has no communal spaces which is an obstacle to socializing with neighbours; when neighbours do connect it is most often with those in their own age cohort. That said, and in alignment with my participants, I have taken steps to create two committees (social and environmental), recruit committee volunteers of all ages, and collaborate to host events which engage neighbours.

Mostly I see myself hovering in the space between:

- As a woman who is of white-European descent and arrived to Canada as a child immigrant to Canada, the experience(s) and meaning of home, community, and belonging are complex and layered.
- As a former allied health care clinician in geriatric care and aging-in-place consultant, I have worked on the social issue of seniors' social isolation in Toronto since 1997, and witnessed the neglect, abandonment and abuse towards older adults.
- As a carer for my now-deceased parents, I understand the significance of having a safe, supportive community across the lifespan. It was important for my widowed mother who moved into a high-rise building in order to remain independent and enjoy a good quality of life, and it was equally important for my physical and mental well-being as a carer.
- As a middle-aged woman who is transitioning from midlife through the threshold of being an 'older person' in Canadian society, I experience institutional, structural and interpersonal ageism including the vacuum of roles and responsibility of older persons in

Canadian society and local communities. My assumption from this lack of knowledge and awareness is that there are no known or ascribed roles and responsibilities for older persons.

- As co-founder of a grassroots, volunteer-run community organization, The Neighbour Network: Toronto Seniors Taking Charge, to address seniors' social isolation through social action. We connected senior community leaders to support and learn from one another. Older adults with lived experience of community development mentored and modelled the process(es) and obstacles to cultivating a sense of community with neighbours including practical and relational strategies such as trust-building and collaboration.

This aspect of my 'insider' position was directly salient to study recruitment. It was through this grassroots network that I discovered a high-rise building with an established intergenerational community. I was acquainted and collegial with 'JB', a resident-owner and board of director of this high-rise condo. We met in person at various events pre-Covid19 and became familiar with each other through our volunteer work. Due to our collegiality and familiarity we were able to connect and explore the possibility of collaborating to explore the success of her high-rise condo to cultivate intergenerational community with neighbours.

Methods

Site Identification: Gatekeepers and Facilitators

The qualitative research process began with an exploration of feasibility to identify a high-rise building in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) where residents had lived experience of intergenerational community development. Through my personal, professional and volunteer

networks I connected with individuals who had knowledge of high-rise buildings with intergenerational engagement between residents. Another factor I considered was the length of time a multi-unit site had engaged in intergenerational community so as to demonstrate sustainability. An integral aspect of CBPAR would include connecting with senior(s) residents who identify as coordinators or community leaders of intergenerational programs in their building.

Both property management and community leaders represent gatekeepers of the high-rise building, which Green and Thorogood (2018) describe as individuals who control access to the fieldwork site or to participants, with potential impacts on the research. There are two types of gatekeepers: formal gatekeepers, such as property management or the board of directors for this research project, who were necessary to get access to the site; and informal gatekeepers such as the community leaders who provide support to recruit members, inform the community about the study and communicate the legitimacy of the research project (Green & Thorogood, 2018).

While gatekeepers are needed to gain access to the building site, they can be influential in various aspects of the research: the selection of particular community members as participants, their leadership, and their support for the research. Although gatekeepers were required to support this research project and process, I needed to ensure individual participation was voluntary and that each individual's voice had equitable space and opportunity so as to be in alignment with best practices of CBPAR.

I contacted a community leader, JB, at one identified condominium building site through email and a 'warm 'call to share the purpose of this research project, inquire about the building's intergenerational initiatives and determine her interest in participating in CBPAR as a collaborator and partner. JB requested clarification regarding the purpose, timeline and

recruitment for the research study and shared that she would present it at the next Board of Directors (BoD) meeting, of which she is one of the directors. She said that she would support the study and help with recruitment of five participants (to select invitees), and apart from that would be a community researcher along with the other participants and have the option to participate fully in the focus group, feedback meeting, dissemination of the results and any future research studies as she wished. The Board of Directors agreed to support the study, and the study was cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board.

Site of the Study

Rodeo Walk is a high-rise condominium building located in North York, near the corner of Yonge St. and Sheppard Ave. It has direct access to two subway lines and is within walking distance of public spaces, a performing arts centre, tennis club, movie theatres, restaurants and four supermarkets. It has concierge and security services, and amenities which include an exercise room, multi-purpose room, library study space and swimming pool. Rodeo Walk was registered as a Condominium Corporation in March 1990. The present property management company is First Service Residential. The building consists of 23 floors and 325 suites. This condominium has nine years' experience of developing intergenerational community including community initiatives and social programs for residents of all ages.

In March 2018, the building conducted an informal resident scan, to "develop a better understanding of the profile of residents for planning purposes and in order to better meet their needs" (Rodeo Walk Resident Scan – as at March 10, 2018). This was supplemented with information from property management and their personal knowledge of the residents. At that time, 26% of households were seniors, 38% were families and 36% were other (single adult, adult couple). Sixty-nine per cent were working households. In terms of occupancy, 70% were

owners while 30% were renters and tenants. There were approximately 20 languages spoken including Korean, Chinese (Mandarin), Cantonese, Persian/Farsi, European (Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Romanian, French), Indian, and Arabic.

Recruitment

Recruitment involves decisions about who will participate, from whom data will be collected and how the participants will be recruited. In keeping with CBPAR, these decisions were discussed with JB as an informal gatekeeper and key informant. JB contacted me to inquire whether another board member, J, could also participate in recruitment along with herself, someone who was familiar with residents of various ages who were involved in intergenerational initiatives, and could be a back-up if needed. We agreed to having J join us for an initial conversation to review the study and discuss the inclusion criteria for recruitment: building residents who helped to coordinate, organize, implement or attend intergenerational events and activities.

I met with JB and J in the multi-purpose room at Rodeo Walk. They showed me around and gave me a tour of the kitchen space, lighting, tables, and provided the wifi details. We reviewed the study recruitment packages; there were two packages for guardian and child, and 10 packages for adults over 18 years. JB's name was on the recruitment letter, she would deliver by hand to each resident whom JB and J selected as meeting the inclusion criteria. I requested a wide range of potential participants, diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, gender and religion to reflect their community. Our aim was to have 4-5 individuals recruited for two on-site consecutive groups, the first being the focus group, and the second meeting for the research feedback session to discuss the preliminary thematic analysis. JB and J conferred on potential

participants, JB wrote a list and asked J if she has the email addresses of those on the social committee. She said she did and would send them to JB.

JB and J began to generate a list of 10-12 potential residents for recruitment who would be appropriate research participants and be able to answer the research questions. JB said that everyone wanted to be able to have their say, give input into the research study. They said that the people involved in intergenerational community in the building "didn't realize it was anything of significance. We were just doing our thing, and this research is helping us realize that it is something."

We discussed the focus group meeting, the process, supplies, requirements (wifi, quiet, privacy, participants would be invited to attend the follow-up research feedback meeting) and I answered their questions. I shared that I would bring art supplies (craft paper and markers) for people to doodle, write, colour or take notes during the focus group. I would also bring refreshments and they suggested sweets, fruit, party sandwiches, juice and soda water. All the supplies were purchased through my own scholarship funds.

JB emailed regularly with updates regarding potential focus group participants whom she contacted and handed the recruitment package. Interested residents emailed me and we set up a phone chat to review the study, the consent form, and answer their questions. I offered two potential dates in July 2024. Most of the participants were available to attend July 23, 2024 from 7-9pm. In total, eight participants—seven adults and one child—attended the focus group. A ninth participant (and their guardian) sent regrets for not communicating in time to attend the focus group, and requested an online (zoom) interview with the young person which I granted. The final list of research participants totalled nine, double in size to the planned focus group size. It seems to indicate, and confirm, the enthusiasm, engagement and connectedness between the

residents in this building, who want to share their experience and learn more about the research process. Relatedly, JB emailed me after the focus group as several participants who were unavailable to attend asked to inquire if they could attend the follow-up research feedback meeting. This community is actively involved and curious to contribute, discuss, and learn about the results of intergenerational initiatives in their high-rise building.

One of the participants inquired if the focus group could be moved from the MultiPurpose Room to the Party Room for health reasons; the Party Room had doors that could be opened onto the patio for better ventilation. JB confirmed availability of the Party Room and the focus group was booked for that new location to accommodate the request.

Data Collection

Focus groups offer participants the opportunity to discuss ideas, express opinions, and communicate differences and commonalities (Kieffer et al. 2005). They are considered to be a 'culturally-sensitive 'method in that they can access and fit well with groups which value collectivity, such as an intergenerational community (Kieffer et al.2005, p. 147). The questions, responses, interactions and conversations which take place in focus groups can generate rich stories as participants share experiences and perspectives in their own words. The group process can help to balance the power between researcher, facilitator(s), and participants since the "flow of interactions and opinions empowers participants' voices" (Kieffer, et al. 2005, p. 147), emphasizing the importance of the participants' thoughts and ideas. In addition, having the focus group(s) in a familiar setting can further promote the participants 'influence in the group interview.

Furthermore, the authors suggest that groups and community members become agents of change through the telling of their stories, sharing their perspectives on the social issues affecting

them and/or their community, and recommending strategies to address these issues which are grounded in the realities of their environment and experience. The focus group method is ideal for community-based participatory research where, in this study intergenerational community members are collaborative partners in the research process and knowledge translates into action and social change (Kieffer et al. 2005, p. 163).

The focus group was held on a weeknight from 7-9pm and I arrived early to set up the space, arrange the tables, set up my laptop and test the Zoom online recording software, put out the refreshments and welcome the participants. About fifteen minutes before it started, participants began to arrive and helped me finish setting up the tables with art supplies and the kitchen space with refreshments. The atmosphere in the space was jovial; people were chatting with each other casually and getting themselves seated and comfortable for the focus group discussion.

I welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation, and handed out sealed thank you cards with cash renumeration to each participant. We reviewed the consent form, clarified how they wished to be identified in the research study and whether they wished to continue participating to disseminate the results. I reviewed the questions and stated that they were the same questions that were in the consent form. Most had signed the form prior to the focus group, which I interpreted as another sign of their eagerness and enthusiasm to be involved and share their experience and learning with the broader community and stakeholders. We then reviewed the demographic form and a few participants changed the ethnicity ‘White ’to ‘Canadian’.

Before I pressed record to begin the audio recording, I requested that participants speak one at a time so the transcribing feature could clearly capture everyone’s contribution. The interview questions in the focus group were the following:

- How would you describe the community at Rodeo Walk, especially between people of different ages?
- How did this intergenerational community begin? What keeps it going?
- What do people value about intergenerational relationships in the building?
- What kinds of issues and challenges have arisen in intergenerational community development here?
- What roles do younger, middle-age and older persons play in intergenerational community development?
- Is there anything else, anything we forgot or something important that we should know about?

During the focus group, I noticed the way(s) in which participants respected each other and created a safe space; they listened quietly and attentively, they clarified and/or requested clarification when something was unclear, and they asked fellow participants for their perspective which they saw as more accurate or expert. The older adult research participants joked and laughed with each other, as peers, which gave the focus group discussion a sense of warmth. When participants began to share examples that were not related to the question at hand, I guided them back so as to remain on-topic and have time to answer all the questions.

The same process in the research feedback meeting occurred on Tuesday, October 8 from 7-9pm however only six research participants were available to attend; one child and five adults. As I reviewed each of the preliminary themes which I identified through thematic data analysis, they offered their opinions and perspectives. Whereas I shared each theme to the group and requested their feedback, there were several occasions when an adult participant would engage and include the child in a kind, warm-hearted manner.

The first focus group was 1 hour and 28 minutes, the follow-up research feedback session was one hour, the individual online interview with the child was 24 minutes.

It is important in a research study on intergenerational community to have representation from people of various ages, from child to older adult, yet there were ethical, methodological and practical questions to be asked: Do young children want to attend with their parent? Does their parent want to attend with them? Ethical guidelines for the participation of a minor under 18 years of age were followed according to McMaster University protocol. I was curious to learn about the community's protocols for younger persons' participation in events and programs and in what ways adult residents take care of children and younger people. All the participants needed to sign consent to be audio recorded for both the individual and focus group interviews.

Participants

From the original list of 12 potential residents, all 12 responded with interest, however five were unavailable to attend the focus group due to scheduling conflicts. Eight people were able to attend, and I held an individual interview with one participant unable to attend the group, for a total of 9 participants. At the follow-up research feedback meeting, six of nine focus group participants attended.

The research sample was diverse in age, gender, time lived in the building and experiences with meaningful intergenerational relationships. There was a range in ages: 2 participants (23%) were under 20 years of age, one participant (11%) was between 40-49 years of age, two participants (23%) were between 60-69 years, three participants (33%) were between 70-79 years, and one participant (11%) was between 80-89 years. Two of the participants identified as male with 78% self-identified as female. With regards to ethnic background, the majority of participants identified their ethnicity as white (n=4) with others choosing to identify as Canadian

rather than white (*n*=3), and the remaining participants identifying as East Asian (*n*=1) and mixed ethnicity, East-Asian-and white/Canadian (*n*=1).

Of the nine participants, the majority *(n*=5) were members of the Social Committee, two individuals were attendees at community events, one participant was the Chair of the Social Committee, and one was a Board member. All the adult research participants were owners in the condominium building, and there were no condo tenants who participated in the study.

All nine participants lived in the building for more than two years and 67% lived in the building more than 10 years (*n*=6). When asked to identify the spaces and places where they experience meaningful intergenerational relationships; all participants noted their friendships (n=9), the majority had intergenerational relationships with family members and relatives (n=8), with neighbours in their local community, through volunteer work (n=7), and school and academic experiences (n=6). Fewer participants identified work (n=4), leisure/recreation (n=4), fitness and health (n=3), or church (n=1) as spaces where they experienced intergenerational relationships.

The research participants were offered options to identify themselves in the research either with a pseudonym, initials, or their first name. They identified themselves as follows: Alice, Arlene, B.L., George, Gill, G.P., J.B. Mary, Sondra. The former property manager chose his first name, Attila, as identification.

Data Analysis

An inductive approach to thematic analysis sees data analysis as a 'bottom up' process where the data are connected with the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, p. 83). Since the research data was collected using focus group methods, it is uncertain whether the themes identified will connect with the original research questions, such that I would need to help the

participants stay on track with the research questions and topic(s). Once again this is due to the inclusive nature of CBPAR and its guiding principle that community members participate throughout the research process, potentially changing the research questions to suit their context. Inductive data analysis develops codes and themes that are directed by the content of the data.

In terms of the level, or depth, of theme identification, the latent level of thematic analysis aligns with a constructionist paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Its intention is to "identify or examine the *underlying* ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic (surface meanings) of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

Thematic Analysis

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process for thematic analysis, the first step involved familiarizing myself with the data set by reviewing the transcribed recordings of the focus groups and individual interviews. I re-read the transcripts several times while adding observations and insights, and began to consider potential meanings and patterns. The second step involved coding, where I explored possibilities for initial codes based on the ideas and observations from the transcription. These codes serve to identify a feature of the latent data that appears interesting or intriguing, and provide a structure to organize the data into meaningful groups. I focused on noting evocative and important features of the data that might be relevant to understanding how intergenerational community is developed and sustained, and its unique challenges, creating preliminary codes in the margins of my transcripts. In the third step, I began to sort through the different codes and ideas, determining where there was potential to connect the codes into an overarching theme and develop distinct potential themes. I collated data relevant to each potential theme to be able to work with the data and review the potential for

each candidate theme. This led to the fourth step and further developing and reviewing themes so as to decide which ones are (not) salient and which can be combined together. I worked with my supervisor to discuss my identified themes and determine which themes had robust supporting data from focus group and interview transcripts. The fifth step focused on refining, defining and naming the themes, further identifying what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 92) refer to as the 'essence' and meaning of the theme. It involved understanding the scope and focus of each theme, determining the 'story' and title for each theme, re-grouping the themes and developing thematic descriptions. The final step was to write out the research study in such a manner that it communicated credibility and validity while sharing the complex story of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 94) suggest to write in a compelling manner that illustrates the story about the data, weaving together the "analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualizes the analysis in relation to existing literature." I finalized each theme by considering them in relation to my research questions.

Results

Themes

I identified five main themes: (a) foundational structures of intergenerational (IG) community; (b) growing and cultivating IG community; (c) benefits and outcomes; (d) roles of generational cohorts; and (e) who is missing.

Theme 1: Foundational Structures of Intergenerational Community

A main focus of this research project was to examine how intergenerational (IG) community was seeded and cultivated in multi-unit housing in urban Toronto, specifically a high-rise condominium. According to the research participants living in Rodeo Walk, there were three distinct yet interconnected foundational components, what I conceive of as structures,

involved in the development of IG community: Property management, board of directors and the social committee.

Before discussing these structures, I report on my interview with the former Property Manager, Attila. Attila offered important background about the building's history, especially in terms of shifting demographics and the number and energy of committees that formed, that provide context for how IG community developed in the building.

1.1 Property Management.

Intergenerational initiatives at Rodeo Walk began with the initial support of property management and particularly the property manager, Attila, who was amenable to the idea of social events geared to residents of all ages. Attila, former property manager at Rodeo Walk and presently the regional director of Crossbridge Condominium Services Property Management Company, shared the history of intergenerational community development in the building. He worked at Rodeo Walk from 2008 until 2019, and noticed that starting around 2013 the demographics begin to change in the building. Prior to 2013, it was mainly retirees and older adults but thereafter young professionals with children and middle-aged people who were downsizing began to move in such that the population at Rodeo Walk and the surrounding neighbourhood changed in terms of age and ethnicity. In describing how intergenerational programs started to develop, Attila noted,

> Rodeo Walk is a little bit unique. And it's not because I've (worked) there…but rather, because they were open-minded and there were a number of committees. I think at one point there were 4-5 committees.

Attila emphasized the unique interest of the board of director members in community development, noting the existence of four committees: the Social Committee, the 3Rs (environmental) Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Building Upkeep and Improvement

Concerns (BUICC) Committee. Attila suggested that with this many committees, there were continuous communications to the residents such as call-outs for volunteers, and information shared on the condominium website and in elevators.

Attila noticed diversities in the building including cultural and age diversity. He noted that the building started "to have people of all backgrounds, especially visible minorities such as Chinese and Korean people, who were getting involved" and volunteering which helped build 'that community feeling ' particularly in two committees, the Social Committee and the 3Rs (Environmental) Committee. Attila referenced specific examples of age diversity that were promoted "because one of the former presidents of the Board wanted her older son to get involved." He referred to the Social Committee with an 11-year old, which had members up to 82 years of age, and the 3R's Environmental Committee where there was a younger person.

Although the number of committees and the energy and diversity of committee members supported intergenerational community building, the personal characteristics and social skills of the property manager may also have served to promote an environment open to intergenerational contact. While Attila was promoted to regional manager five years ago, he continues to be very close to his former residents at Rodeo Walk, saying "the Board members are really dear friends, and still (today), maybe 30 of the homeowners."

One focus group participant, GP, acknowledged the social acumen of the property manager,

> He was just an outstanding person. He knew everybody by name. Everyone. Everyone living here, and what their dogs' names were. He knew where you parked your car. Yeah, he knew everything, everything. If you went into his office, he'd often (be meeting) somebody else.

As their property manager, Attila presented with friendliness, ready to socially engage with residents, and worked to connect and familiarize himself with them, which in turn led to a sense

of appreciation, of feeling known by their property manager. Property management with strong social skills and a desire to engage with the residents played an important role in encouraging and supporting the residents to connect with their neighbours and engage in their community.

1.2 Board of Directors.

This property management company encouraged and promoted intergenerational community along with its board of directors who govern the daily operation of the property and also support involvement of the residents in this community. Attila brought attention to variance of involvement of board of directors in intergenerational engagement:

> Either the board is very involved with social events or committees, which provides good education for everybody, and people get to mingle together. With some of the boards, unfortunately, there isn't really a lot. Maybe they will organize a holiday event…So in those communities there really isn't any consideration to think, …Why don't we do something intergenerational and try to bring all of us…to the table and see how we can improve communication and the overall 'community feel'. You don't even need a strong board. I think what you need is an astute board.

Attila suggested that a key distinction of intergenerational community is that while the board of directors are elected to govern the daily operation of the property, they should still be connected to their community 'with their roots and with (their) feet'. According to Attila, the board that distances itself, approaching their role as one of strictly governance with an attitude of 'I'm doing enough already now, why should I bother? Let somebody else do it' lose sight of the importance of community such that residents and neighbours do not have opportunities to get to know each other. Attila's comments highlight his connection, as property manager, to and with the board of directors, and the awareness of property management of the dual roles of board members in building this IG community. Some boards of directors do not want committees because they view them as problematic and causing issues. Attila suggested that a board with this kind of optic, with no readiness or attempt to attract people and set up committees, will find it

challenging to cultivate community. Instead there will be the same number of residents, perhaps 15-20, who are engaged, know each other and are close to the board members.

The need for an astute board of directors was also highlighted by the research participants when they noted that residents go to their board to resolve an issue. When there is a community-level issue or conflict at Rodeo Walk, residents are instructed to contact the property management office. If there are grievances or issues that arise, such as conflict between neighbours or young children yelling in the hallway on an ongoing basis, there is a Board Liaison who connects the resident with the Board of Directors. As BL commented,

> The collaborative problem-solving group is right there (pointing to fellow research participant JB). She's one of five and they are a very strong team. They're the board and they're backed by a hugely efficient property manager.

This highlights the importance of a positive connection between property manager and the board of directors in this IG community. JB confirmed the presence of a strong board of directors at Rodeo Walk,

> If there is a continuous problem, like…noise or misbehaviour, then the board and the property manager take action. It is the roles of the board and property manager, and not to put individual residents in conflict situations. It's our mandate. But we're (board of directors) not intergenerational.

Attila confirmed that the Condo Act states that one has to be over 18 years of age to be a board of director. Based on his experience, depending on the demographics of the condo, buildings in downtown Toronto will have demographics that reflect young professionals and young families. In contrast, he noted that the Yonge Corridor in North Toronto, where Rodeo Walk is situated, has community leaders and board of directors who have lived there for decades and are close to retirement or retired professionals, and "would want to create that community feeling." Attila noted that it is the Board of Directors that can start to recruit residents to facilitate and volunteer in committees.

The role of the Board of Directors also addresses intergenerational tension or issues, such as noise, between residents and neighbours. At Rodeo Walk, these are resolved by going through a formal process including contacting the property management office. Two focus group participants, Gill and JB, both noted that when there are grievances or issues, there is a board liaison who is able to share and discuss it with the board. If there is a continuous problem or ongoing issue, such as noise disturbance, the board of directors and the property manager take some action. The purpose of this role is to address IG issues so that individual residents are not placed in direct conflict situations. However there is also an informal process of resolving conflicts between residents through neighbourly networks. JB, a board of director, described the benefit of intergenerational networks in addressing residential issues,

> If you have a problem, it also helps when you know somebody…who knows the source of whatever the disruption would be. So it is also about the links between (neighbours). I think that networking and that having a network is better.

The role of the Board of Directors is to address interpersonal issues and conflicts between residents, which tend to occur in residential places and are indicative of community generally in a building. This board consists of members who are 'astute' and skilled at conflict resolution including intergenerational issues, encourage volunteerism and community engagement, and have a positive relationship with property management.

1.3 Social Committee.

The intergenerational community at Rodeo Walk developed in large part through the mechanism of the social committee, with growing diversity among its members in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. The number of social committee members fluctuate but are generally between 10-14 individuals. The majority of members are adults over 60 years, with 1-2 middle-

aged adults and one 10-year old. The social committee is facilitated by one Chair and one Board liaison in the committee, both of whom are older adults.

The intergenerational social committee in Rodeo Walk plans events for all the residents in the community. There is collaborative decision-making about programs and events, mostly centred around holidays (Chinese New Year, Halloween, Christmas, Chanukah) and seasonal events such as BBQs. When discussing the start of intergenerational events that included children, two participants recalled the following,

> JB: I remember that there used to be a Christmas party, a holiday party. And then one year somebody said let's have a separate one for kids. (So there) was a separate one for kids. And then the adults all came to the kids' party because they'd like to see the kids! (laughing)
> Arlene: J. (The Board of Directors liaison) started to bring people of different ages together. She started a social committee and then started having activities, including Halloween, Christmas.

Interestingly, all the social committee members were ready and open to recruiting younger people. The youngest committee member, George, shared how he was invited to join and got involved in the social committee:

> We (my mom and I) were going out and I saw someone from the social committee, Mary, hanging up Hallowe'en decorations. I went over to her and offered to help. I helped hang it up and (another social committee member) BL came by and she said, "Oh, you're helping out, setting up the decorations. Do you want to help a little bit more? Like, do you want to join the (social) committee?" So I said, Okay, I'll join the committee and that was when I was eight.

The willingness to include social committee members of all ages is reflected by both the property manager and the board of directors, however the social committee did not have an intentional strategy or plan to involve children or youth. Rather it happened as a result of individuals of various ages meeting casually in the building, chatting and discussing whether there was an interest to volunteer and get involved. This opportunity was presented by the older adult to the young resident and their parent, and framed as an invitation.

In sum, the foundational structures of the IG community that developed at Rodeo Walk include two structural components—property management and board of directors (volunteer residents)—both of which have an openness and interest in connecting neighbours and creating a sense of community with residents. This willingness provided the foundation for the social committee to self-organize and offer special events and celebrations. Although it appears as though intergenerational connections happened organically, there was an established structural foundation which made it possible for residents who were eager to participate and commit to community development such that intergenerational contact and friendships were able to form.

Theme 2: Growing and Cultivating Intergenerational Community

There were many ways in which the social committee at Rodeo Walk maintained and nourished intergenerational community. Although these were not intentional, for the purpose of sustaining IG relationships and initiatives, they served to grow and cultivate IG community in the high-rise building.

2.1 Social Programming and Intergenerational Collaboration.

Using fun, meaningful and social events as the vehicle, the social committee cultivates a sense of community for and with the residents. Holiday and special events that drew residents of all ages created positive and joyful memories for neighbours who participated,

> Gill: You know, this building [likes] to party and get together, and want to celebrate something!(everyone laughing)
> JB: I think people are proud of what they have done here, proud of where they live and the contributions that they make. And that sort of thing tends to snowball.

The intergenerational social committee organizes activities and celebrations which are open to all ages, with its members working together to host and implement special events such as holiday gatherings, BBQs and Hallowe'en.

A young social committee member, George, shared that he made a Halloween poster which was posted in all of the elevators and motivated a few kids to get involved and attend the Halloween party. He helped with the Kids Christmas Party, which is considered 'the big one', and helped with different crafts at the Chinese Lunar New Year party which many children participated in. George noted that, "I usually help get kids engaged with that and I can help by telling the other committee members what they can do to help get them (the kids) involved." George described the importance of having younger committee members such as himself to communicate the needs of children living in the building and suggested offering access of ongoing programs to younger people,

> Maybe some younger people want to join in, but it's only for older people… a lot of events are for them. Maybe a lot of kids would go to bingo night, except very young kids who would probably zone out and…go to sleep and then just be there, right? And there's also karaoke nights. Maybe younger people can go there, watch the show, have fun, sing.

Interestingly, George noted that even very young children who would not be able to actively participate in an event would benefit by being present and part of the community. Giving the image of a sleeping child tucked safely beside their parent, he offers that there is a sense of security for young children to be with their guardian(s) encircled by their community of neighbours. The unacknowledged side benefit is that their parent(s) or guardian would be able to be there with their young children, socialize and engage comfortably with neighbours.

In addition to voicing the interests of IG residents, focus group members stressed the importance of collaborating with people of different ages to learn how to build IG relationships. The following exchange illustrates the value of teamwork for the IG social committee volunteers:

> BL: The big thing is we all work as a unit. It's a team, teamwork.
> Gill: I feel like that (collaboration) happens every time we have a meeting, even if there's disagreement or different opinions about how an event should roll out…I don't actually

> see tension as necessarily a negative. I actually think that as a team, we sort of look through it and learn other collaborative skills…Sometimes just listening. We're solving a problem or an issue in the social committee for our building, actually listening to people work through the solutions.
> JB: We have other committees that go through similar kinds of processes but they are not intergenerational. Yeah, I think the best example is probably the social committee for that….The social committee is more about relationships and involving more people.
> Gill: Yeah, (it's) the art and science of being neighbourly.

In addition to learning how to collaborate as an IG team, research participants shared their experience of volunteering, especially in the social committee, and that they value the wide range of talent, skills and experiences of volunteers:

> Gill: Everyone participates to whatever their interest or talent is. And you can't force it. That is actually what makes us (the social committee) so wealthy, is the richness of all that.
> BL: There is no pressure. But if you are in, you are in.
> Mary: We speak with each of the (social committee) members to see what they like to do. For example, for the Lunar New Year, I spoke with each one of you to see what you like to do. And then I place each of you in the right spot. So everyone has their own thing to contribute.
> Arlene: You can't do it on your own.

The volunteers in the intergenerational social committee spend time working together in-person and value volunteering as a team. They plan, coordinate, organize, implement, and evaluate the programs. The research participants noted that creating an intergenerational committee allowed for complex problem solving and reflecting on how to meet the social needs of building residents including young children. Using a collaborative process, they plan special events and activities for their community to gather and celebrate together, with the intention of creating positive experiences during special events and to promote social connectedness with their neighbours.

2.2 Older Adults Inviting and Welcoming Participation.

The older adults invited**,** encouraged and supported younger people to get involved in the building events and to participate in social activities. This provides opportunities for young

residents to learn how to socialize in groups of people of different ages, and with their own peers. There is relationship-building and friendship-building within and across generations. Gill described a conversation with her neighbour during Covid-19 which encouraged her to connect and get involved with others in the community:

> Gill: A neighbour…said just come to one (social committee) meeting. And what I heard in the meeting that changed my mind were super engaged people…I thought about my neighbour who was saying she was socially isolated. And I thought to myself, there's probably half a dozen or more people. So we came up with the Walking Club, we met twice a week and I got to know my neighbours.
> BL: People that emerged from that became committee members. And we had a karaoke night, bingo online, we had a travel series, trivia (during Covid19).

This exchange seems to be indicative of how residents in this IG community are thinking of their neighbours and their well-being, taking them into consideration for program planning and inviting them to join social activities and events. Older residents note the intention to 'make it fun' and to plan events that are child-friendly:

> JB: What keeps it going? It was fun. You're making it fun, and you make connections.
> GP: I think there's more kids participating now. Committees have been good at that. The (3Rs) environmental committee have an event and try to have something for kids like games. The Lunar New Year was just amazing. They had a chopsticks contest and you see the (older adults) just losing to the kids!!

Older committee members invited younger people to join, and together they collaborated on activities to meet the social needs and interests of diverse residents in the building. The intergenerational social committee became more intentional about hosting events with specific activities that would appeal to families with young children and youth.With call-outs to residents to volunteer on committees, the younger IG social committee members expressed appreciation for the personal invitation by an older person and being given an opportunity to try volunteering in their high-rise community without commitment. It seems that experiencing respect firsthand along with other's level of engagement influenced their decision to join.

Theme 3: Benefits and Outcomes

There were several benefits and outcomes of intergenerational community in the multi-unit building, including community and volunteer engagement, sense of community and caring, respect and care of communal spaces, social skills and social connectedness, and diversity and inclusion.

3.1 Community and Volunteer Engagement.

There were two different types of engagement identified in the intergenerational community at Rodeo Walk: community engagement and volunteer engagement. The research participants shared their views of residents' engagement as a continuum from no engagement, to attending and participating in events, to planning, organizing, and implementing events (such as the social committee and other volunteers). Intergenerational engagement provided opportunities to create connections between generations, building trust and a sense of belonging. The focus group participants provided examples of residents' differing levels of community engagement and interest in socializing with their neighbours in the high-rise building, from a core of avid participants to others who are not known or familiar to the community:

> GP: We had a live annual general meeting, probably with 70 or 80 people, kind of the usual suspects who propel things.
> BL: There are some people in the building I know very well, and have known for years. But there are people who are not particularly social in that they choose not to participate…are perfectly content to come and go and that is enough for them. They just enter their unit. I have gone up in the elevator with people who don't even know where the party room is. Hard to believe.

Arlene reflected on the core of residents who actively participate in the high-rise community as well as those who have not or are new residents to the building:

> I would say there is a strong core of people who participate in the building, which is great, and you recognize those people. It would be nice to have other people become engaged. Over the last three years a lot of new people have moved in and I am not sure whether they want to participate…It would be nice to invite them and include them.

One participant, JB, shared her observation that engagement at social events energizes others and inspires neighbours to participate more in their community,

> When people see others being engaged, when they see you interacting with others, that draws more people in. They want that energy, they want to be a part of it.

The intergenerational social committee shared their experiences with volunteer engagement and how tasks were matched with ability of the resident. In this IG community, children learn from the adults about the importance of their role(s) as volunteers, for the community and for the individuals in the community.

> Gill: Children understand that when they come to an event that there is something for them to do. They're not just showing up as a guest. They're also learning that (in order) to throw a big party or to throw any sort of event together, that it takes all hands on deck, right?
> George: Yeah. Everyone pitches in.

The research participants, many of whom were social committee members, shared the benefits of their community and volunteer engagement, such as spending time working with people of different ages and the growth of friendships with neighbours.

3.2 Sense of Community and Caring.

Participants in this study described a range of ways that IG community fostered practices among residents of looking out for one another, and developing deeper social bonds than merely living in the same building. The research participants shared their experiences of IG community, and the concern neighbours have for each other. The following is an exchange that illustrates the sense of 'home' and comfort of being known to each other.

> GP: I think there's a lot of respect for other people, and I think this is largely because there are so many older people. (They) tend to be open and so you regularly hear, "Have you seen so-and-so, I haven't seen her for a couple of days. I haven't seen her since last week." If somebody has had down times, you kind of hear about it. Everybody knows everybody else.
> Sondra: I think that is a core of people who know each other, and check up on each other.

> Arlene: This is our home and since it is our home, we want to make it the best place to live. As an adult, you look at the building and say, how can I contribute or get other people to help make this the best community to live.

This sense of 'our home' and contributing to make it the best community suggests a sense of 'neighbourliness' which may extend beyond the building itself. Neighbours who are familiar to each other appear to be more social when they meet each other in their neighbourhood.

> Gill: If I leave our building and I see a resident…I might stop…and chat with them while they're outside…(The children) also communicate…about…things that they know in the building. For example, there is a neighbour the same age as (my daughter), across the hall from us, but their family doesn't tend to come (to events)…And my daughter will still ask (the other child-neighbour), "Hey, are you coming to whatever?"
> Our parking spot is nearby to another neighbour and their daughter is a couple of years younger. Now when they see each other…in the parking garage…they tell us about each other's day. So that encourages additional connection because they don't go to the same schools and they really just know each other from the building. It's very important.

Gill also addressed the comfort of having a larger safety net for everyone, especially children, and the importance of a safe community for their child,

> It's really important for kids to be able to connect with people, especially…with other adults in their building, who they then get to trust and know that if they were ever in trouble with/in the building, they could go and find somebody or ask for help.

The former property manager, Attila, confirmed the important need for residents to experience a sense of community in their high-rise tower such that they feel safe, included and a sense of belonging in their building. Attila notes the importance of a board of directors and committees for creating a sense of community:

> There is that 'community feel'. And then, when people see each other…they say hi to each other…People can live on a floor and maybe know two or three of their neighbours…We want to improve that in these big high-rise towers so that people feel that they're in a little village…I think, psychologically, it would be a great help for people to know that, 'Hey, I'm in a good community. I'm in a safe community. I'm aware of what's going on.' So people don't feel…an outsider or not wanted**.** I think it would have a lot of social benefits.

The research participants identified the benefits to the individuals and to the collective of residents living in the high-rise building of knowing there is a sense of community where people can reach out to others in case they need help or are ill. It offers a sense of safety and security for people of all ages, especially children. The former property manager highlighted the benefit of community engagement for individuals and how it can offer psychological safety.

The impacts of participation and engagement in this intergenerational community include increased connections, caring and support between neighbours of different generations and ages. The residents who are known to each other through social events seem to be more respectful towards each other. Older residents who have lived in the building for many years have knowledge and history about their building and longer relationships with their neighbours, which makes them more likely to check up on each other, show care and respect towards their neighbours.

3.3 Respect and Care of Communal Space.

Research participants discussed the ways in which IG community cultivated more awareness of their shared space(s) and communal areas, shifting the experience of living in the same building to taking care of their 'home' together. The following exchange between Gill and JB highlights the focus group participants' perspective of their shared space(s):

> Gill: They (the neighbours) take better care of the amenities, which ultimately increases (y)our property value…I find that because people are engaged, they actually get to know the space. We treat it like it's a sacred community space. It's well used, it's well loved. People leave it for other people in a state so that we can all enjoy it.
> JB: Maybe for the people who participate. I think the people who don't participate or don't take part wouldn't have that necessarily.
> Gill: But they get the benefit. Even if they don't participate in any of the events that are available. Their property still increases in value to a certain extent because their building becomes high in demand.

Attila, the former property manager, shared the benefit of neighbourliness on the property itself. He highlighted the benefit for individuals and the community of knowing their space and the rules for the building, and how it informs and shapes decision-making that supports the common good:

> Whenever you have two-thirds (of residents)…disconnected, …they will have the tendency to do their own thing…When they are told well, by the way, you shouldn't be doing it that way…we (property management) waste…more resources and time to find a solution to certain problems.
>
> If residents were connected and participated, they would become aware and hear things. So when it comes time to make a decision, they might…check with the management office and with the board (of directors)…so it's not to the detriment of others. So there's a consideration of other people who are now known. It's not just faceless neighbours.

The communal spaces of intergenerational community are taken care of by neighbours and seen as 'sacred' community spaces that are *cared and shared,* showing respecting of shared space may increase overall property value.

Residents, particularly those who are more engaged in the IG community, appear to show more care and respect towards their physical environment: on their floor, in their communal spaces and common areas. They take better care of property and of amenities. Participants described feeling that they know their space and respect their common spaces, where residents get together for celebrations and events becoming their 'favourite spaces'. An additional aspect to the benefit of neighbourliness on property was highlighted by the former property manager, and how it encourages decision-making that supports the common good.

3.4 Social Skills Development.

Research participants considered how the IG community developed social skills and confidence in socializing with others. Younger research participants shared how this builds their

comfort when meeting people and their confidence speaking in public. George shared the following example:

> Before I joined the committee, I couldn't talk to people who I didn't know, like a cashier at a store. I couldn't go up to them and say thank you. I had to walk by because I was too shy. But once I got into the social committee, I joined all these different events, met new people, talked to people who I didn't know, helped people who I didn't know. So that got me really social. Now I can go up to the cashier and say thank you so much for checking (us) out.

George described how he became more social and 'really talkative'. He speculated that meeting new and different neighbours grew his confidence in social settings:

> I became friends with new people of different ages and cultures. I got to learn new things about them at each party…At the party where we were welcomed our new (property) manager, Alice, I got to go up and meet her. I wasn't scared anymore because I had been on the social committee.

The young research participants' confidence and comfort with public speaking expanded from their neighbours in the building to their school and the broader community. George shared his experience of talking about his volunteer role in the IG social committee in his building,

> At school, we talked about the different things that we've done…and take part of. So I did talk about the social committee. Also, when there were auditions for student council, I talked about the social committee and how I helped participate to set up different parties and events, and how I share my feedback.

Gill shared a story of her child's growing sense of confidence with public speaking, and how it moved beyond their building to doing a presentation at her school setting:

> We got a message from our daughter's teacher last year around Hanukkah. Our daughter…stood up there and, despite not being the most world's most confident public speaker, she did a little mini-presentation. We heard about it from her teacher. She didn't tell us when she got home so we asked her about it and we were like, wow, that's great.

In addition to social and public speaking skills in different environments, Gill offered the importance of her child seeing her parents connect with people outside their family circle:

> Gill: It's one thing to socialize on your own as a person in the world. It's another thing entirely to watch your parents or grandparents…socialize and be people who are outside

> of the family unit, and just see them interacting with somebody else…that is very unique. BL: I like your point, the fact that they see their parents in a different way, and they see them interacting as an adult, not as a parent so much, but just within the community. I think that's valuable, but I don't think it happens all that often.

Intergenerational social events and special programs provide opportunities for neighbours to connect and socialize, offering stimulation and engagement while learning and/or maintaining social skills. This was mostly facilitated by older residents, and appreciated by the younger research participants. As participants noted, older residents in this intergenerational community demonstrated to younger people and children how to socialize and encourage them to connect with others at events and programs. They demonstrated social and communication skills to younger generations, especially in large group events including etiquette, manners, polite small talk, how to greet others and introduce oneself. This process appears to offer individual residents greater self-confidence and comfort in various social situations and public speaking, while generating a sense of connectedness and social cohesion in this intergenerational community.

3.5 Diversity and Inclusion.

The research participants in this study noted that there seems to be a connection between intergenerational community where there is inclusion of people of all ages, with the inclusion of ethnicity, religion and other diversities. They discussed the values of inclusion and openness to others in their IG community, as well as norms and expectations of how people behave in a building with age diversity. For example, in the following exchange about noise and chaos, an older adult expressed ambivalence about living in a building with children and their need for calm and quiet on their floors, as well as an acceptance of intergenerational community living.

> Sondra: Sometimes I feel there are less seniors here. I feel sometimes there's too many children. Yeah, (children) run up and down the hall. Some were washing a bicycle across from me out in the hall. I know on another floor a kid was riding his bicycle up and down the floor, and as a senior, that isn't something that I want to necessarily live with…I can hear a family with their children at the elevator screaming every morning as they take the

> kids to school.
> BL: In all due respect to you, it would drive me nuts if someone was riding their bike up and down the hall! You know, maybe if you spoke to them, because to me that has to be addressed immediately because that's not right. To me something like this is an aberration. I've never heard of that.
> Arlene: Yes, that's annoying. You have to be tactful about something like that. And it's community living as well.
> Sondra: But there weren't kids here when we moved in.
> Arlene: Nothings perfect?
> Sondra: No, nothings perfect.

This exchange also illustrated the often challenging adjustment for older adults to the changing demographics and increased age diversity in the building, but has also led to an identified need to plan events that offer suitable programming suitable for children.

> JB: It has become an expected and established (norm), when you are planning events or programs, that there is something, some activity, for kids. It seems that is taken for granted (now).

Residents in the building celebrate holidays and honour each others' cultures together, with people of all ages collaborating to organize, implement and/or participate in these special events,. It has helped to build their IG community, creating an environment of acceptance and challenging ageist and racist stereotypes and prejudices, which is highlighted by the following exchange between three participants:

> BL: "Something that's really special in the building too is we celebrate people's cultures, and it goes for all celebrations and holidays. So we do Diwali, we do Hanukkah, we do Christmas, we do Chinese New Year. I think that's really special and it brings the core of the community together."
> Gill: "Yes, people come out to each other's events to support that, even if they're not going to stay for the event.
> JB: With Lunar New Year and Hanukkah, people who weren't celebrating still came to learn something. And it was both offering and sharing. I think that also builds the connections (between) people.

The willingness to 'offer and share' in JB's words, refers to neighbours of different ethnicities and ages, which may support and nourish intergenerational community. The research participants expressed this in three varying contexts:

Firstly, promoting age diversity at large meetings,

> GP: (When) you see more young people in person (at the Annual General Meeting), you get to see different concerns. You get different perspectives from the younger people than you do from the older people.

Secondly, appreciating and valuing heterogeneity and differences,

> BL: When you think of community, if it is homogenous, it is very safe. But it depends on your outlook…whether you thrive on differences and change, your attitudes, what you value in your community. Anybody that lives anywhere is worth a shot in terms of being friendly.

And thirdly, embracing diversity in daily interactions, including age diversity:

> George: It's good that there are different ages, different people. It makes our building more special because there's kids, there's adults, there's older people, there's babies, there's dogs, there's pets, more pets. I think that makes our building diverse, and it makes our building special.
> I like diversity because it gets people together, to meet people they might never meet. It gets people to talk with each other, engage and discuss problems that may be happening somewhere else in the world.

The participants' value the diversities in their building, including age and ethnicity, noting that this enriches their community. Participating in this IG community offered residents the opportunity to share and learn about different, sometimes contrasting, needs, concerns and perspectives of neighbours of different ages and cultures.

Theme 4: The Roles of Generational Cohorts

Residents of different generations were involved in developing and sustaining this intergenerational community. Each cohort appears to serve different roles to nourish their IG community.

4.1 The Role of Children.

It appeared that young children knew their roles as did the adults and older adults in the intergenerational community, clearly articulating them: to make fun, to have fun, to make the adults happy. They provided a sense of play, playfulness, joy, and excitement:

> Alice: Some of the kids show up and show off at the events. They have fun. They make a lot of the seniors happy.

Children also had an important role to help with event-related tasks: helping to set up furniture for events such as tables and chairs, to put up decorations, to promote the events to children, and to offer feedback that is child-focused.

> George: At some events, some kids and teenagers who aren't on the social committee help out with events. At the Kids Christmas Party, there were two teenagers who helped set up and watch over the kids. I think the young kids just make the party exciting and crazy! Then the older kids, like me and three others, we help with setting up, going around, talking to people, helping them out, and having fun at the party too.
> Arlene: (The kids) come, they set up, they're old enough now. They do the grunt work.
> BL: They love it! They love it because they can see how much of a help they are. They set up the tables, they arrange the napkins, they bring out the supplies, they fill the bowls with chips and they stock the pop. But see this is the thing—you have to give them something to do—especially children.

Children gave feedback about whether an event went well for resident children and how to involve them, and answer adults' questions about events for children. George shared that he helped at parties, barbecues and different events, and also shared his input and feedback. When asked about the type of feedback that is important to share from the perspective of being a younger person in the building, George commented,

> They usually ask me questions about events for kids, like Christmas parties and different things that children can get involved in, or about how (an event) went, like if it went well or not. Because they just need a little help understanding, I think.

There is clarity about the children's roles and the importance of their presence and contribution to IG events and special activities. The adults, especially older adults, showed how they value and respect the energy, support and volunteer engagement of younger people in their community.

4.2 The Role of Older People.

Older residents served as knowledge historians of the building itself and the local neighbourhood. They have knowledge of the history of the building, of the place, of the people who live there, the staff who work there, the history of gatherings and events, and of the organizational history of property management, board of directors and committees:

> Gill: I think they are the legacy historians, legacy historians of legendary legacy events. They are role models.

The older adult research participants described their roles as Inviters, Welcomers and Greeters to the intergenerational space, place and community. Inviting and welcoming new neighbours was considered an informal process of becoming a part of the community where established residents invited new residents to join, engage and get connected.

BL spoke about the act of inviting people, focusing on being inclusive and friendly:

> Anybody that lives here is worth a chance in terms of being friendly. There (are) only two ways to react. They can either act or they don't have to. And that is perfectly fine.

According to participants in this study, older people have knowledge of the 'how to' create, cultivate, develop and maintain a sense of community with people of all ages. They are seen as having 'know-how' co-create respectful space and place:

> Gill: I learn different skills from older people running different committees and attending (events) that you can't always learn on a job or in school.

Older people can provide facilitation and leadership skills in committees and large community events. They coordinate, organize, delegate, implement, and evaluate events with volunteer-neighbours of all ages.

> George: Older adults plan ahead, encourage everyone to take their own notes at meetings, everyone is clear about what they are doing at an event and they evaluate together.

During the research process, the older adults demonstrated how to have a group discussion and how to problem solve with humour, respect, and laughter. This behaviour was

present during the focus group when older participants joked with each other and considered every comment with respect. During both research group meetings, older participants provided space for younger people to share their perspectives and experiences, showing everyone present how to validate others. This was especially evident when as the researcher I did not explicitly ask the younger research participants to respond to questions.

The older research participants also taught building residents how to be good neighbours. They modelled and demonstrated norms and expectations of respectful and caring behaviour in community living and with fellow neighbours. For example, what one should do when there is an issue that needs to be resolved or the importance of checking up on others, demonstrating how to care for/about neighbours.

While younger focus group participants were able to describe the roles of older persons in intergenerational community, and older persons outlined what they do in intergenerational community, the older adult research participants did not see themselves as facilitators or leaders of their intergenerational community nor did they claim these roles as older adults in intergenerational community.

Rather, they perceived themselves as volunteers in their community who have the freedom and choice to stop when they need or want to. Their responses centred around their volunteer role(s) and not on their role(s) as older persons in their community. The following exchange between research participants illustrates the emphasis on their volunteer role and confusion about the meaning of having possible role(s) as older adults in their community:

> Ruth: So, I noticed that others know the roles of older people in intergenerational community, and older people can describe what they do in their roles in intergenerational community, but older people do not claim their roles as leaders of their intergenerational community. So I wanted to ask about that.

> Sondra: I guess I'm considered one of the older ones here. I've done volunteer work all my life. I'm tired of volunteering and I don't need to. When you volunteer, you do it because you want to do it.
> Jane: I'm not sure I understand what you mean by claiming (our role)?
> Gill: Are you basically saying that although they are the knowledge historians, legacy historians, they're the inviters, the people with how to knowledge, the teachers, the leaders, they don't actually take credit for that leadership-teacher know-how, they don't want to say 'we're the drivers of this'…
> BL.: See it's all wrong. Nobody's getting paid to do it, including the board. So to me, this idea of not taking ownership for the leadership, as an older person, I don't see it that way at all. If you do it, it's volunteer, so you don't have to. The fact is that in any committee there are different people who take the lead depending on what the event is. Someone might set up and organize the meeting, but within the group there are people who step up. This idea that I need to take ownership or not? I don't understand that.

The older adults provided mentoring and facilitation roles in the IG social committee and at their community events, which offer a sense of community, social connectedness and belonging for many of their neighbours and residents of all ages. However there seemed to be confusion, misunderstanding, and perhaps disagreement, at the notion they would hold leadership roles in their community.

4.3 The Roles of Middle-Aged Persons.

Middle-aged persons in intergenerational community appear to have the roles of Connector, in that they 'bridge' between the generations. They create access pathways between younger and older generations. Participants in my research noted that as parents, middle-aged people in intergenerational community decide whether they want their child to interact with and engage with different age groups, and how they may interact. There is a sense of giving permission or approval to younger people about the quality and quantity of contact with their neighbours:

> Gill: It's important for youngsters to see other grown-ups of different stripes pitching in, because you want them to have that example.

Middle-aged people also have the role of learners of knowledge from older adults. Gill shared her personal learning:

> I learn…experiential learning pieces—how to have an effective meeting, how to get consensus when there's disagreement, how to refocus a meeting when there are too many voices, or watching moments of conflict and challenge—those are what I'm watching and learning.

Middle-aged residents may learn conflict resolution in their building setting and/or between neighbours, how to lead an effective committee meeting with neighbours which can require holding competing perspectives with people who live in close proximity. However, there was no mention of middle-aged persons as individuals or of single status in the community, who were not a parent or without children.

4.4 The Roles of Teenagers and Young Adults.

There was some mention of the role of teenagers in social events: to supervise and watch over the younger kids at large events, to engage the younger kids, to help with setting and cleaning up at events, and to talk to people who attend events. However, their role in the larger community was not mentioned by the research participants. BL shared an initiative that they considered for teenagers:

> BL: Something that we have been trying to push…is to see if we can match them with something they love to do…getting teenagers more engaged and eventually getting them to lead the event because they really don't want a bunch of old farts hanging around… Something like games, something relatively low key.

Gill recounted a personal story about connecting with a neighbour's teenage son to engage him in community events and volunteering. She asked him to help with various tasks at the Kids' Christmas Party which appealed to him:

> Gill: He was the musical chair remover and…he helped to check people in at the registration desk and introduced himself. Then I had him also help out as one of my volunteers, so he gained volunteer hours that are required for his (high school credit

> hours). I had him help create decorations…he was great, and he came back every time and he said, OK, what else do you need help with?
>
> That's the same thing at our social committee events here. Teenagers don't necessarily want to just attend with (as) guests. They get to that age and they want to help, but they need guidance.

The role of young adults and teenagers in this intergenerational community was unclear for the research participants. However, they provided examples of successfully engaging young people to help with social events and how younger people wanted to learn how they can be of assistance as volunteers and with their neighbours, potentially signalling their interest in volunteer and community engagement.

Theme 5: Who Is Missing?

In examining who was missing from engaging and participating in the intergenerational community, three distinct groups of people surfaced: young adults in their 20's and 30's, isolated older adults, and young parents.

The research participants shared that witnessing other residents participate and engage in events was compelling, yet noted with some concern the lack of community engagement with some residents. Although there were opportunities to become acquainted with fellow neighbours, some residents choose not to engage socially in their community and stayed to themselves.

5.1 Young Adults: 20–30-Year-Olds.

During the focus group, there was no mention of young adults, residents in their 20s and 30s, who live at Rodeo Walk. In the follow-up feedback session, when examining possible reasons for which they might not attend or participate, three participants stated that they did not know where the 20-year-olds are and suggested what might invite their engagement.

> BL: They're a special breed…My idea would be to have a little subcommittee which they eventually run. So that if they want the party and they want to have a night set aside for just them, why not? They can just kind of explore…whatever they want to do as a group.

> JB: Yeah, I think they have different interests…and they do parties and they do discos and they do dinner parties. They don't do a mid-afternoon BBQ. They're drawn to other kinds of events.
> Gill: I don't know where they are, but I think their focus is definitely more inward than outward at that age. But that doesn't mean we can't try to encourage them to come out. But I think also we try to advertise that we're here.

Several research participants discussed where the young adults in their building might be, and engaged in a long discussion with strategies to bring them together and form their own community:

> Sondra: I think the only way to get them out is if you knew a couple of (20-year olds) and had them organize something…we can't organize for them. They would have to do it themselves.
> BL: That's the whole key.
> Sondra: They also have their friends from school and they're the ones that they make their arrangements to go out at night and do things. And they're interested in those people, probably not so much people in the building.
> Gill: That's true. The outside world away from home is more interesting than here.
> BL: And this…would be a hugely safe environment…you just have to come down a few floors. I mean, wouldn't it be wonderful if you could give it over to a group of teens that designed and worked out their own programs?

The research participants reflected with thoughtful possibilities the reasons that young adults are not socially engaged or participating in the community, taking into consideration their stage of development and social needs. As they discussed the issue, they came up with several potential ideas and strategies to address this issue in collaboration with the young adult residents.

5.2 Socially Isolated Older Persons and Adults.

Isolated adults and older adults were mentioned during the focus group as an area of concern. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted who was isolated to the building residents and the property management company. While they organized to address it during the pandemic, isolated individuals continue to be missing in the community and a challenge to identify among neighbours in the building.

One of the research participants, Sondra, shared her personal sense of isolation when her husband was ill and had accessibility issues in the building. She spoke intently about the experience of not being able to participate, and of becoming isolated:

> Sondra: When my husband was sick, there were a lot of events that we didn't come out to and a lot of events that I didn't tune onto because it was just too hard for me to get him out. There is a gap looking after people (who are isolated). For example, if I wasn't part of this group, nobody would have known what I went through (as a caregiver to my husband).
> Gill: I think part of it has to do with making sure that people who are isolated and their caregivers, to connect them better. But how do we do that?
> JB: During the (Covid19) pandemic, we did have a roster of (residents and neighbours) who were offering to shop and do errands for people who were ill.

The research participants identified that social isolation among older adults was an ongoing issue in the building and that it was a multi-factorial problem. This is made more challenging for residents to resolve due to confidentiality and privacy concerns, and that property management is involved when there is grave concern.

5.3 Young Parents.

Although not as widely discussed, one community research participant noted the challenge for young parents, particularly young mothers, to socialize in the building and engage in community events, and at risk of being socially isolated.

> Gill: Young mothers and new parents in general. It's hard for them to come out to events. There's a new couple that just showed up for the last BBQ that are about to have a baby. They've lived here for a number of years. Never seen them before in my life.

Research participants were aware of young parents and new parents who were not able to attend social events or participate in the community. Although there are opportunities to connect socially, there does not appear to be a support network between neighbour-residents, property management and the board of directors to address social isolation and social health needs.

Discussion

This research study explored intergenerational community in a high-rise building in Toronto, Ontario. My study was designed to understand how intergenerational community with neighbours begins, how it is sustained and nourished, the roles of older residents, middle-aged and young adults, and children in this IG community, and the benefits of IG community for its residents.

My analysis of study data generated five main themes: foundational structures; growing and cultivating IG community, benefits and outcomes of IG community, the roles of generational cohorts, and residents of the building who are missing from IG community.

What I learned from this study is that in this multi-unit housing site where IG community was not intentional but rather an organic process, structural supports facilitate intergenerational community. In this case property management, board of directors, and a social committee provided a foundation of collaborative governance such that IG community can grow and sustain itself. My study shows that there are psychosocial benefits of IG community for individuals as well as socio-environmental benefits for the community, such as respect and care for common areas and a greater acceptance of all kinds of diversities, which appear to promote social connectedness and a sense of belonging. The skilled and inclusive facilitation by older residents of the IG social committees and IG gatherings offered meaningful ways in which to contribute and encouraged social, community and volunteer engagement. As I discuss further below, these social processes have potential to confront both self-directed and other-directed negative ageist stereotypes. Finally the residents, especially older residents, were aware of and concerned about neighbours who do not attend or participate in IG community, specifically noting young adults in their 20s and 30s as well as older adults who may be social isolated and/or lonely.

In considering how my study contributes to the literature, I will focus on the structural support and collaboration that were foundational for IG community to begin and sustain itself in this high-rise complex, the benefits of IG initiatives for individual residents and the community, and the skilled and inclusive facilitation of older residents which may confront ageism and loneliness.

Foundational Components of Intergenerational Community

My study expands on the literature to draw attention to the contributions that can be made to IG community by property management operating independently (that is, outside of the context of a community program), and to highlight the role of boards of directors in promoting IG initiatives in multi-unit housing.

In the Community Connectors initiative reported by HNC, a Property Management company deployed staff to support residents as Community Connectors to coordinate social activities. In my study, the property manager did not take a role (or assign staff) to coordinate activities. Rather, he and members of the board of directors supported neighbours to connect and create a sense of community with one another, encouraging the development of various committees, including a social committee that began to organize and offer special events, celebrations and program initiatives. This social committee was the vehicle through which intergenerational contact began in the high-rise and it itself evolved to become an intergenerational committee. The three distinct yet interconnected foundational components—property management, board of directors and social committee—what I conceive of as structures, were involved in the development of IG community at my study site. Notably, this process was informal; it happened organically rather than through intentionality. It also involved the residents themselves taking leadership, rather than paid staff, which helped to sustain their IG community.

My study is aligned with two academic articles (Kang, 2015; Zhong et al. 2022) which identify the need for structural supports in IG multi-unit housing, with Kang (2015) arguing against a top-down model of service delivery, instead recommending a community-based, grassroots model which develops social cohesions from the ground-up. This is in contrast to Nemoto et al. (2023) wherein a 3-year community intervention did not help build relationships among community residents, IG contact in my study was sustained and grew into community-level mutual help and social support. Recommendations of Nemoto et al. (2023) focused on neighbours having regular contact, communicating their needs and offering help, yet did not address the foundational structures or process to ensure sustainability.

Much of the existing literature focuses on organizations or property management creating the opportunities rather than the residents. Zhong and colleagues (2022), suggest that a partnership model with collaboration between agencies serving older adults can create opportunities for social interactions between the generations in their residences and neighbourhoods, however there was no reference of property management or residential structures. In addition, as mentioned above the Community Connectors program highlights how a property management company, participating in the initiative with multiple government and community stakeholders, contributed to IG community in multi-unit housing in Vancouver. Although stakeholders, such as community organizations, municipal governments and property management corporations, can offer initial support and resources, my study would suggest that the sustainability of IG community requires the engagement of age-diverse residents to facilitate and coordinate intergenerational practice where they live. Having an established structural foundation made it viable for the residents in this study to volunteer or participate in community events such that intergenerational contact could occur. Collaboration between the board of

directors and property management about community development helped to cultivate a social environment, like a vertical village, and support intergenerational initiatives within this vertical village.

In this study the residents, both in the board of directors and in the social committee, had an important, perhaps integral component to the foundational structure of IG community in multi-unit housing, and I would argue that they hold and share power as an intergenerational collective of neighbours. As Brennan and Israel (2013) point out, power has a role in social change, as depicted in political economy theory, and a community that has a sense of its own agency is central to the process. In this study, where the age-diverse residents are empowered, community agency has facilitated the development of an intergenerational collective capacity. This has helped to form sustainable IG community, and a sense of community for all ages.

Benefits and Outcomes of Intergenerational Community

My study aligns with much of the literature on the benefits of intergenerational connection, with the caveat that there is a lack of research on empirical data of intergenerational contact in a community with people of all ages, and this study adds to it by situating the benefits of IG community in a high-rise building, or vertical village.

Similarly to research by Varjakovski in Finland (2023) who found that adult participants appreciated how children brought joy and vitality to their mixed-age residence, while older adults created a safe and supportive environment, my study corroborates this funding. The research participants expressed appreciation of young residents who brought a sense of liveliness, energy, play and fun, and the younger research participants valued the welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment that the older residents provided in the community

This also highlights the different talents, strengths and skills that members of each generational cohort provide to IG community.

Studies conducted by other researchers have identified links between intergenerational community and social issues, such as ageism and social isolation. For example, Kahlbaugh and Budnick (2023) found that through in-person intergenerational contact, both older and younger participants shared their skills and values, becoming "more accepting of each person's time of life." The researchers showed that this short-term, 7-week IG experience began to confront ageist beliefs. My research corroborates this finding wherein the participants expressed benefits for both younger and older individuals, and not only accepted but also supported each other's time of life.

Two scholars (Lim et al. 2021, Seifert, 2020) highlight the impactful role of having close connections with neighbours; Lim et al. (2021) demonstrating that knowing at least six neighbours may reduce loneliness through meaningful connection, while Seifert's 2020 study found that regular contact with neighbours facilitated a sense of belonging and reduced loneliness. This aligns with my study where IG community engagement cultivated a sense of community and caring in the building, with greater social connectedness between neighbours.

In terms of social isolation, Zhong et al. (2020) noted there were social benefits for older adults who participated in structured organized IG programs, and Zhong et al. (2022) argue that IG communities create social environments which promote relationships, social health and well-being for individuals across the life span thus addressing social isolation beyond age-friendly communities. My study confirms this, with participants identifying the importance of neighbourliness, as one individual stated, 'the art and science of being neighbourly'. Young participants (and their parent) noted their improved social skills, confidence with public speaking

and increased comfort talking with new people and in groups. The research participants discussed how to identify and support younger and older residents who do not engage or participate in events, and may be at risk of social isolation, due to lack of accessibility to shared spaces or structural barriers.

My study identified similar benefits to the Housing Operator-led Approaches to Multi-unit Housing and Community Connector initiative, wherein social programming was found to be positive for the overall building environment, and the property managers noticed increased safety and sense of belonging, improved care of common spaces and property. However, both initiatives noted improved relations between staff and residents with less conflict which was not made explicit in my study.

There was one interesting observation of IG community in my study; along with age diversity among residents there was inclusion of ethnicity, religion and other diversities. My study offered insight into an additional benefit of IG community, one that I did not see described in the literature: along with the valuing of age diversity among residents, participants reported on the value assigned to diversity of ethnicity, culture and religion. The literature did refer to age-friendly communities (Krug et al. 2021; Phillipson & Grenier, 2021), aging-in-the-right-place (Bookmyer, 2024; Narushima & Kawabata; 2020; Phlix et al. 2024), and age-diversity in the workplace (Bell & Narz, 2007; Riach, 2009; Wang & Fang, 2020).

This finding surfaced the possibility of age diversity as a gateway to other forms of inclusion and diversity, acting as a potential facilitator role to other diversities. In considering possible theories, it may be that IG community has members who have a higher degree of tolerance of and towards the other(s), and choose to live in a residential environment that is open to inclusion and diversity including age, or that people diverse along other dimensions have a

greater capacity to engage with age diversity. This is an area where more research is needed to explore this connection between valuing age diversity and other diversities.

In terms of connections to theories of community, the benefits and outcomes that came forward in my study appear to be aligned with Durkheim's structural functionalism, as they are indicative of the norms and values—respect, inclusion, diversity, collaboration, caring and fun—which cultivated sustained community engagement and provided a sense of community in this high-rise building. There are behaviours which are unacceptable in this IG community, such as bike riding on the floors, and behaviours that are expected, such as welcoming and inviting other/new neighbours, hosting celebrations that honour the diversity of residents, including activities for children at events and promoting intergenerationality in committees. When there is IG conflict between residents, there are structures which support their resolution including property management and the board of directors. These norms, values and behaviours connect the generations as a collective consciousness and promote a sense or harmony**.**

Facilitation and Leadership of Intergenerational Community

My study contributes to the literature on leadership of intergenerational community, particularly with informal, organic IG community development in multi-unit housing. None of the academic (Kang, 2015; Mo et al. 2023; Nemoto et al. 2023; Zhong et al. 2020; Zhong et al. 2022) or grey literature (Avery et al. 2023; Ching and Craig, 2023; HNC, 2022; HNC, 2023) drew specific attention to the facilitation or leadership of informal intergenerational community. Rather they focused on structured programs and interventions, such as Community Connectors (HNC, 2022), organized and led by agencies and organizations, levels of governments, housing operators and residents living in IG communities and neighbourhoods. In contrast my research

demonstrates intergenerational community that was organized, led and facilitated by its residents, primarily its older residents.

The older residents in my study formed a social committee, gradually included age-diverse members, and through collaboration they facilitated special events and social activities for their community. These provided opportunities to experience enjoyment, fun and play with people of different ages, with the potential of confronting negative ageist stereotypes while offering a sense of purpose for older adults. This study extends the literature on intergenerational community to consider older adults as facilitators and leaders of unintentional IG community in multi-unit housing.

In alignment with Kang (2015), this research demonstrated that experiential learning and critical analysis support the process of IG knowledge creation, a growing sense of efficacy through collaborative teamwork generates a sense of social connectedness, with a co-learner approach to IG facilitation. While Kang (2015) suggested the need for collaborative intergenerational approach between youth and adults in decision-making processes, this (decision-making) was not made explicit in my research. However opportunities to provide feedback and offer suggestions from age-diverse members did factor in decision-making by the older adult facilitators.

My study supports the perspective of Brennan and Israel (2013) who believe that there is a role for community agency such that its residents are empowered and there is a growing sense of collective capacity in the community. Drawing on social theories that help us understand community dynamics, the authors (2013) consider the work of Marx regarding who holds power, and it would seem that in this study, it is the older residents in the IG social committee who hold power, but also share it with age-diverse members. Hand et al. (2020, p. 565) argue that “older

adults are often positioned as impacted by neighbourhood features; their impact on neighbourhoods is less often considered." Buffel and Phillipson (2024, p. 113) further confirm that most research in urban ageing takes the perspective of how environments support or discourage participation and wellbeing of older adults rather than focusing on "the ways in which older people shape, influence, and transform" their local community. My study shows that older adults can shape, influence and transform their high-rise community for the social good and promote social connectedness.

Buffel and Phillipson (2024. p. 114) discuss a variety of ways in which older people demonstrate "agency", which they define as responding to changes in their environment by being proactive and engaging in their local communities such that it meets their needs. These acts of agency contribute to what Hand et al. (2020, p. 571) refer to as both "a personal sense of belonging in the neighbourhood and a collective sense of connectedness". This was reflected in my study in how older residents organized events, checked in with neighbours, invited residents to attend or join committees and cultivated a sense of community in their residence. The older adults at Rodeo Walk can be seen demonstrating agency and driving social change when promoting intergenerational events with values of inclusion and diversity and encouraging age-diverse members in their committees.

Yet, when I shared my researcher observations with the participants, that the older adults in the social committee seemed to hold roles as community leaders, they did not see it. Rather their perception was of being volunteers in their community; they did not understand what I meant about claiming their leadership roles as older persons with the younger people in their social committee or in the building. They expressed their concern with the apparent sense of responsibility implied by the term 'community leader', yet from my vantage point, they already

enact these responsibilities in their IG social committee and at community events and activities. This leads to me querying whether there is self-directed or internalized ageism, or a lack of awareness and intention about their role as older persons in their IG community.

This would align with a report on community leadership by older people by Rawsthorne et al. (2012). In their report, they note that when exploring the roles of older adults the participants did not self-identify as leaders but rather 'a sense of collective leadership' in which they developed internal and external networks in their community which were inclusive of age, gender, race and class (Rawsthorne et al. 2012, p. 33).

Researchers note that although older adults are encouraged and want to contribute to their families, communities, and society, there is often a lack of opportunities for older people to contribute (Gidron, 1980; Kaplan et al. 2019), and that intergenerational programs help realize the potential for older adults to volunteer and contribute to the social good (Kaplan et al. 2019). Although older people may retire from paid employment and step out of their economic role, Schultz (1991a) stated that this does not mean they are giving up their roles in the other systems in the community, but rather it can allow older adults to be more productive in other roles. The older adults in my study demonstrated the importance of sharing their knowledge, wisdom and skills, and offering their lived experience for the social good of their community

Leadership theorists have concluded that perhaps it is not sufficient to consider the leader or the situation in isolation, they are interconnected (Bennis, 1990; Jago, 1982; Koestenbaum, 1991; Stogdill, 1974). This viewpoint seems essential when discussing community leadership and the context of leadership of and with a community. Vandenberg et al. (1988) defined community leadership as leadership specifically exercised as part of the community development process.

Older persons can offer community leadership that includes a sense of care as Rawsthorne (2012, p. 34) notes, “care for neighbours, care for community facilities, and care for the essence of community” wherein this manner of leadership is manifested in taking action every day. For example, Hey Neighbour Collective has created roles for residents who want to build community in their multi-unit housing, many of whom are older adults; these residents may be called resident animators, community connectors, or ambassadors (HNC, 2023). Older persons who are informal community leaders play an important role in bridging across difference and a commitment towards inclusion and diversity (Rawsthorne, 2012). This corroborates the role of the older participants who facilitated the social committee and events, and emphasized the importance of appreciating and honouring the diversity of their neighbours including age diversity.

As noted in the literature, Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018) point out that that ageism tends to present itself as other-directed ageism, in the way one (age) group treats another, and remind us that internalized ageism as exists, and yet, according to Levy (2001), ageism is often directed at oneself with little awareness but having impacts on social interactions and viewpoints. My research raises the question whether there was ambivalence on the part of the older adults in the study claim their power as leaders, acting according to expected societal norms and behaviour whereby self-directed ageism becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Empowering people as they age helps to counter societal ageism where growing older is experienced as a disempowering process; societal responses to aging can lead to invisibility and a lack of power for previously independent adults (Cusack & Thompson, 1999). Myers (1993) proposed that the challenge for societies is to develop roles for older persons in which they can achieve a sense of meaning and purpose, which are respected by others, and which offer an

effective barrier against the current vulnerability that exists for many older people. Thompson (1999, p. 20) proffer that "no one sees (older adults) as people, but as old people. In other words, the mask of old age renders the real person invisible." Despite the belief that retired people want and need to make a meaningful contribution to society, there is a lack of older people willing to claim the responsibility of leadership.

The skills, wisdom and knowledge of older persons can, and should, be applied to address a wide variety of social issues. Older people provide hope and support for social connectedness, with intergenerational community and programs as the vehicle (Freedman, 1997). Engaging older people as community connectors and leaders may be a practical solution, and social policy can play an important part in developing and realizing these roles (Freedman, 1997). As Hatton-Yeo (2006, p. 9) suggests, "intergenerational practice in communities should be seen as a strategy in which to challenge ageism, valuing the role and importance of all individuals, younger and older, in order to promote active citizenship and healthier, better connected neighbourhoods".

My study also deviated from all five academic articles (Kang, 2015; Mo et al. 2023; Nemoto et al. 2023; Zhong et al. 2020; Zhong et al. 2022) which had the term 'intergenerational' in their title, yet none had participants of all the generations in their study. When the concept 'intergenerational community' was brought up while recruiting for my study, research participants shared that they did not realize that they were cultivating intergenerational community; they had not heard of the term and found it intriguing. The focus groups I conducted offered them a meaningful opportunity to reflect, discuss, share and examine their experiences and what they value about IG community. This suggests the value of providing ongoing opportunities and forums to talk about the meaning of IG community with neighbours and

residents, as well as the broader public.

Exploring shared meaning of IG community suggests a symbolic interactionist perspective on community. The members of this high-rise share this commonality which defines their community, considered a boundary by Cohen (1985), yet it was unintentional and informal. Their intergenerational community became activated with the recognition, by older adults, of age-diverse individual needs for social interaction. The identity of this community as one of an intergenerational community came from outsiders, non-members who were academics and researchers, and offered this term to the community members, the residents. Going forward, they are seeking to understand the meaning and significance of IG community with each other and for themselves.

Methodological and Researcher Reflection of Intergenerational Community

One of the surprising outcomes of this research project was its impact on me, the researcher, as a resident in multi-unit housing in downtown Toronto. Listening to the research participants share their intergenerational initiatives inspired me to explore IG community development with my neighbours. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Rodeo Walk provided opportunities for young people to volunteer in their social committee and become a committee member. It motivated me to connect with my board of directors who agreed to formally create a social committee and a 3Rs (environmental) committee in our townhouse community. This led to a call-out request to neighbours of all ages to volunteer for these two new committees. There was a resounding response; eight individuals volunteered including a young couple and their son who joined the social committee. We had adult volunteers from 20 through to 70 years of age, spanning four continents and speaking five languages.

We collaborated to host a summer social in August 2024 with both committees promoting and participating in the event and had a 150% increase in resident attendance from previous years. Moreover, residents expressed appreciation and gratitude for the effort that went into it, the morale in the community improved with people shared ideas for future events. With their qualities of openness and inclusion, the Rodeo Walk residents and property management inspired me to collaborate and cultivate an intergenerational community in my residence.

As someone leaving midlife and entering the space of 'emerging old', I have wondered what it means to be and become an older person. Apart from the organic process of aging and growing older, what does it mean in relation to others? Do my roles change and if so, how? What new roles or ways of being are expected of me in western society, specifically in Canada? Doyle and Timonen (2010) discuss the views of academic researchers and older adults involved as co-researchers in participatory process using Israel et al.'s (1998) principles of participatory research. The authors note that one of the principles of CBR is "to promote a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities" (Doyle and Timonen, 2010, p. 246). Furthermore, they suggest that one of the aims of CBR is to empower participants by enabling them to identify issues of relevance, for themselves and their community, and possible solutions to these problems (Doyle and Timonen, 2010, p. 246)

Interestingly, empowerment is also an aim of critical gerontology. Bengtson et al. (1997) note that critical gerontology has two distinct foci: one focus is on the humanistic dimensions of aging and the second focus is on the structural components of aging. Both foci "confront us with the *disempowerment* of the old"; through structural constraints that impact aging and the loss of place and purpose for older persons in society (Minkler, 1996, p. 471).

Dewar (2005) proposes that the motivation for older persons 'involvement in

participatory research is focused on giving rather than receiving. One of the recommendations put forth by James and Buffel (2023) is to support co-researchers through support, mentoring, and learning, where co-researchers can reflect and share with other co-researchers and the academic researchers. This support can build trust, openness, mutual support and create a culture of co-learning between team members (James and Buffel, 2023). The authors refer to Ward and Gahagan's 'ethics of care 'framework which develops "ethical and mutually supportive relationships within the research team as well as with older persons who participate in the study" (James and Buffel, 2023, p. 2951) The ethics of care framework is based on values of attentiveness, responsibility, competence, responsiveness and trust, and "the practical support necessary to enable co-learning and co-research" (Ward and Barnes, 2016 as cited by James and Buffel, 2023, p. 2951).

This speaks to the alignment of CBPAR with the focus and process of this study, learning and creating intergenerational community and community leadership. It provided me with the opportunity to have insights into my own community, as a neighbour, resident and emerging community leader, developing myself as a community leader (volunteer), cultivating social connectedness and doing it from the perspective of an aging woman. Furthermore, it speaks to principles of CBPAR including the meaningful outcome of social action and social change. As someone who is curious about the role of elders and elderhood in Canadian society, and my changing roles as I age and grow older, I was appreciative of how the research participants shared their insights and experiences, empowering me as a fellow citizen in their municipality, to collaborate with my neighbours and create IG initiatives that are inclusive and promote neighbourliness.

Directions for Future Research

There are five main areas for future research which surfaced from this research study. They are (1) theoretical perspectives, (2) methodology and methods, (3) older adult leadership in IG community, (4) the relationship between age diversity and inclusion with other diversities, and (5) examining IG community in other multi-unit housing models.

Theoretical Perspectives

Interesting research might be oriented with ecological systems theory, which has some connections with post-humanism. Early on in my thesis, I explored Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework for intergenerational community, and going forward I can see value in drawing from ecological theory to consider how actions that older people take (the actions that I understand as leadership) may be products of their environments, relations, material forces, etc. rather than certain human-centred innate qualities or intentions (Andrews, 2020).

Posthumanist theory, which as Andrews and Duff (2019) suggest, de-centres and de-privileges 'the human', with a horizontal and co-equal rather than hierarchical, top-down relationship between human and nonhuman. Humans are seen as one aspect of a complexity of nature, with more recent developments in ecological theory including deep ecology (e.g., Besthorn, 2012). Deep ecology was first used by Norwegian philosopher Naess as an approach to human–nature relationships with the central tenet being that the world is not divided into subjects and objects, nor is there any absolute separation between the human and non-human realm (Besthorn, 2012). Similar to posthumanism, deep ecology stresses mutual dependency of all elements in a system or ecosystem.

An exploration of older adult 'leadership 'in IG community could be usefully enhanced with attention to these forms of mutual dependency. Andrews and Duff (2019, p. 53) suggest

that posthumanism offers meaning in older age with a holistic perspective towards aging, focusing on what older people 'do with' the world and not 'what is in' older people or what is 'out there' for them. This approach shifts from the biological towards the sense of agency of older persons and the interdependent connections, processes, and roles that materials, humans, relations, and meanings play as actors in these processes (Andrews and Duff, 2019).

Andrews (2019, p. 5) notes posthumanists consider a shift from identity politics towards one of "affinity" and "knowledge", where boundaries and divisions created by identity labels, such as older adult leaders, can instead be seen with a shared sense of purpose, promoting greater unity and connection between individuals and within groups. I could see that with posthumanism, the hierarchical leadership model would be flattened. A study oriented by post-humanism could allow me to build on my current study and explore how we might see humans of all ages share the responsibility for sustainable IG community.

Methodology and Methods

The site of Rodeo Walk was identified as an intergenerational community by me, an academic and researcher, and was a new term for its residents and the research participants. They were curious to understand the meaning and significance of IG community, both with each other and for themselves. As I noted in my section on conceptualizing community, symbolic interactionist perspectives focus on the meaning of community from the standpoint of community members and explore how members define situations. Future research might take up a symbolic interactionist lens to explore the meaning and perceptions of intergenerational community from the perspective of its members and residents living in intergenerational housing. In addition, although IG practice is a strategy found to address ageism (Mikton et al. 2021), my study did not explicitly explore how IG community may have influenced ageism in

the Rodeo Walk setting. Symbolic interactionism could also guide an exploration of ageism in the subjective understandings of Rodeo Walk residents, and consider the connections they make between IG community and ageism.

Arts-based research, specifically visual methods, may be useful with this community in a study oriented by symbolic interactionism. Photovoice enables participants to record (their perspective of) strengths and concerns in their community, can promote dialogue and discussion about the various interactions and experiences that are defined as ageism, and those that carry meanings of age-integration in their living place and space. Residents could be invited, for example, to take pictures of aspects of their physical and social environments that they experience as supporting or impeding participation and belonging. A photo exhibit of the images can mobilize subjective knowledge about ageism and age-integration within immediate and broader community, with ongoing meaning making from the photovoice process with the inclusion of the attendees (Latz and Mulvihill, 2017).

Older Adult Community Leadership and Facilitation

Schultz and Galbraith (1993) note that little integration has occurred in the literature between leadership and older adults. There was very little literature about older adults in leadership roles, with the exception of studies conducted by Chetkow-Yanoov (1983, 1990), Reynolds (1985), Payne and Bull (1982, 1985), Fu (1980), and Schultz (1991a). Schultz and Galbraith (1993) conducted an exploratory study of community leadership education for older adults and noted that the literature on older volunteers is voluminous however there are no findings easily generalizable to the concept of community leadership, and the link between volunteering and older adults 'leadership has not been established (Chetkow-Yanoov, 1983). While each study focused on different aspects of retired individuals, one consistent finding

emerged from the studies: Older individuals have the ability and skills to engage in various community leadership roles (Schultz and Galbraith, 1993).

Relationship between Age Diversity and Other Diversities

This research on IG community revealed a possible connection or relationship between age diversity as a gateway to other forms of inclusion and diversity. Further research is needed to explore this connection between acceptance of age diversity and other diversities and examine potential theories to better understand this phenomenon.

Sustained Intergenerational Community in Other High-Rise Housing Models

This research revealed a knowledge gap of IG community development in high-rise buildings. While this study explored IG community in a condominium high-rise building, future research can expand to other models of including market rental, cooperative, and community/supportive housing, to determine how sustainable IG community with neighbours of all ages, children through to older adults, is established and nourished.

Buffel and Phillipson (2024) note that there is abundant information and research on age-friendly cities which build upon the World Health Organization's approach, and the founding of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. However there is a dearth about the "community" dimension of developing age-friendly activities (Wiles et al. 2012; Le Fave, Szanton, and Gitlin, 2021) which are inclusive, age-diverse, and accessible. This research can help build on this body of knowledge.

Mo et al. (2023, p. 4) note the limited studies on the perceptions of the concepts 'intergenerational', 'intergenerational programs', and 'intergenerational housing', with existing research reporting generally positive benefits with most people being in favour of the concepts (p. 4). Interestingly, the authors argue that "there is currently no research, to our knowledge,

exploring the topic" of older persons 'perceptions of intergenerational housing (Mo et al. 2023, p. 5). The older research participants in my study were not aware of the terms 'intergenerational' or 'intergenerational community,' in their condo high-rise building and were eager to participate so as to contribute to the body of research literature. There is an opportunity to involve and engage older adults across housing models to explore their experience of intergenerational housing and IG community. The older research participants in my study were not aware of the terms 'intergenerational' or 'intergenerational community' as potential descriptors of their relationships in their condo high-rise building and were eager to participate so as to contribute to the body of research literature. There is an opportunity to involve and engage older adults across housing models to explore their experience of intergenerational housing and IG community.

Limitations

An important limitation of this research study was the lack of teenagers, and 20- and 30-year old participants. This age demographic was difficult to recruit, which is reflected in the research sample of participants as well as in this IG community. The research participants, especially older residents, were aware of and concerned about neighbours who do not attend or participate in IG community, specifically noting young adults in their 20s and 30s who may be social isolated and/or lonely.

Conclusion

Intergenerational contact is a strategy found to address ageism and age-segregation in geographic places (Krug et al. 2023; Mikton et al. 2021). Adding to the scholarly literature which is primarily focused on structured intergenerational (IG) programs in neighbourhoods, this study explored how intergenerational contact is seeded, nourished and sustained in informal and

organic ways in the urban context of a high-rise condominium building with neighbours of all ages.

Thematic data analysis generated five key themes: foundational structures; growing and cultivating IG community, benefits and outcomes of IG community, the roles of generational cohorts, and residents of the building who are missing from IG community. Participants highlighted the psychosocial benefits of IG community for individuals as well as the socio-environmental benefits for the community, such as respect and care for common areas and a greater acceptance of all kinds of diversities, which appear to promote social connectedness and a sense of belonging. Consistent with the literature, young adults were not engaged in this IG community.

This study has demonstrated that individuals of every age have strengths and talents to share that enrich the IG community. Learning how to be a good neighbour amidst conflicting values and choices, and challenges in the social and physical environment, can create a safe, caring community in the building, a 'vertical village 'that has significant potential to redress ageism and age-segregation. Individuals in an inclusive IG community benefit from the collective wisdom of its residents, while cultivating a resilient community offers a sense of belonging and social connectedness.

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