

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY OF THE USE OF LEISURE BY AGED MALES

A study of the relationship between
leisure time activities after and
before retirement by aged males, who
resided in the City of Winnipeg and
were in receipt of Social Allowances
during December, 1961

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ABSTRACT

This is a limited study of the leisure time activities of one hundred and twenty-one aged males residing in the City of Winnipeg who were in receipt of Social Allowances during the month of December, 1961. The area of study included leisure time activities before and after retirement within five varieties: athletic; social; dramatic; artistic; and educational. The activities were further classified as to: spectator; participant; solitary; or group. In this study, relevant data was obtained from personal interviews and compiled on a schedule.

Major findings were that the occurrence of activities after retirement was markedly less as compared to the pre-retirement period. The athletic variety was most popular before retirement; solitary and spectator activities were the most important types within the athletic variety before and after retirement. Social activities were proportionately the most popular variety of activity after retirement; participant and group were the most important types of social activities. Dramatic activities occurred less frequently after retirement, yet its proportion of occurrence as compared to the total, increased after retirement. Solitary and spectator were the most frequent types of activities within this variety. The ranking of artistic and educational activities was the same for the two periods. On the other hand, artistic and educational activities occurred less frequently after retirement.

CHAPTER I

Longevity, with its protracted period of retirement, has not necessarily been an unqualified blessing, rather it has introduced a host of perplexing problems. Pertinent to this is the problem of making use of the leisure hours which suddenly have become the whole life of the retired individual. The use made of this leisure will depend on the individual, who in turn, is influenced by a variety of factors that interplay to determine his choice. In this research study, we will be concerned with the leisure time activities of aged, retired males. The aspect chosen for a closer scrutiny is the influence of pre-retirement leisure activities on the activities undertaken after retirement. For this purpose the activities of a selected number of aged males of Winnipeg, who were in receipt of Social Allowances during December, 1961, were studied.

Without question, the most significant development for the human species in the 20th century is the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult to die. As a result, an explosive increase in the population of the world is in the making...A major aspect of the problem of population expansion...is the fact that more and more people are passing the 65-year milestone into the era of life we commonly call old age. In 1900 only one out of ten Americans could expect to achieve this goal; today two out of three celebrate their 65th birthday.¹

The fact that more and more people are living beyond their sixty-fifth birthday has wide spread implications for many areas,

¹Edward L. Bortz, M.D., "Healthy Added Years", 1961 Britannica Book of the Year (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1961), Canadian Supplement, p. 66.

ranging from health and medicine, economics to social work. Some of the health and medical problems accompanying old age are well known, and at times strikingly obvious--decrease of physical strength, gradual loss of motor and mental skills, impairment of sight and hearing, increased chronic illness and degrees of disabilities. While of great concern to the aged, and an important factor that influences the use of leisure by the aged, we can do no more than recognize the existence of the problem of health and health care in this report.

The economic problems associated with the aged are indeed weighty. People over sixty-five may stop producing goods, but they do not stop consuming them. This group now demands--and its demands will grow proportionately greater as it increases in size--vast quantities of the necessities of living. The increasing magnitude may be inferred when the ratio of older persons is considered. At the turn of the century the proportion of aged persons in the population was estimated to be 5.01 per cent.¹ By 1955 the proportion of aged persons had increased to 7.8 per cent and was expected to increase with the years.² "The Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects" estimated that Canada would have a total population of 26,653,400 by 1980; the ratio of aged persons was estimated to be 8.9 per cent.² A comparison of the Federal Census figures for 1901 and 1951 of the Manitoba

¹Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1901, Vol. IV, Population, pp. 6-7.

²Government of Canada, Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957), p. 108, Table 6.3.

population is even more revealing of what this increase can mean for a given area. The percentage of the Manitoba population of those sixty-five years and over in 1901 was 2.39 per cent, but in 1951 it was 8.43 per cent of the increased population.¹ The large influx of adult immigrants, the falling birth rate and the decline in mortality were contributing factors in swelling the numbers of older people. To narrow this increase down to our own community, the Greater Winnipeg survey of our older citizens brought out the startling fact that "one person in 11 in Greater Winnipeg is sixty-five years of age or older, as contrasted with 1 in 17 in 1941."² This increasingly heavy economic burden of aged and their needs may eventually necessitate intensive study to find ways and means of keeping senior citizens productive. In addition, this increasingly higher ratio of persons over sixty-five, has focused greater interest and concern on the social problems of the aged. Thus the health, welfare and happiness of our senior citizens is a major problem not only because of their increasing numbers and proportion in the population, but because their status constitutes an enormous waste that the nation can ill afford.

Fundamental social forces have transformed the labor market in the present century so as to make it increasingly difficult for older people to find work.

¹Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1951, Vol. I, Population, Tables 1 and 19.

²The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, Age and Opportunity (Winnipeg, 1953), p. 1.

In 1890, 68 per cent of men over 65 were at work. This was fairly close to 100 per cent of the men who were able to work efficiently. The proportion of older men at work decreased rapidly to 43 per cent in 1940, went up to 50 per cent under the stimulus of war production in 1945, and dropped back to 42 per cent in 1950. Today the employed older workers are mainly farmers or self-employed city dwellers or service workers.¹

The trend of the past years has been toward earlier retirement and a refusal to hire people as they come closer to sixty, and in many cases forty-five, years of age. Despite lower absenteeism and fewer accidents, hiring practices have largely remained unfavorable to the older worker. This is partly due to the higher costs of providing pensions and disability insurance for workers who begin employment at a more advanced age.

Retirement is a comparative newcomer on the scene of American living. For it is the product of scientific and technological advances that have lengthened life while shortening the work period. Thus, not so long ago, "retirement" in its contemporary sense was still a luxury, only the fairly well-off and wealthy could afford to contemplate. At the same time, there is some indication that the retirement-at-sixty-five principle was an outgrowth of the depression of the 1930's when it became important to create job opportunities for younger people. However the system has remained in force with but few exceptions, and with the constant extension of human longevity, it is promising to become a considerable problem because of the many years of relative idleness thus created. The extent of the problem can be gauged by the

¹R.J. Havighurst and R. Albrecht, Older People (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), pp. 102-103.

fact that a man presently sixty-five can expect to live at least twelve years more, while his wife can expect to outlive him by two or three years. The woman who is a couple of years younger than her husband can expect to live at least seventeen or eighteen years after her husband has retired.¹

The social implications of the problems arising from the process of aging are tremendous, and fortunately, are receiving more attention than ever before. As an example, we can consider the social implications arising as society changes from a work-centred to a leisure-centred society. This transition creates difficulties for the people who grew up with the idea that it was socially and personally desirable to work as much and as long as possible. It has been suggested that a person born after 1920 is in many ways quite a different person from one born around 1900, due to the changes in attitude toward work and leisure.² In view of this one would suspect that many of the persons presently over age sixty-five will have their days spotted with hours which they will feel are wasted; hours during which they merely exist; hours permeated with the feeling of the dreariness of life. It is well known that illness can develop from idleness and boredom.

The problem posed by retirement and the new demands of leisure may well affect the aged males more than aged females. For many of the females, who were not gainfully employed, or did housework, old age

¹Edward L. Bortz, M.D., op. cit., p. 74.

²R.J. Havighurst and R. Albrecht, op. cit., p. 103.

doesn't bring such great changes in social role as for the male.¹ Very often retirement for a man means the loss of social contacts enjoyed with his fellow workers and fewer outlets for his emotional energies; for many women their usefulness continues largely unabated well into the later years. On the other hand, the married aged males have an advantage socially over the widowed or unmarried men in that the relatives and old friends of each spouse are at least potential sources of social interaction. While recognizing this difference, we decided to include married, widowed, and unmarried aged males in our study. By doing this we hoped the findings of our research would have wider application.

It is within this context that we decided we would look at some of the factors that may determine the use of leisure by aged males. However, it became readily apparent that innumerable factors could influence the use of leisure. Factors that could be considered significant are: the influence of previous planning; health; financial resources; local opportunities for diversified activities; the present age of the individual; educational and cultural level; personality development; religious beliefs and values; and, activities and interests prior to retirement. While this is not a complete list of all possible factors, it did indicate that we could not deal with the total implications of the problem. Therefore, we sought to restrict our research by focusing on the relationship between the use of leisure

¹E. Cumming and W.E. Henry, Growing Old (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1961), pp. 144-147.

time activities before and after retirement. The fact that other research had considered many of the other factors had a bearing on our decision. Studies have been made of the adjustment of the aged, their housing, role changes, recreation needs and recreation usage. However, the relationship between the use of leisure time activities before and after retirement had not received as much attention.

Just as numerous factors presented themselves for consideration, so also the variety of possible subjects for study required that we restrict ourselves to one group from within the total aged population. The choice that presented itself included: a study of aged males and/or females; a selection from any or all of the different social and economic levels; one or more of the cultural groups within the city; or again each of the described individual groups could have been combined with other groups to permit a wide range of possible subjects. For our purpose, however, we have concentrated on retired aged males on Social Allowances as the subjects for our study.¹ This group was chosen for several reasons. The possibility that aged males may have greater problems with leisure, and therefore require more help, has already been mentioned. A further reason relates to the inception of the Social Allowances program by the Province of Manitoba. As a result of this new program, the staff of the Department of Welfare came into active contact with the aged in the Province. This soon highlighted the lack of verified, tested information about the aged.

¹See Appendix A for a brief description of the Social Allowances program.

One of the problems recognized was that of the single man living in a room in the downtown section of the City of Winnipeg. Aside from his financial circumstances, it was felt that more should be known about the daily routines of their lives, of the use made of their time, in order to ensure that legislative provisions might more accurately meet their particular needs. Other agencies, as the Age and Opportunity Bureau, were also interested in learning more about the aged in order to be more effective in meeting the leisure time needs of the aged. As a consequence, a suggestion was made to the Research Director of the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, that studies of problems of the aged might be useful. In view of this we decided to use the aged males on Social Allowances as our research subjects; the fact that this was a readily accessible group for research also played some part in the final decision. Restricting the study to recipients of Social Allowances should help to equalize the factor of financial resources. On the other hand, their limited income might indicate that, as a group, they require additional help from the various concerned agencies in using their leisure time in a way most satisfactory to themselves.

Solutions to the problem posed by our rapidly aging population cannot be long delayed. While the social and economic aspects of the aged have received more attention during the last decade, nevertheless, the possibility still persists that too-long neglect of the problem of the aged may result in narrowly focused political pressures on the part of the aged as a group. Some of the groups that have been formed to

provide the elderly with recreational and social outlets have already been altered into political pressure groups designed to secure larger pensions, special housing and other benefits for the aged.¹ While recognizing the validity and desirability of these benefits, such interests may not always be compatible with the interests of the nation as a whole, and do not strike at the root of the problems. It would seem, therefore, that the solution to the problems of the aged should not be divorced from a program that takes into account the needs and opportunities of the whole population. Thus all levels of our society must be made aware of the problems and be induced to make constructive efforts at their solution. E. L. Bortz, president of the American Geriatrics Society, has written:

The problems of aging are a personal concern of people who are now in their 30s, 40s, or 50s, for the solutions to the problems of the aged in the 1970s, 1980s and thereafter must have their basis in actions taken in the 1960s by individuals, by business, by government and by society as a whole.²

In view of the recognized need to do something about the problems of the aged, and the need to prepare for retirement, the suggestion has been made that education should be provided to teach citizens avocations, or perhaps a second vocation that will provide satisfaction and help fill with meaning their increased leisure time after retirement.³ However, this suggestion possibly produces as many problems as it hopes to solve. In the case of the group studied in

¹Edward L. Bortz, M.D., op. cit., p. 79.

²Ibid., p. 80.

³Ibid., p. 66.

this research, since most of them are probably drawn from the laboring class, many may have but a limited educational background. Furthermore, to follow this suggestion, our knowledge about the use made of leisure needs to be expanded by research. Thus we need to know, among many other things, which factors most significantly determine the use of leisure after retirement. Knowing this, we may receive some indication of how to approach the task of educating younger and older people to prepare for old age so that the aged years may be used intelligently and happily. Thus if research should indicate there is a meaningful carry-over from previous leisure time activities into the retirement period, this would be very useful and important information for the planning and the undertaking of any effort to prepare individuals for the leisure time of old age.

Growing out of the chosen problem and the particular focus of this study, we wished to test the proposition that leisure time activities after retirement, of aged males on Social Allowances, are related to the leisure time activities before retirement. In seeking to answer this several supporting hypotheses were formulated for testing. Firstly, the ranking of leisure time activities according to their occurrence within the varieties after retirement, by aged males on Social Allowances, is the same as the ranking of leisure time activities according to these varieties before retirement. We thought that over all our group of males, if they had been active in several varieties of activities, be they athletic, dramatic, artistic, social or educational, would probably tend to keep up, though with some

abatement, their interest and activity within the different varieties even after retirement.

The second sub-hypothesis is: the occurrence of leisure time activities after retirement, by aged males on Social Allowances, is less than the occurrence of leisure time activities before retirement; in addition, this occurrence will differ for each variety of activity. It was presupposed there would be a difference in the occurrence of leisure time activities before and after retirement. However, it was thought this over all difference would be greater or smaller depending on the particular variety of activity.

Further, the proportion which each variety is of the total occurrence of activities after retirement will be different than the proportion each was before retirement. Even though it was presupposed that the ranking of leisure time activities would remain the same before and after retirement, the proportion of the activities as related to the total occurrence of activities would be changed during the two periods.

The fourth supporting hypothesis is: the occurrence of leisure time activities, by types after retirement by aged males on Social Allowances, is less than the occurrence of leisure time activities before retirement; in addition, this occurrence will differ for each type. We expected that the difference in the occurrence of leisure time activities before and after retirement, as seen in the hypothesis respecting variety, would also hold true for the types of activities, be they spectator and participant or solitary and group. In addition,

the difference in the occurrence of leisure time activities would not be constant for the different types of activities.

The final sub-hypothesis is: the proportion which each type is of the total occurrence of activities after retirement, by aged males on Social Allowances, will be different than the proportion each was before retirement. The presumption was that the proportion of the activities, by types, if related to the total occurrence of activities, would show a difference in proportion.

Many questions had to be answered to draw a picture of the leisure time activities of aged males and to determine the occurrence of leisure time activities before and after retirement. What are some of the different leisure time activities of the aged? Which variety of activity is most popular before retirement: athletic; dramatic; artistic; social; or educational? Which variety of activity is most popular after retirement? If there are differences in popularity, what may be the significance of this fact? What proportion of activities are represented by the different varieties? Is there a difference in the occurrence of leisure time activities before and after retirement? Is there a larger proportion of solitary activities after retirement than before retirement? Is there a larger proportion of spectator activities after than before retirement? Is there a larger proportion of participating activities before than after retirement? Is there more solitary than group activity before retirement? What about after retirement? Is there more spectator than participating activity prior to retirement? Does the same hold true

to the post-retirement period? What is the significance of these facts in understanding the needs of aged males, or in planning for their needs? While many more questions could be posed, these were some of the ones that received consideration as we planned how we would test our hypothesis.

Some of the terms appearing repeatedly in this report should be defined. By the term, "the aged" we refer to those persons within the age range of sixty-five years and over. This age range was chosen since it is the one used in many industrial retirement policies. Old Age Assistance is granted to those sixty-five and over whose need is proven, while every one seventy years and over is entitled to Old Age Security. Social Allowances are paid as a supplement on a needs basis to recipients of Old Age Assistance and Old Age Security. In addition, the local survey on the aged included those sixty-five and over.¹

"Retirement" is interpreted as "separation from paid employment which had the character of an occupation or career."² If a person has part-time employment, which, however, does not disqualify him for Social Allowances, he was considered to be retired, and the part-time employment a use of his leisure. "Leisure" is considered to be "the time we are free from more obvious duties which a paid job or other obligatory occupation imposes on us."³

¹The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, Age and Opportunity (Winnipeg, 1953).

²Wilma Donahue, H. Orbach, Otto Pollak, "Retirement: The Emerging Social Pattern" in The Handbook of Social Gerontology (ed.) Clark Tibbits (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 330.

³Quoted from Lundberg by Max Kaplan, "The Use of Leisure", Ibid., p. 410.

The second chapter will give a general picture of the growing emphasis on leisure in our society. Some of the implications of the increased leisure will also be outlined. Following this will be a review of pertinent research findings regarding the influence of various factors in the use made of leisure.

The third chapter describes the method used in this study. The primary source of the information regarding the use of leisure time was obtained by the completion of a schedule through personal interviews of aged males in receipt of Social Allowances from the Department of Welfare, Province of Manitoba. The limitations of the study, and definitions used, will be given as well.

An analysis of the collected data is given in the fourth chapter. The total number of athletic, dramatic, artistic, social and educational activities will be compared against each other to indicate the ranking of leisure time activities before and after retirement. The occurrence of activities will be considered and the relationship to activities before and after retirement shown in percentages. Finally the type of leisure activities will be examined by comparing the solitary, spectator, group and participatory activities before and after retirement.

The final chapter (five) will bring out such generalizations as can be drawn from the material in relation to the hypothesis and the questions raised regarding the relationship between the use of leisure before and after retirement.

CHAPTER II

Within relatively recent years we have been forced to give further consideration to the use of leisure time.¹ The effects which industrialization has had upon the patterns of social living is partly responsible for this increased interest. The traditional work week of seventy hours has been gradually reduced to forty hours with indications of further reductions in the near future. Vacation periods have been extended. Civil servants are now granted a three week holiday period, whereas previously, this was restricted to only those employees who could claim some twenty to twenty-five years experience with the particular agency. Retirement policies are forcing compulsory retirement at age sixty-five for men. If the present trend in unemployment continues, this age limit may be further lowered. Extensions for continued employment after the age of sixty-five are not granted as readily. Modern homes are planned to include physical opportunities for the increased use of leisure time, i.e. rumpus rooms are becoming an essential feature in planning. Opportunities for participation in leisure time activities have increased. No longer are we restricted to the social opportunities provided through church affiliations but we can extend our interests through enrolment in a varied selection of adult education classes. Further interest has developed in travel and particularly so since the costs can be extended over a period of

¹Leisure has been defined as: "The time we are free from more obvious duties which a paid job or other obligatory occupation imposes on us" quoted from Lundberg by Max Kaplan, loc. cit.

time. The expenditures for leisure time activities are no longer viewed as luxury items but rather as necessities and essential to the promotion of healthy living.

There is more money available for leisure time activities. In the United States, "total estimates for leisure expenditures in 1955 went from \$35 billion to \$281 billion ... Over \$331 billion went to federal taxes in 1952 from entertainment admissions."¹ The Canadian Consumer Price Index gives the percentage of the rise in cost for Recreation and Reading. If the year 1949 is considered as being 100%, the estimate for 1951 was 109.7% to 144.3% in 1960. The most significant differences occurred in 1957-58. In 1957 the total was 129.8% and this increased to 138.4% in 1958.² Undoubtedly these percentages do indicate a general rise in the cost of living but also imply that there are increased expenditures in the particular area of leisure.

While this trend toward increased expenditures for leisure time activities will affect the various age groups, the question remains: what does this increased leisure time mean to the aged individual in terms of his over all adjustment to the retirement period? It means different things to different people. Some have found themselves with more leisure time than they really wanted or could profitably use.

Retired individuals, gradually bereft of companionship, characteristically become lonesome, complaining and self centered, and may make excessive demands on children, physicians, caseworkers, ministers and others.³

¹Max Kaplan, op. cit., p. 307.

²Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Canada Year Book 1960, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961,) p. 495.

³R.J. Havighurst, "Flexibility and the Social Roles of the Retired," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LIX, 1953, p. 310.