Cultural and Ethno-Racial Variables Affecting Resident Participation in Assisted Housing: A Literature Review

by

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Table of Contents

Appendix: Description of the Literature Search

Bibliography

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives

The objective of this chapter is to provide a thorough, up-to-date review of the Canadian and international research on the cultural and ethno-racial variables that may affect resident participation in assisted housing. The focus is on identifying the range of potential barriers relating to the cultural and ethno-racial diversity common to many assisted housing communities. Based on this research, many variables and factors which may present barriers to participation in Canada's more culturally and ethno-racially diverse assisted housing communities are identified and the findings relating to them are briefly summarized.

While there is some research on resident participation in assisted housing communities, this literature does not specifically address the variables which may serve as barriers to participation based on cultural or ethno-racial diversity. Rather, the research on potential cultural and ethno-racial barriers to participation is found in a variety of literatures, including the business management literature (relating to organizational change and development in a multi-cultural society), the public health literature (relating to the use of health services by an increasingly diverse population), and the education literature (relating to barriers to effective education and training among minority populations). This literature rarely mentions participation in housing. Many of the barriers discussed, however, relate to most any form of human interaction where the participants are from diverse cultural and ethno-racial backgrounds. The vast body of literature, therefore, was 'filtered' based on a knowledge of the diversity in assisted housing communities in Metro Toronto and in urban Canada. Care was taken to limit the reliance on the U.S. 'race

relations' literature which tends to relate to the specific nature of U.S. inner-cities and U.S. 'black/white' relations.

Moreover, only those variables which seem to be most relevant to assisted housing communities are identified and discussed in this chapter. As a result, some potential barriers are discussed in greater detail than others. This is a reflection of the availability of literature, not the significance of the potential barrier. Greater detail has also been provided about the findings of the literature which is focused explicitly on assisted housing communities. Finally, the literature search did not assume any one form or type of participation. There is a range of activities which are commonly defined as participation, such as sharing information, consultation, on-going dialogue and shared decision-making (Arnstein 1969).

1.2. Cultural and Ethno-Racial Diversity in Metro Toronto

Metropolitan Toronto has one of the most diverse cultural and ethno-racial populations of any urban region in the world. The diversity reflects recent immigration patterns that have witnessed a dramatic shift from the early 20th century when most people in Ontario were either of British or, to a much lesser extent, French ethnic origin. In the 1990s, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's recent data for immigrants to Canada and Ontario demonstrate a marked shift in countries of origin. The five most common source countries include Hong Kong, Philippines, India, China, and Taiwan (Sri Lanka for Ontario), accounting for almost half of the newcomers to Canada and Ontario in 1994. In contrast, the combined percentage of recent immigrants from England, France and the United States is only 6.5% for all of Canada.

Furthermore, even as annual immigration to Canada has increased substantially over the last decade, the majority of newcomers to Ontario continue to settle in Metropolitan Toronto (between 60% and 70%). According to the 1991 Census, most of these immigrants are from the following regions: European countries *other* than Great Britain; Asia (especially Hong Kong, India, China and Sri Lanka); the Caribbean and Bermuda;

Central and South America; and Africa. In addition, Metropolitan Toronto annually receives a large percentage of refugee claimants from all over the world that are not included in the general immigration figures (Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto 1994).

Other measures of Metro's diversity include census data on ethnic origin and 'mother tongue.' With respect to ethnic origins, Statistics Canada's data reveal a mosaic of groups headed first and foremost by those of 'mixed ethnicity' (22%), followed by a high proportion who identify themselves as of English (12%) or 'Canadian' (8%) background, closely followed by 'Italian' and 'Chinese.' Several other groups with relatively high proportions in the population include 'Black,' 'Portuguese,' 'Jewish,' 'East Indian,' 'Scottish,' 'Irish,' 'Polish,' 'Greek,' and 'Filipino.' The reported mother tongues (the language "a person first learned as a child and still understands") share a similar distribution, with English, Italian, Chinese (including both Mandarin and Cantonese), Portuguese, and Polish the most commonly identified languages in Metropolitan Toronto in 1991.

1.3. Housing Context: Assisted Housing In Metro Toronto

There are about 4,800 assisted housing communities in Canada built under the federal/provincial public housing programs that provide housing for 205,000 households (CMHC 1990). This is about one-third of all assisted housing in Canada. The largest assisted housing agency in the country is the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA), with about 30,000 units under management (15% of Canada's public housing and one-third of Ontario's). The MTHA houses about 125,000 people in 110 different locations throughout Metro Toronto, which represents about 9% of the rental households in Metro.

There is a small but growing body of academic literature on the MTHA in general (Smith 1995), on the racial mix in MTHA communities (Murdie 1994), and on resident participation in MTHA and in Canada's assisted housing in general (Prairie Research Associates Inc. 1991; Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 1993; Vakili-Zad 1993;

and Greater Vancouver Regional District 1995). None of this literature deals with the issues associated with the challenges presented to resident participation given the cultural and ethno-racial diversity found in Metro's assisted housing communities. There has been one report on cultural and ethno-racial barriers to social housing in British Columbia (Circa Enterprises and Associates 1995).

There has been much more literature published on resident participation in assisted housing communities in the United States (Baron 1974; Meehan 1975; Sadacca and Loux 1978; Diaz 1979; Kolodny 1979; CMHC 1987; Monti 1989; Carlile 1990; Marabella 1991; Reingold 1994; Peterman 1994) and in the United Kingdom (Hague 1990; Cairncross et al. 1990, 1992, 1993). Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has evaluated housing built under its public housing programs (CMHC 1990) and has produced guidelines for resident participation (CMHC 1988). This literature does not provide an analysis of the variables which may create barriers to participation based on the cultural and ethno-racial diversity in assisted housing.

1.4. Organization of this Chapter

The remainder of this chapter examines and synthesizes the various research that bears either directly or indirectly on cultural or ethno-racial barriers affecting resident participation in assisted housing. The chapter has been organized around a review of the literature based on the following themes: an examination of primary and secondary *variables* affecting participation (Section 2); a discussion of the situational, organizational, and contextual *factors* that may affect resident participation (Section 3); and a presentation of different *strategies* for addressing barriers to participation.

2. Primary and Secondary Variables Affecting Participation

A large proportion of social research over the years has focused on the manner in which different types of factors have had varying impacts on social interactions. Berelson and Steiner (1964) endorsed such a position more than 30 years ago in their classic entitled *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings.* Identifying the most powerful forces at work that shape human behaviour has been at the heart of much of the explanatory research that has ever been conducted – and the source of many of the most engaging controversies. As such, one might expect that there should have been a fair amount of research devoted to exploring cultural and ethno-racial factors affecting resident participation in assisted housing, including the personal characteristics of residents as well as the impact of situational, organizational and contextual factors. In fact, the research has been quite limited to date. As a result, this section draws upon a wide variety of literature to identify two lists of *personal characteristics* which may, under certain circumstances, become barriers to positive and effective social interaction. It is hoped that the identification of these characteristics can serve as a check list for facilitators and participants alike.

These characteristics, referred to as *variables*[*] in the literature, are common to all people. They are found in countless combinations resulting in the great diversity we find among humans. Though our universal identity as human beings is our primary identity and is more fundamental than any other identity, individuals claim recognition on a wide variety

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[*] A variable is a concept that *varies.* A concept is a way of viewing and categorizing objects, people, processes, relations, events (a 'mental image' of these). This mental image is not static but has characteristics that can take on different values in terms of quantity or intensity. Each situation involving a group of humans will be different depending upon the variation in each of the variables the participants bring to the process or organization. Their interaction will likely lead to even further variation in the intensity and implication of particular variables. It is thus not possible, without empirical study of particular cases and knowledge of the particular context, to predict whether certain variables will be or will become barriers or assets, or just neutral facts about the different characteristics of the participants.

of bases. As Richmond (1994:43) notes: "Gender, age, nationality, citizenship, property ownership, and tax paying status may impose conflicting claims on the body politic and confuse issues." In this confusing 'politics of recognition' of which we are all part, some of our personal characteristics cannot be changed (e.g., skin colour, age, gender) or cannot be easily changed (e.g., culture, religion, disability). These are defined as *primary* characteristics (or variables). In contrast, *secondary* variables refer to personal characteristics that can and often do change over time (e.g., level of education, language fluency, economic status, behaviour and attitudes).

The term variable is used here and in the literature rather than barrier. A variable (in reality it is always a combination of variables) relating to the personal characteristics of people engaging in some form of social interaction (e.g., participating in a community development process) may or may not be a *barrier* affecting the quality of the interaction. The variable may be an asset, or it may simply be a neutral fact.

Finally, any of the variables discussed below can become a barrier in two possible ways. A participant from the 'dominant' (non-minority) group involved in a culturally and ethno-racially diverse organization or participatory process may be uncomfortable with or even discriminate against people who are 'different' on the basis of culture, 'race,' country of origin and so forth. Or, a new Canadian may choose not to participate or co-operate, or may even discriminate or take offence at others, on the basis of his/her characteristics. In either case, a barrier is created.

2.1. Primary Variables

Primary variables are, according to Mamman (1996), the major characteristics of a person's background that distinguish him/her from others. They are called 'primary' because they are *characteristics which are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to change*. The literature tends to identify seven primary variables: culture, 'race,' country of origin, age, gender, religion and disability.

A) Culture

'Culture' is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. The idea of culture embraces a range of topics, processes, differences and even paradoxes. In his book *Culture*, Christopher Jenks defines culture in the following way:

> "The idea of culture implies a notion of accumulated, shared symbols, representative of and significant within a particular society... Everybody has culture, and is with culture, in that they are social beings; it is an instance of their membershipping, culture being a collective symbol of social existence." (1993:168)

Jenks also quotes from anthropologist Raymond Firth (*Elements of Social Organization*, London 1951) as follows:

> "If ... society is taken to be an organized set of individuals with a given way of life, culture is that way of life. If society is taken to be an aggregate of social relations, then culture is the content of those relations. Society emphasises the human component, the aggregate of people and the relations between them. Culture emphases the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to and transmit."

Primary Variables

A) **Culture**
B) **'Race'**
C) **Country of Origin**
D) **Age**
E) **Gender**
F) **Religion**
G) **Disability**

National culture is thus usually defined as shared feelings, thinking, norms, and values that guide people's behaviour (Tayeb 1994). The research generally suggests that the greater the difference between two cultures, the more difficult it is for people to interact and to adjust. More specifically, culturally similar people display high attitudinal confidence and shared networks which in turn reduce uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst 1985). Cultural similarity generates reciprocal feelings; people who are similar culturally tend to like each other (Brewer and Campbell 1976). Certain dimensions of the dominant group's culture can have varying significance on a minority group's interaction. Prominent among these dimensions of culture are: power distance; uncertainty avoidance; masculinity-femininity; individualism-collectivism; concept of time; use of language (verbal

and body); perception and use of space; and orientation to nature (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Triandis et al. 1988; Adler 1991).

Moreover, comparative studies have found that culture affects work-related values and behaviours and that differences between cultures can cause difficulties in a multi-cultural workplace (Kirchmeyer and Cohen 1992). In summary, the larger the gap between a diverse employee's culture and that of the dominant group, the more effort will be required to improve interaction (Mamman 1996:450-452).

B) 'Race'

The most important thing to remember in considering issues relating to the 'race' of a person is that although 'race' is a "key element in interpersonal interaction, what matters is not the actual race but the meaning people attach to it" (Mamman 1996:452). Richmond makes this point in the following way:

> "Even when there is biological basis for defining identity, as in the case of gender, the actual behavioural manifestations are socially constructed and culturally determined.... 'Race' is similarly a social construct, the cultural meaning of which varies according to time and place. From a strictly biological point of view, there are no 'races,' only gene pools that determine the statistical probability that certain physical traits, such as skin pigmentation or hair form, will appear in each generation" (Richmond 1994:21).

A pattern of relationships emerges based on the *meanings* people working together attribute to the notion of the 'race' of a person. These meanings can become social barriers to participation if, for example, some 'non-minority' members of the group believe that human 'races' exist as distinct biological types, possessing different mental and physical abilities.

> "What matters is not just actual difference in skin colour, but the way these are related to, invested with meaning and importance through interaction. What is significant are the patterns of relations that are established, the lines along which they are drawn, and the myths and assumptions that go along with and inform this" (Figueroa 1984:19).

Thus a key to understanding the role of 'race' in social interaction are the perceptions of the interactants, which are influenced largely by stereotype, prejudice and ethnocentrism (Stening 1979). Mamman (1996:452) further notes that 'race' can affect interpersonal interaction in that some racial groups can be perceived more favourably than

others, people from different racial backgrounds tend to vary in their level of adjustment and experience in a new environment, and, in an organizational setting, some groups experience discrimination during selection, promotion, and performance appraisal based on their 'race.' Using 'race' in this way in a social or organizational setting is referred to as racism. Racism can be a significant barrier to the success of any collective endeavour. It is often defined as a doctrine of biological inferiority and inequality – an obvious potential barrier to full or equal participation in any number of different settings (Miles 1989, 1993; Henry 1994; Richmond 1994; Guillaumin 1995; Yinger 1995; James 1996).

C)   *Country of Origin*

Intercultural experiences can vary with a person's country of origin (cf. Michalski and George 1996). The country of origin can connote status, competence, friendship or enmity, level of civilization, and a variety of other things (Cui and Berg 1991). The meaning attached to a person's country of origin partly influences the attitudes and behaviour in intercultural interaction. Like perceptions of 'race,' perceptions of a person's country of origin is influenced by stereotype, prejudice and ethnocentrism. The stereo-typical image the dominant group holds can be influenced by prior experience with people from a particular country (Mamman 1996:453).

D)   *Gender*

Gender refers to the meanings attached to being male or female as reflected in social status, roles and attitudes regarding the gender of a person. In Canada, almost two-thirds of assisted housing residents are female, a reflection of the preponderance of female household heads among single-parent families, as well as the greater longevity of women (CMHC 1990:26-27). The division of labour between the sexes varies across and within cultures. Gender role equality is higher in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures. The gender role is essential in explaining female adjustment to work or other settings (Figueroa 1984; Chi-ching 1992; Fraser-Wyche and Browne-Graves 1992; Mamman 1996:454-455). Even within the same culture attitudes and behaviours between men and women vary (Hall 1984; Segall et al. 1990). Research indicates women are less

competitive, preferring to collaborate and resolve conflict in a consensual way (Tannen 1990).   These variations can be the subject of misinterpretation which can lead to stereotype, prejudice and discrimination (Powell 1990). Stereotyping by colleagues in a process or workplace can undermine achievement in that women can be seen as tokens in the process or organization and, as a result, can feel marginalized and undervalued (Fraser-Wyche and Browne-Graves 1992; Kanter 1977).

Sapp, Harrod and Zhao (1996) provide a recent discussion of the impact of "gender role theory" and "expectation states theory" on the development of leadership roles in groups. Gender role theory suggests that men consistently are reinforced in their role as leaders in groups because they are expected to assume this position.

> "Gender role theory proposes that when men and women act upon these shared expectations they selectively reinforce male participation and leadership emergence in task-oriented groups. Thus, males emerge as task leaders because both males and females are socialized to expect males to take on leadership positions in task groups" (Sapp, Harrod and Zhao 1996:67).

Expectation states theory suggests that leaders and prestige positions are assumed by high status individuals and are culturally defined.

> "Expectation states theory.... proposes that groups confirm culturally established prestige hierarchies by supporting greater task participation by, and higher leadership evaluations for, members with perceived higher status characteristics. As compared with gender role theory, which relies upon shared expectations based upon normatively defined roles for males and females, expectation states theory focused on expectations of competence associated with previous experience with a nominal group" (Sapp, Harrod and Zhao 1996:67).

In short, gender may directly affect resident participation based on cultural differences in the socialization of men and women to assume leadership positions and to the degree that males have higher prestige and are thus expected to participate more fully than their female counterparts. In either situation, men may be more or less encouraged to assume public roles associated with resident participation in assisted housing.

E)   Age

A person's age may influence the nature of the interaction as well. Some research suggests that the older one becomes the more difficult it is to adapt to a new setting, i.e.,

that younger people are more likely to be flexible in adjusting to a new environment (Kim 1977; Gudykunst and Kim 1984). In some societies, age has status connotations (respect, wisdom). According to Harris and Moran (1991), for example, "if an American is considerably younger than an African, the latter will have little confidence in the American." Thus age differences may affect the nature or the quality of the interaction, or even the likelihood that some individuals will be more inclined to participate in certain activities.

F) Religion

Religion can influence a person's adaptation to a foreign setting (Hoffman 1990; Mahmoudi 1992). Mamman (1996:455) points out that "the relevance of religion to interaction adjustment will depend on the type of religion, the religiosity of the interactants and the stereotype of religions held by the interactants." To appreciate the influence of religion it is necessary to understand the 'meaning' of religion across cultures. In the predominantly 'Christian West' religion is largely a private matter and one's creed does not necessarily influence the process and outcome of interaction with others. In contrast, Islam is considered by its followers to be a way of life, or a dominant cultural force. The daily interaction with strangers will be governed by religious teaching and practice:

> "Islam, unlike Christianity, is considered by its followers as a culture in its own right (a way of life). For people who adhere to the teaching of Islam, their daily interaction with the stranger will be governed by the teaching and practice of Prophet Mohammed. According to this teaching, all strangers should be respected and treated well, but, more so, a stranger who is a Muslim should be regarded as a brother or sister and be treated accordingly. Thus, a diverse employee might find his/her chances of building and maintaining relationships enhanced by the mere fact that he/she shares the same religion with some co-workers" (Mamman 1996:454).

In a study of Muslims, Buddhists and Catholics, Bochner (1976) found that religious beliefs influence how people perceive and react to each other. Those whose religion is more salient and less differentiated from others tend to look doubtfully at members of other faiths. Finally, some people may hold negative stereotypes of certain religions, thereby affecting their followers' ability to interact with others. Such a stereotype can be used as a justification for subordinating outsiders.

G) Disability

Some people perceive the physical and mental capabilities of disabled people negatively (stereotype, prejudice). Attitudes of others can affect the performance of a disabled person and can limit the level of integration and adjustment. Negative stereotypes can be used as a justification for subordination and alienating people with disabilities (Parish et al. 1979; Johnson and Johnson 1984; Abrams and Hogg 1988; Mamman 1996).

2.2. Secondary Variables

Secondary variables encompass other aspects of a person's background that can play a role in defining his/her identity in the eyes of others, thereby affecting interaction in heterogeneous organizational settings (Mamman 1996:450). They are called 'secondary' because they are characteristics which can be changed – and often *do* change – over time. Several of these variables may affect resident participation in assisted housing, including educational attainment, linguistic ability, economic status, position in the organization or activity, prior experience with diversity in organizational activities, and three psychological factors: cognition, behavioural, and attitude and personality.

> **Secondary Variables**
>
> A) **Educational Attainment**
> B) **Linguistic Ability**
> C) **Economic Status**
> D) **Position in the Organization**
> E) **Prior Experience**
>   *Psychological Factors:*
> F) **Cognition**
> G) **Behavioural**
> H) **Attitude and Personality**

A) Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers an achieved status of acquiring formal credentials through schooling. An increase in educational attainment implies an increased capacity to learn and to adapt to the challenges of life. In general, education enables people to adjust and to have more positive attitudes to 'new things.' Other things being equal, high

educational attainment can improve a minority person's ability to interact with the dominant group as status differences are reduced. Many experts argue that education and training can reduce intercultural conflict and improve understanding between heterogeneous groups (Cox and Blake 1991; Tung 1993). As a final consideration, although educational attainment can influence social acceptance, it can also attract jealousy and resentment from some (Schwarzwald and Hoffman 1993; Mamman 1996).

B)   *Linguistic Ability*

High levels of linguistic ability can break down cultural barriers during intercultural interaction. Language and the style in which it is used can be constructed to mean competence, friendliness or aggressiveness, or a measure of social status (Gelinas-Chebat 1992). There is a relationship between voice characteristics and the perception of speaker's emotion, personality, attitudes, influence, competence and expertise. What is perceived to be an 'acceptable' communication style is culturally determined (Norton 1983). Certain intonations in speech, for example, are rated highly (Rubin et al. 1991). Attitudes towards linguistic ability can be influenced by the dominant group's level of ethnocentrism (Mamman 1995). In a study of the low contribution level of minorities in task groups, Kirchmeyer (1993) found that minorities were at a disadvantage in groups dominated by others who communicated more effectively and appropriately, who were more assertive, and who expressed less concern for others.

C)   *Economic Status*

Economic status may be one of the principal determinants of participation, although the research is not yet sufficiently developed to confirm this. The logic suggests that before people participate in any activity they must have the rationale and motivation for doing so. People who must struggle to obtain the essentials of life on a day-to-day basis are less likely to have the time or the inclination to participate in activities which may not be directly relevant to their immediate struggle. The extent of participation in any activity depends on the interplay between motivation and opportunity (including resources). Before people participate, especially if they are not the originators and designers of the

process, they must want to participate and they must have sufficient ability to translate motivation into action (cf. Marabella 1991). For example, a UK study of the socio-economic basis for organization among assisted housing residents concludes that "although tenants do show some degree of collective feeling, they rarely have a strong orientation towards collective, militant, protest action" (Cairncross et al. 1993).

In addition, there is a stigma and often low self-esteem associated with being poor, in receipt of social assistance, and a resident in assisted housing (Shapiro et al. 1987). This can lead to feelings of personal inadequacy, in terms of their perception of the quality of their contribution to a process, and intimidation, to the extent that stigma and low self-esteem take their toll on their perception of themselves within an economically diverse group situation. Outside their group of peers, some of the poor may feel inadequate and thus become disillusioned about their ability to participate and have a positive impact. In the extreme, they may perceive themselves as an oppressed people whose behaviour will tend to be characterized by both psychological and social withdrawal (Moreau 1992). In general, then, the higher the economic status of a person and his/her household, the higher the participation will be and vice versa, other things being equal.

D) Position in the Organization

Having some degree of control helps reduce uncertainty, thereby furthering adjustment by a minority person in an intercultural context. People at the higher level of the organizational hierarchy use 'active' strategies, such as changing rules to enable early adjustment, while employees at the lower level rely on social support. Other things being equal, people at higher levels of the organizational hierarchy may adjust more easily and quickly than those at lower levels, because the latter will have less control over reducing uncertainty and anxiety (Gudykunst 1988; Witte 1993; Mamman 1996).

E) Experience Factors

Experience counts. Several studies have shown that people with prior experience with diversity are more likely to find it easier to adjust and can enhance their successful interaction compared to those without such experience (Klineburg 1981; Furnham and

Bochner 1986; Black et al. 1991). In addition, research indicates that adjustment to a new environment is influenced by the duration of stay. The longer one stays, or is expected to stay, the more likely it will be that he/she will put an extra effort in learning to adjust to that environment (Kim 1977; Dodd 1982; Torbiorn 1982; Mamman 1996). At the extreme, however, prolonged commitment and effort can produce 'burnout' on the part of participants – an issue addressed in some detail later in the chapter (see Section 4.10).

F) Psychological Factors: Cognitive

People process information through a categorization process which is, to a certain degree, culturally determined (Gudykunst 1988; Mamman 1996). Participants in any process or activity need to be aware of the cognitive cultural differences between and within groups, between men and women, and between young and old (Triandis et al. 1993). Appreciation of these differences is necessary for accurately interpreting others' attitudes and behaviours. This is a subtle but important factor to be aware of in a participatory process involving a diversity of people. It plays a role in accurately interpreting others' attitudes and behaviours (Mamman 1996:457-458).

G) Psychological Factors: Behavioral

The rules governing social behaviour vary within and across groups. Any process needs to have participants who demonstrate 'socially appropriate' behaviours. Some behavioural dimensions that can enhance interaction include the ability to develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships and the ability to effectively communicate (enter into meaningful dialogue, initiate interaction, deal with misunderstandings). What is considered as appropriate behaviour can vary with the backgrounds of the participants. Effective participation thus requires a range of social skills to deal with the heterogeneity of the participants (Furnham and Bochner 1986; Hammer 1987; Mamman 1996).

H) Psychological Factors: Attitudes and Personality Factors

New situations often require unique attitude and personality traits. Several of these characteristics are likely to enhance the capacity of peoples of diverse backgrounds to

interact in a more productive manner, including each of these: flexibility, self-confidence, self-efficacy, openness, motivation, orientation to knowledge, cultural empathy, openness to information and optimism. Indeed, one might argue that the development of appropriate attitudes can be essential to effective exchanges in heterogeneous settings. Self-confidence and self-efficacy, for example, are likely to be vital traits for managing in an intercultural setting (Brislin 1981; Mamman 1996).

3. Structural and Institutional Factors Affecting Participation

The primary and secondary variables described above represent personal characteristics that individuals carry with them, more or less visibly, in all manner of social interactions. These characteristics are presumed to affect resident participation in assisted housing to varying degrees, despite the limited amount of direct evidence. There are broader structural and institutional factors, however, that may further impact the quality and the outcome of the process. These are presented in three categories: situational factors, organizational factors, and contextual factors. The literatures that deal with organizational and contextual factors explicitly address assisted housing issues.

3.1. Situational Factors

The effect of the primary and secondary variables on interaction is mediated by *situational factors* found in the organizational or activity setting. That is, what is the situation the minority person finds him/herself with respect to the nature and intensity of the dominant group's attitudes towards minority employees/participants? The variables operat-ing among the dominant group mediate the effect of the primary and secondary variables (characteristics) of the minority person. They can either enhance or inhibit successful interaction.

Situational Factors
A) Stereotype
B) Ethnocentrism
C) Prejudice
D) The Dominant Group Factor

Mamman (1996) identifies the several situational factors that may be present among dominant/majority group members which can mediate the experience of a minority

person. The most important of these relating to assisted housing are: stereotypes held about that persons background; ethnocentrism; prejudice; and the 'dominant group' factor.

A)   Stereotype

Stereotyping is a social process by which some people assign attributes to others solely on the basis of their group identity (Wiseman et al. 1989). A stereotype is a false or inaccurately generalized conception of a group of people that results in either an unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences (Henry et al. 1995:329). People can have specific perceptions of themselves which may or may not coincide with how others perceive them. As Everett et al. (1984) point out, a person's interactions will depend to some extent on whether others' perception of him/her (heterostereotype) coincide with how he/she perceives himself/herself (autostereotype). Thus, interaction is likely to be low when heterostereotype and autostereotype conflict.

B)   Ethnocentrism

In simplest terms, ethnocentrism involves holding positive feelings towards one's own group and negative feelings towards others (Gudykunst and Kim 1984). It is a tendency to view events or people from the perspective of one's own culture, with a corresponding tendency to misunderstand or diminish other groups and regard them as inferior (Henry et al. 1995:327). Ethnocentrism can be a major barrier to any group process involving people from diverse cultural and ethno-racial backgrounds.

C)   Prejudice

Prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalism (Allport 1958). It is a mental state or attitude of prejudging, generally unfavourably, by attributing to every member of a group characteristics falsely attributed to the group as a whole (Henry et al. 1995:328). The net effect is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his/her own conduct (Adler 1991; Mamman 1996). Some

people hold stereotypes which can be extremely difficult to modify. Prejudice can have greater negative consequences than ordinary stereotype or ethnocentrism.

D)   The Dominant Group Factor

Members of the 'dominant' or majority group[*] in any organization or process can vary in their attitudes and experience with members of minority groups. Members of minority groups, therefore, do not necessarily experience consistent and identical attitudes from others in the dominant group with whom they interact (Mamman 1996:462). In addition, members of minority groups can vary in the way they perceive and react to these differences from members of the dominant group. This factor adds a further institutional/structural unknown to the dynamics of any participatory process involving a mixture of participants from the majority and minority groups.

3.2. Organizational Factors

There are several organizational factors that may either facilitate or create barriers to resident participation in assisted housing. The process by definition requires some organzational capacity and some degree of commitment on the part of participants. The review of existing literature highlights several of the more prominent organizational factors that are likely to affect resident participation. These are

| **Organizational Factors** |
| A) Attitudes Towards Participation |
| B) 'Top-down' Participatory Initiatives |
| C) Administrative Support for Participation |
| D) Organizational Authority |
| E) Organizational Weaknesses of RMCs |

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[*] Henry et al. (1995:327) define the dominant or majority group in the following way: "The group of people in a given society that is largest in number or that successfully shapes or controls other groups through social, economic, cultural, political, or religious power. In Canada, the term has generally referred to White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant males." In contrast, minority groups consist of people who are either small in number and/or have little access to social, political or economic power.

discussed below.

A)   Attitudes Towards Participation

There is a large body of literature on citizen participation in decision making activities. Community participation is a common goal of many public and community-based agencies, despite the difficulty of attaining such participation. Though desirable in administrative decision making, Gulati (1982) points out that there is no clear rationale for this objective unless there is "consensus on who the citizens are, and how and with what consequences they participate." Gulati notes that objectives of participation include feedback from consumers, building community and overcoming alienation and hostility, and the mobilization of untapped resources that often lie latent in each community.

Cohen (1976) identifies the following barriers to participation:

- *experience and expertise*: a lack of experience and expertise among the participants and a lack of immediate results especially in longer term complex planning processes can lead to discouragement, a decline in feelings of efficacy, and can even result in an increase in the feelings of alienation and hostility;

- *relevance of the task*: a lack of relevancy to problems and needs of the community can lead to an increase in the role of outside professionals and an increasingly patronizing attitude which can result in anger and alienation within the community;

- *role of the 'sponsor'*: if a process is sponsored by outsiders (e.g., a government agency) the enthusiasm of the community participants can begin to cool on realizing that their input might contradict established policy and threaten to disrupt the smoothly running operations of the sponsoring organization.

Gulati (1982) questions whether citizen participation during the 1980's was geared to develop administrative reform rather than social change, and if so, then research needs to focus on what types of participation lead to more effective service delivery. Gulati's research on resident participation found that, as a mechanism for bargaining to improve the services available to the poor, the process can have some success. Such participation occurs more often in family housing rather than among the elderly. This research found that the power and influence of resident participation does not seem to alter the effectiveness of management or administration. A negative relationship can occur at times

between participation groups and management as a result of this activity. Management performance is not demonstrated to improve as a result of resident participation. Gulati (1982:83) argues "That administrative rationality and consumer participation cannot be maximized simultaneously places an important constraint on the one or the other." Therefore this might pose a significant barrier on continued development of citizen participation (Gulati 1982).

Katan (1988) reports on participation among residents of old age homes, finding the following barriers to participation among the elderly:

- Many residents have never had the experience of participation with organizations that they were involved with previously: "These residents are reluctant to change this pattern of behavior, even if they are encouraged to do so."

- Many are skeptical about their ability to create change within the policy and procedures of institutions: "This feeling stems from a sense of powerlessness, a lack of resources and a belief that institutions are not open to influence and change."

- Many prefer to focus on themselves rather than on the organizational operation. This is often encouraged by relatives.

- The organizational culture in institutions does not always support resident participation, nor are the professionals involved necessarily skilled or knowledgeable in the process to encourage this participation.

Katan and Bergman (1988) identify reasons why there can be a lack of follow-through on participation initiatives among the elderly. These include: staff workload; lack of staff training in developing group experiences; questions about the official support of participation by authorities dealing with elderly (staff are thus reluctant to get into conflict with other staff, management, or the Board of Directors); and the belief (stereotype) that residents are not really interested in the process.

B) 'Top-down' Participatory Initiatives

Peterman (1994) notes that, based on U.S. experience, resident participation in assisted housing is an inherently grass roots or 'bottom-up' effort. As such, there are four necessary conditions for successful resident participation initiatives: (1) adequate and

continuing resources for operating and subsidies, modernization, and technical assistance; (2) a pre-existent, resident-based organizing effort; (3) an atmosphere of creative tension between residents and the housing authority; and (4) strong ties between resident organizations and other community institutions. He notes that a problem with the current situation in the U.S. is that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has mandated a top-down approach in legislation in 1988 and 1990, with a formula approach which must be followed by those wishing to receive funds to implement resident participation initiatives. Peterman (1994) concludes the following:

> "Resident management has succeeded in some places and undoubtedly can succeed in many others. Yet it is not universally applicable. As a public policy it has become entangled with conservative ideology that promotes less government, more home ownership, and less public housing – goals that are likely to benefit few, if any, low-income, public housing residents."

Peterman fears that turning over assisted housing to residents might be viewed as a form of 'lemon socialism,' where residents are given developments that housing authorities have given up on.

Cohen (1976) identifies the inherent problems of distrust and concern of citizens involved with program planning for social service agencies, and suggests that citizens also become involved in the strategic planning and decision planning process. Cohen (1976) offers the following advice: "Perhaps an alternative way of developing resident participation in community action programs would be to move the planning and decision-making process away from the trained experts associated with formal institutions to the residents within the neighbourhoods themselves."

C) Administrative Support for Participation

A U.S. study of the requirements for effective resident participation in assisted housing communities found that a key component of success is housing authority co-operation and carefully administered technical assistance and training for residents (Fuerst 1988). This finding is supported by Katan (1991) in a study of resident participation in the management of senior citizen housing. The factors hindering the residents included the external environment (family, community) and, most importantly, the internal

administrative environment of the organization. Among the problematic internal factors were:

- worker attitudes and activities (use of formal and informal power to undermine the adoption and implementation of resident participation);
- lack of resources for proper follow up;
- incongruence between resident participation and smooth operations by staff;
- institutional policies;
- population size and homogeneity poses difficulties;
- staff not trusting resident's ability to accomplish tasks; and
- belief that resident participation might disrupt the efficiency of the program (Katan 1991).

D) *Organizational Authority*

The classical definition of authority was developed by French and Raven (1959), and included five sources of power related to authority. None of these categories is seen to be negative, as effective managers are noted to use or acknowledge the full spectrum of power in their practice. A reliance on only one type of power, however, may prove to be problematic. The sources of power include:

- *Reward Power*: occurs when one person has the ability to reward another person for meeting requirements or expectations
- *Coercive Power*: based on one person's ability to punish another person for not meeting expectations
- *Legitimate Power*: exists when one person acknowledges that another person has a right or is entitled to exert influence within bounds
- *Expert Power*: one person has some relevant expertise or special knowledge that the other person does not
- *Referent Power*: based on the desire for one person to imitate or identify with another person with influence

Fitch (1994) describes cross-cultural studies on use of directives with respect to compliance-gaining behaviour. Various cultural groups will react in a different manners to directives by a non-minority leader. This is of interest when related to the classical forms of power in groups that are traditionally used (French and Raven 1959).

Literature on cross cultural studies on compliance-gaining behaviour notes that communication is related to the cultural norms for requesting or directing others in order to achieve something. Rosaldo (1980) states that directives are used by a group in the Philippines as guiding "unformed inconstant human will." Therefore this group believes that fewer directives or less direct ones would cause human life to disintegrate resulting in communication that resounds with clear and repeated directives.

In an anthropological study of Athabaskans in Bear Lake, Rushford (1981) described this group as a society where value is placed on individual freedom and autonomy such that any sort of directive is counterproductive. Requests are generally made through the use of a third party to allow the other person to maintain respect.

E)   Organizational Weaknesses of Resident Management Corporations

There is very little research on existing *resident management corporations* in assisted housing communities, despite the encouragement this type of management often receives (especially in the United States).   Monti (1989) examined eleven resident management corporations in the U.S., finding that:

- *Good relations between a housing authority and residents does not necessarily produce effective resident management corporations (RMC):* "It is not the contractual arrangement between a RMC and housing authority that defines how good its relations are... 'Good Relations' are more a matter of how much latitude the housing authority is willing to give the RMC and how much the RMC is willing to take."

- *A few strong resident leaders do not produce effective resident management corporations:* "sites with strong leaders and compliant boards had been able to articulate positions on matters of greater and lesser significance for some time. They also enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy and in several cases had acquired substantial funds to rehabilitate apartments or whole buildings. On the other hand, these sites also were viewed as places with inbred leadership that did not necessarily respond well or at all to demands for change by residents."

- *Sites with good ties to outside institutions are likely to fare better:* "A site blessed with certain 'locational advantages' and a good organization is not likely

to make much progress if its leaders are complacent or unable to articulate a broader vision of their site's role in the community. By the same token, people who can make such arguments convincingly can bring some resources to their sites even if those sites are poorly located and have an unsophisticated organization working on their behalf."

• *Sites with good community organizations tend to have more effective resident management corporations:* "the single most important factor in the success or failure of an RMC is the degree of support it enjoys among the residents at the site. A site that receives little or no modernization money can still maintain a good appearance its residents work together. In the absence of a well-organized and disciplined community however, no amount of money will keep a site looking neat and clean. The site will not become or remain a good and safe place to live without a well-organized community the enforcement of rules regarding acceptable behavior and practices at the site."

3.3. Contextual Factors

In addition to the above situational and organizational factors, there are numerous contextual factors related to the local environment and neighbourhood which may have an effect on resident participation. While there is some literature on these factors, we have not found any relating to the cultural and ethno-racial dimensions that may affect participation.

We discuss three contextual factors below: the level of crime in the community and surrounding area; the prevalence or extent of substance abuse; and the image the assisted housing community and/or neighbourhood has within the broader community.

There are, no doubt, many other contextual factors, but there has been very little research on these thus far. Another contextual factor, for example, that may be important is the nature of existing

> **Contextual Factors**
>
> A) Level of Crime
> B) Amount of Substance Abuse
> C) Image of the Neighbourhood

relations (i.e., the extent of co-operation or conflict) between and among the various groups within a community. There can be divisive local politics in the neighbourhood, resident/management difficulties in the assisted housing community, resident/resident conflicts, and so on. The quality of the local physical infrastructure and community and social services may be another contextual factor affecting participation. We have not found literature on these latter two factors.

It is also important to note that the *perception* of certain difficulties (such as crime and substance abuse) may be just as important, if not more important, than the *reality* of the extent of these problems.

A) *Level of Crime (real or perceived)*

Experience in assisted housing communities over recent decades suggests that the level of crime within the community has a significant impact upon resident participation in any community initiatives. Oscar Newman's well-known work on 'defensible space' (Newman 1973), together with more recent research, demonstrates that a combination of neighbourhood social ties and clear signs that an area belongs to those who live there reduce crime and vandalism (Brown, 1983; Taylor, 1987). "The reduction of crime in coops was a significant factor in people's taking of control over their buildings and lives. Yet it is only a small part of the close connection between active positive attachment to buildings and neighborhoods and the empowerment of individuals and groups who live there" (Saegert 1989:309). Other research has further suggested that a decrease in the perceived fear of crime lead to an increase in social attachment, which has obviously positive implications for resident participation in assisted housing (Burby and Rohe 1989).

B) *Amount of Substance Abuse*

Drug trafficking can influence the ethos of an assisted housing community as it determines the area as being lawless or out of control: "Such visible disorder breeds fear, undermines social cohesion, and promotes crime and economic decay" (Skogun 1990). Research in the 1970's focused on housing characteristics that made high density assisted housing more vulnerable to this type of activity (Newman 1973). Clear sight-lines of

public areas that residents could monitor from the privacy of their homes was essential. Residents needed to have the anonymity of their home and convenience to respond to drug trade. Safety was important. If people were concerned for their personal or family safety, their effectiveness in addressing the issue was limited severely. The issue has been at the core of Cityhome's (1994) establishment of a Drug Abuse and Security Committee, which worked to develop a community-based security policy that could be applied across Cityhome's portfolio.

Popkin et al. (1995) describe a public housing authority's program to eliminate drugs in the setting. The traditional methods of dealing with the problem, which ranged from aggressive policing (drug raids, bust operations, etc.) to resident empowerment (crime watches, resident participation in management initiatives), met with only limited success. It was necessary to adopt a larger 'systems approach,' which meant placing the issue in context with other issues such as unemployment, lack of recreational services, discrimination, and so on.

C)   *Image of the Neighbourhood*

Some neighbourhoods, often those with large assisted housing communities, have a negative image within the metropolitan area. This is often the result of negative stereotyping by the media and others based on perceptions about the extent of crime, substance abuse, and other difficulties. Having a bad 'image,' even if residents know it is false, can affect participation, usually by demoralizing residents or, more rarely, by mobilizing them to do something about the 'bad press.' There is growing awareness of this problem (it seems to have acquired a name, 'neighbourhoodism'), but no relevant literature currently exists.

There is a related body of literature on resident satisfaction (i.e., people inside a community) with their neighbourhoods and housing (mainly from the U.S. and U.K.), as opposed to the image outsiders have of their community. Weidemann and Anderson (1982) addressed the topic of neighbourhood image among residents in their work on resident's perceptions of satisfaction and safety in multi-family housing. The authors (1982:697) stressed the need to determine resident perceptions of the neighbourhood. "As

knowledge about housing environments has accumulated, it has become increasingly apparent that there are often differences between those who make policies and direct housing programs and those who are the recipients of such policies and programs." The primary predictors of residential satisfaction included perceived atmosphere (attractiveness, police, recreation);   apartment evaluation; maintenance; friends nearby/social interaction; high safety; other residents similar to self; satisfaction with neighbours and management; management evaluation; and perceptions of safety.

4.   Strategies for Addressing Barriers to Participation

Not only is group diversity unavoidable in places like Metro Toronto with its broad cultural and ethno-racial population mix, group diversity is known to enhance problem solving in some contexts because more alternatives may become available for consideration and a wider critical base may be provided (Kirchmeyer 1993). This can happen in task groups *as long as* cultural and ethno-racial variables and related structural, institutional and situational factors do not become barriers to effective interaction. They can be assets if properly managed. To realize the creative potential of diversity, multi-cultural task groups need to identify and overcome the interpersonal and institutional problems that diversity can present. In addition the unique approaches and perspectives of minorities will

> **Strategies for Addressing Barriers**
>
> A) Interaction Strategies
> B) Cultural Sensitivity Training
> C) Enhancing Communication
> D) Enhancing Participation
> E) Resident Training Opportunities
> F) Participatory Management Training
> G) Conflict Management Training
> H) Mentoring
> I) Anti-Racism Organizational Efforts
> J) Coping with Burnout

remain unexplored unless the reasons for their often low contribution levels – due to the variables and factors identified in sections 2 and 3 – can be avoided or properly addressed. There is very little research on strategies relating to cultural and ethno-racial barriers in assisted housing communities. Some of the more general literature on cultural and ethno-racial barriers does offer advice on strategies. This is outlined below.

4.1. **Interaction Strategies**

A majority group or a minority group person's participation and interaction can depend on the strategy he/she adopts when interacting with others who have significantly different backgrounds. There is a great deal of literature on inter-group interaction and organizational socialization. Reducing uncertainty has been found to be central to successful interaction because it increases the possibility that perceptions of each other will become more accurate (Gudykunst 1985, 1988; Witte 1993; Mamman 1996). Berger (1979) and Mamman (1996) identify three strategies for reducing uncertainty that individuals and organizations can use in interacting with others: (1) avoidance; (2) reactive; and (3) proactive. The avoidance (do-nothing) strategy is based on the assumption that nothing can be done within the context and time-frame of the activity to correct certain negative attitudes. Mamman (1996:464) suggests that the avoidance strategy "will be more appropriate (a) when the employee is new to the organization, (b) the dominant group has inflexible attitudes, (c) the interaction is with peers or superior, (d) interaction is infrequent and less intimate." The reactive strategy refers to reacting to, responding to, or asking questions about any issues regarding diversity among the participants or employees. Since stereotypes are influenced by ignorance, the asking and answering of questions about potential differences potentially provides more accurate information. The proactive strategy goes beyond responding or reacting to initiating interaction and discussion of potential differences. This constitutes a form of direct engagement in which parties openly discuss those aspects of their cultural and ethno-racial differences that may affect successful participation. Rather than a one-time only process, the strategies may be revisited throughout the process when the circumstances warrant (Mamman 1996:463-466).

4.2. **Cultural Sensitivity Training**

Cultural sensitivity training requires in the first place the development of a 'culture' or environment within which people's differences are recognized and even celebrated. The means for developing cultural sensitivity are several, including rather straightforward

proposals to display in public visible signs of ethno-cultural diversity or to educate others through public recognition and the celebration of others' cuisines, holidays, and even languages. Indeed, James (1993) has argued in the context of discussing race relations in childcare programs that the participants (i.e., the parents) must be willing to share information about their backgrounds with others in a proactive fashion rather than place the entire burden of cultural recognition upon the shoulder's of other stakeholders. Otherwise, the dominant group will have no trouble ignoring, as the African Canadian Community in Metropolitan Toronto has commented, "their contributions to Canadian society (through) non-recognition and devaluation (African Canadian Community Working Group 1992:1).

Corvin and Wiggins (1989) propose a training model for professionals who work with multi-cultural clientele. Their proposed model of 'anti-racism' training (aimed originally at the 'White' majority in the United States) identifies four developmental stages with specific training goals (cf. Ponterotto 1988). The stages, goals, examples, and rationale can be summarized as follows:

1. *Acceptance stage* – characterized by a denial of an ethno-racial problem or significant cultural differences, which thereby perpetuates dominant culture norms; *training goals* – increasing one's awareness and emotional sensitivity of the self as a member of particular (i.e., dominant or mainstream) culture and expanding awareness of cultural differences; *example* – activities that ask participants to remember their experiences of growing up as a member of an ethno-racial group, what they were told about other such groups, and how they were taught to interact with others; *rationale* – owning and acknowledging one's ethno-racial identity serves as a pre-requisite to changing one's attitudes and behaviours toward others.

2. *Resistance stage* – characterized by anger toward demonstrations of racism, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and stereotyping and a belief that the system should be changed, though with resistance to the perceptions of one's own racism; *training goals* – identifying one's own racist attitudes and behaviours, as well as working through one's own sense of futility to develop hope and power for change; *example* – viewing and discussing films that deal with issues of racism; *rationale* – acknowledging personal racism and ethnocentrism allows one to take ownership of the problem and to begin contemplating strategies for change.

3. *Redefinition stage* – characterized by re-evaluation of one's personal goals and values to develop an ethno-racial identity and, therefore, ethno-racial culture

without racism; *training goals* – increasing awareness, sensitivity, and ownership of the problem of racism and one's ethno-racial identity to develop action strategies to change racist systems; *example* – value clarification exercises that focus on challenging racist beliefs and discussions of current events or personal experiences involving racism; *rationale* – the recognition of one's personal contribution to the perpetuation of racism will provide a strong impetus for action.

4. <u>*Internalization stage*</u> – characterized by a recognition of ethno-racial differences and differing levels of awareness *and* by efforts to work with others to recognize diversity and experience within a multi-cultural environment; *training goals* – supporting the development of racial identification as part of personal identification, with the aims of (a) eliminating exploitive, oppressive attitudes, (b) developing a multi-cultural perspective, and (c) implementing strategies for change; *example* – discussions with others about specific examples of racism that they would like to confront, identifying particular implementation strategies; *rationale* – change occurs when participants can transfer their perceptions and beliefs regarding ethno-racial identity and multi-culturalism into concrete actions.

Foeman (1991) describes several approaches to 'race' relations training, including the 'didactic model' with a focus on information sharing, 'experiential training' that encourages interaction and personal exchanges among workshop participants, and the 'groupwork model' which includes a combination of information-sharing techniques (films, role play, discussions) and accommodates a variety of learning styles. The goals of 'race' relations training that emerge from some consideration of these different approaches include: establishing an information base and social context for training participants; increasing cross-racial dialogue; and encouraging participants to place themselves in the context of the larger social system and experience interpersonal cross-racial relations simultaneously. The training situation should include a relatively small group (not more than 12-16 participants, with either 1 or 2 facilitators), icebreakers (e.g., self-identification exercises such as "I" statements), 'mixing-up activities' (physical activity rather than talking activity), question and answer sessions, 'same-race caucuses,' and wrap-up activities (e.g., exchange of imaginary gifts or personal commitments to change). The various models described by Corvin and Wiggins (1989), Ponterotto (1988) and Foeman

(1991) clearly may be transferred to other contexts – including sensitivity training among those interested in promoting resident participation in assisted housing.

4.3. Enhancing Communication

A logical corollary of cultural sensitivity training concerns the development of more effective communication and dissemination of information strategies, which are the cornerstones of a recent Cityhome (1994) study. In some instances, the communication strategies will necessarily involve reliance upon translation and interpretation services. Turner (1990) concludes from the fact that since roughly one-third of new immigrants to Metropolitan Toronto lacked official language skills, the importance of translation services, multilingual publications and language training cannot be overstated. Until recently, these services have been routinely available in literally dozens of languages across a spectrum of ethno-racial, community-based agencies (Yampolsky and Medeiros 1992).

The authors of the Cityhome (1994:3) study argue that "(p)roviding information to tenants is a pre-requisite for meaningful tenant involvement." The specific strategies recommended include, for example, the creation of a centralized mailing list, publication of a revised tenants' handbook, the establishment of a communication standard (including time allotment for returning phone calls), annual meetings between tenants and staff, and the development of a policy handbook.

More broadly, Masi (1992) argues that cross-cultural communication models must consider five main factors that will impact the interaction: (1) exchange of information, which includes the selective usage of translation in appropriate situations; (2) understanding, or the extent to which definitions of the situation are similar or different; (3) empathy, or the ability to take on another's perspective and to be concerned about the emotions of another; (4) mutual respect, which includes a recognition of other's beliefs and concerns; and (5) confidence, or an acceptance that participants engaged in the interaction process belong there and have something to contribute (cf. Button and Rossera 1990).

Successful cross-cultural interaction further requires a clear understanding of each other's expectations (Masi and Disman 1994). Masi (1992) further points out that one

does not have to know everything about every other culture or of any one group in particular to be able to communicate effectively. Rather the ability to appreciate others' norms, values and beliefs, as well as the ability to look inward to appreciate one's own perspective, are the keys to successful communication: "Cross-cultural communication is thus far less knowledge than it is a set of skills and an attitude" (Masi 1992:1163). Finally, while some people may be appear to be 'naturally' more competent at cross-cultural communication, the fact remains that these skills can be developed through an investment of time, experience, and understanding.

4.4. Enhancing Participation

To enhance the participatory process in assisted housing requires more than simply a handful of strong resident leaders (Monti 1989). There are several practical steps that can be taken to enhance participation, such as the organization of community events, the provision of meeting space, and even independent funding for resident associations (Cityhome 1994). It is also important to recognize that participation in the management of assisted housing can take a variety of forms, ranging from the provision of information (resident handbooks, newsletters), sharing information (suggestion boxes, surveys), consultation (ad-hoc tenant/staff committees), on-going dialogue (tenants' associations), and shared decision-making (tenant managed projects). Each form requires different practical techniques (CMHC 1987; Ekos Research Associates 1991; Prairie Research Associates Inc. 1991; Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 1993; Vakili-Zad 1993; Greater Vancouver Regional District 1995:33).

Tang and Kirkbride (1986) argue that encouragement to participate may be especially critical for involving participants who are from minority groups, due to cultural values that may discourage assertiveness. Cohen (1976) offers the following advice as strategies for increasing the probability of devising successful participatory processes.

- The greater the familiarity a particular group of people have with a problem, the greater the likelihood that these people will become engaged initially in addressing the problem and then continue working until some resolution is achieved.

- The group decision-making process can be successful if the people involved share common histories with relation to the problem involved.

- The participants should feel ownership of the decision-making process. In a sense the problem to be addressed should be seen as the participant's problem and defined in their terms. Participants should view the planning process and tactics of putting agreed plans into action as their own intervention.

Marabella (1991) argues further that the development of a sense of responsibility among residents requires an understanding of what motivates individuals to assume such responsibility. These 'motivators' might include everything ranging from the satisfaction of personal needs to 'selective incentives' (e.g., public recognition via newsletter) to developing the imperative that "If I don't do it, nobody will." In light of these considerations, Marabella (1991) suggests the following strategies to help develop a sense of resident responsibility:

- acknowledge the existence of 'free riders' (i.e., those who benefit from a collective process without having contributed to the process);

- convince those who have not participated previously that their participation will yield something of value;

- develop a sense of community among residents and provide opportunities for them to pursue their individual interests via the group's ability to meet their needs; and

- recognize that the complex nature of desirable rewards can lead to creative approaches to matching types and levels of participation and resident motivation.

4.5. Resident Training Opportunities

In their study of twenty resident groups in UK assisted housing, Furbey et al. (1994) concluded that, after the availability of a meeting place, access to training was regarded as "the most important ingredient" and a "vital prerequisite" for effective resident participation. Even though some residents had previously negative experiences with resident training (poor quality, patronizing), the great majority of resident responded with enthusiasm to the prospect of training, so long as residents were involved in the decision making relating to the type of training services (Furbey et al. 1994:204). More generally,

Carlile (1990) argues that resident participation training involves a three-phase process: (1) training in accounting, general business procedures, resident screening and maintenance; (2) developing economic strategies for resident businesses; and (3) calling for technical assistance to successful programs where residents wish to purchase their units.

Some limited research (not specifically dealing with assisted housing) has focused on efforts to increase minority participation in managerial positions. For example, Asamoah, Haffey and Hodges (1992) recommend that at least four organizational characteristics will enhance the likelihood that the talent of minorities will be represented at the managerial level: (1) flexible personnel practices; (2) an agency style geared toward developing a sense of community; (3) increased or lengthened career ladders; and (4) decreasing internal resistance (i.e., institutional racism and cronyism).

Beyond the specifics of the organizational structure, there a several potential training methods that can help upgrade assisted housing residents to enhance their self-sufficiency regarding management. Bell (1995), for example, describes the importance of competency-based approaches for upgrading the basic skills of residents, self-paced individualized computer-driven training approaches, and computer-assisted basic skills training.

4.6. Participatory Management Training

The dominant model of resident councils has been the appointment of such councils by an administrative directive rather than through resident-planned meetings at the grass-roots level (Devitt and Checkoway 1982). The more successful resident participation in management endeavours appear to be those where residents have had pre-existent, resident-based organizing efforts, where an atmosphere of creative tension exists between residents and the housing authority, and where there are adequate and continuing resources available for operations, modernization, and so forth (Peterman 1994).

4.7. Conflict Management Training

Comparative studies have illustrated that culture has an impact upon the work-related values and behaviours of group members (Hofstede 1984; McCarrey 1988) and that differences between cultures pose a risk within the multi-cultural work groups (Tang and Kirkbride 1986; Vaid-Raizada 1985). Research by Kirchmeyer and Cohen (1992) highlights the value of training in the area of constructive conflict in multi-cultural groups: the more extensive a group's use of constructive conflict, the more committed the members were to the group and to the decision.

The literature further recommends several possible strategies for managers seeking to achieve an organizational culture which embraces constructive conflict, such as the following: encourage work-group members to express their opinions; actively solicit various viewpoints; be willing to change their own positions; structure critiquing in the form of devil's advocate; seek solutions that respond to several perspectives; reward group success rather than independent work; provide training in constructive conflict approach; develop mutual trust and identification among group members; and develop conditions of security such as mutual trust, understanding, and respect to overcome issues of communication (Kirchmeyer and Cohen 1992; Tierney 1992).

4.8. Mentoring

Allen-Sommerville (1992) proposes the use of mentors as a strategy to increase the level of minority participation in higher education. This idea may be relevant and helpful in assisted housing communities with new residents and, in particular, with residents who have recently arrived in Canada as either immigrants or refugees. Educational institutions are increasingly making use of community agencies, the business sector, and private and government programs to mentor minority young people with their educational achievements. Specifically, the mentoring process can support students from diverse backgrounds to overcome barriers related to communication ability, academic progress, and social and environmental problems. "Mentoring is viewed as an effective approach for use with ethnic minority students to address...insufficient knowledge about, or access to

resources. Mentor-student relationships can develop naturally or within structured interventions through activities designed to arrange, sustain, and monitor matches" (Allen-Sommerville, 1992:29). The mentoring process can be a two-way activity, in that the mentors learn more about the situation and characteristics of the people they mentor. This idea can be applied to a number of situations in assisted housing communities.

4.9. Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Organizational Development

A recent study of barriers to social housing access in British Columbia concluded the following: "Tolerance of a climate of subtle racism and overt racist practices needs to be forcefully eradicated ... A zero tolerance policy needs to be articulated. It should be made incumbent on the management ... to intervene in the case of racist incidents (Circa Enterprises and Associates 1995:44).

Henry et al. (1995), in their recent book *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*, have a chapter on "Organizational Resistance to Anti-Racism." This chapter identifies and discusses fifteen common forms of resistance within organizations to organizational change relating to anti-racist and anti-discrimination initiatives. These are: (1) reluctance to create an anti-racist vision; (2) lack of commitment; (3) inadequate policies; (4) inadequate training; (5) lack of representation; (6) limited access to goods and services; (7) absence of sanctions; (8) lack of individual accountability; (9) structural rigidity; (10) ineffective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; (11) insufficient resources; (12) tokenism; (13) minority change agents; (14) lack of organizational accountability; and (15) limited public accountability (Henry et al. 1995:280-305).

The Joint Policy and Planning Committee of the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Ontario Hospital Association Partnership prepared the *Ontario Hospitals Anti-Racism Project Report* and an accompanying *Ontario Hospitals Anti-Racism Resource Package* aimed at "achieving anti-racism organizational change in the hospital sector" (Ontario Hospitals Anti-Racism Task Force 1996b:4). The *Resource Package* serves as a practical guide that contains a set of implementation tools to assist hospitals with the

"organizational changes required to make health care provision responsive to the needs of all communities" (Ontario Hospitals Anti-Racism Task Force 1996a:1). The *Resource Package* specifically contains the following: (1) Anti-Racism Policy Guidelines; (2) Anti-Racism Organizational Change Self-Assessment Tool (to identify systemic barriers, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of organizational change); (3) Anti-Racism Education Strategy Guidelines (to raise awareness/understanding of the issues and increase employees' skill in identifying/eliminating racism); and (4) "No Excuse" Video (portraying experiences of ethno-racial health care professionals) and Discussion Guide. The package includes instructions for implementation, with a particularly practical reference source entitled *Anti-Racism Education Strategy Guidelines*. The general strategy recommended requires:

- leadership, commitment and support from those responsible for implementing an anti-racism strategy;
- staff participation, representative of diversity of population in all phases;
- linkage with business objectives of organization;
- needs assessment, including focus groups;
- communication, especially to reduce resistance to change;
- action plan that outlines activities for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the anti-racism education strategy;
- allocation of appropriate resources; and
- integration with other training initiatives.

In addition, the *Resource Package* contains a publication of the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat (1995) entitled *Building Blocks to Equity*. The document provides the framework for various tools developed "to assist (organizations) in implementing barrier-free service and effective use of resources." A variety of programs might be offered, including: (1) information sessions; (2) human rights training/harassment/complaints mechanism training; (3) anti-racism orientation; (4) information on legislation (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms & the Canadian and Ontario Human Rights Codes); (5) anti-racism policy; (6) analysis of racism and anti-racism organizational change; (7) time for

participants to discuss, role-play, develop personal action plans; and (8) follow-up and evaluation after sessions.

Minors (1996) describes three types of organizations that are situated along a continuum of world views that range from "uni-versity" (monocultural, excluding world-view) to "poly-versity" (genuinely multi-cultural, including world-view). Organizations can be classified accordingly: (1) discriminatory (monocultural, promotes dominance, racist, excludes differences; (2) non-discriminatory (ignores dominance, non-racist, denies differences; and (3) anti-discriminatory (multi-cultural, promotes diversity, anti-racist, includes differences). The "successful transition to anti-racism requires organizations to

- identify behaviours, practices, or structures that need to, and can realistically, be changed;
- determine necessary sanctions and supports, including training and education;
- plan for and implement changes appropriate to each stage; and
- review, monitor, and institutionalize the changes" (Minors 1996:208).

Tator (1996) argues that anti-racism principles need to be included in the education and training of human services workers in order to produce change. From her perspective, the training should involve several components (see pages 167-168). Johnson (1996) develops a framework for practitioners interested in facilitating anti-racism change within organizations delivering human services. The framework includes a focus on multiple levels, including that of practitioners, the community, the agency, the funders, the political level and the systems level.

4.10. Coping with Burnout

As a final consideration, the issue of 'burnout' merits special attention. Burnout is a common phenomena for individuals involved in working with other people, especially to the extent that these involvements are vulnerable to doubt, disillusionment and eventual loss of energy (Beemsterboer and Baum 1984). Individuals involved for extended periods in resident participation in assisted housing may be susceptible to burnout as a result of the challenges. The development of burnout has been described as passing through four stages:

- enthusiasm, over identification with work, and over-expenditure of one's energy

- stagnation where one merely conducts the work

- frustration with the work

- apathy used as a defence against the frustration (Lammert, 1981)

Beemsterboer and Baum (1984) discuss proactive interventions or strategies to address burnout, including the following:

- *Staff Development*: reduction of demands, consultation, training, support groups, time management

- *Changing Roles and Role Structure*: limit work, arrange daily work, avoid patterns of change or stagnation, limit hours of work

- *Management Development*: management training, develop monitoring systems, monitor role strain, provide formal education

- *Agency Goals and Guiding Principles*: clarity of goals, guiding principles, develop education.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on the available literature to discuss the range of potential cultural and ethno-racial barriers to successful resident participation in assisted housing. The potential barriers identified have included primary and secondary characteristics of the participants themselves, as well as situational, organizational, and contextual factors that can affect diverse people's willingness or capacity to interact. Although the research literature identifies a wide range of potential barriers it does not address the relative importance of particular barriers (i.e., which are the most 'powerful' or 'damaging' impediments to participation). There is also the issue of how the potential cultural and ethno-racial barriers combine (the 'interaction effects') to create the most intractable barriers to resident participation. Thus, even though the available research is very helpful in identifying a broad array of potential barriers, a great deal of additional research is required before we have a more applied – i.e., *policy- and practice-relevant* – understanding of these barriers.

Several of the potential barriers to participation have received considerable attention in the general research literature, including most of the primary and secondary variables, as well as the situational factors. Others have not been subjected to much empirical analysis, particularly as one moves much more directly to an examination of ethno-racial variables affecting resident participation in assisted housing. Indeed, housing policy and housing management professionals, at least for the time being, will have to draw upon a much broader range of research literatures to help inform decisions and strategies aimed at enhancing resident participation. There are emerging models and potentially applicable lessons from the fields of management science, education and health care. In contrast, the housing management literature has produced only limited research and advice thus far.

To place all this in context it is important to keep in mind John F.C. Turner's (1996) most recent advice on "tools for building community." The literature on cultural and ethno-racial barriers inevitably refers to the role of attitudes and values, as barriers to progress and as a means to overcome barriers. Turner ends a recent article noting that the "primary barrier" to making progress on building improved housing communities "is in our own collective and individual mind":

> "The main barrier ... is in the mind and can be overcome only through the change of attitudes, imagery, values and the renewal of language... Underlying and overarching the specific changes sought by so many in the field of home and neighbourhood building is an inner change of imagery, of attitude, values and language" (Turner 1996:346).

If the potential cultural and ethno-racial barriers to successful resident participation identified in this literature review are to be either avoided or overcome, it seems Turner's advice needs to be heeded. The literature review has identified several practical means by which the "main barrier" and the many other cultural and ethno-racial barriers discussed might be addressed. The efficacy of these approaches with respect to enhancing resident participation in assisted housing, however, cannot be assessed at present in the absence of more formal evaluation research. Nevertheless, several options are explored that can be explored and tested in the local contexts of specific assisted housing communities.

Appendix: Description of Literature Search

Our literature search on cultural and ethno-racial barriers to participation began with the housing literature on resident participation. We consulted with housing officials and academics who may know of relevant literature. Contacts were also made via the Internet with housing researchers elsewhere who may know of relevant literature. These contacts did not prove very helpful other than confirming that there is limited relevant literature within the area of housing studies and housing management.

Mari Wilson, MLS, a professional librarian with expertise in searching electronic databases, carried out extensive keyword searches of the Internet and of numerous periodical literature databases. Described below is the detailed breakdown of the search terms and combinations used. Some of the terms used in the freetext portions are somewhat inconsistent. This is due to our progressive familiarity with the subject area, variations in the subject indexing of the different CD-ROMs themselves, as well as an assessment of a satisfactory number and quality of hits to be returned. Virtually all of the literature cited in this review came from these database searches.

Internet
search engines: AltaVista & Excite & Yahoo & InfoSeek

ProQuest Direct
1.   tenant participation or tenant management
2.   subject(minority and ethnic groups) and subject(hous*) and freetext(barrier* or participation)

ABI Inform
•   same as ProQuest Direct

CBCA (Canadian Business and Current Affairs)
1.   tenant w/3[within 3 words] (participation or barrier* or management)

Sociofile
1.   tenant particip* or resident particip* or tenant management
2.   subject descriptors(cultur* or ethnic* or racial or ethnocultur*) AND
     (a) subject descriptors(access or limitations or problems or opportunities)
     (b) title(barrier* or factor* or (discrimination and hous*) or access* or particip*
          or overcoming)

PsychLit
•   Same as Sociofile. Sociofile & PsychLit use same software, indexing is very similar.

PAIS (Public Affairs Information Service)
1. subject descriptors (cultur* or ethnic* or racial or ethnocultur*) AND title(barrier* or factor* or (discrimination and hous*) or access* or particip* or overcoming
2. Same as number 1 but with the (and housing) requirement removed from (b)
3. (tenant or housing) and freetext (participation)

Dissertation Abstracts
(This search was restricted to 1988-1995)
1. tenant participation or tenant management org* or resident participation
2. freetext(ethnic* or racial or immigrant* or cultural) AND title(participation or barriers or factors or differences or access)

Social Work Abstracts
1. tenant participation or tenant management org* or resident participation
2. subject(minority or ethnic or ethno*) AND title(participation or barrier* or access*)
3. subject(minority or ethnic or ethno*) AND (limitation* or problems or opportunit*)

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