

MUNICIPAL RECREATION SERVICES FOR THE
ABLE ELDERLY IN OKLAHOMA: AN
UNEXPLORED FRONTIER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The aging of American society is axiomatic. Not so apparent is the increasing number of persons who are taking early retirement--by their own choice, encouraged by their employers, or as built into the career (such as professional military personnel) (Blau, 1981; Alsop, 1984). Both of these factors combine to produce an ever-increasing proportion of "able elderly" who have a great deal of time, leisure time, to fill. Hudson (1987) conceptualizes this group as:

...a growing number of older persons who are integrated, vigorous, affluent, subject to discrimination, and well. (Hudson, 1987:408)

How is this time being filled? To whom does this segment of the population look for help in filling leisure hours? Who is responsible for providing services to this growing segment of society? These questions, and the lack of satisfactory answers, suggest a significant need in today's society and a critical need for tomorrow as the "baby boom" generation approaches retirement age. These thoughts were echoed by Colston (1986) as he asked:

What program services are currently available in your community for leisure participation by older persons? If available, are they popularly attended and well-received? Is integration within the

community and a sensitivity to the interests of this population observed? These questions and others need to be addressed now. There are individuals currently looking for and investigating an alternative to sedentary living. Will leisure participation become their option and if so, will the recreation and park profession be at the forefront? The answer may be found in this thought--to plan for others today is to prepare for yourself tomorrow. (Colston, 1986:37)

Hudson also questions the new role of the aged: "They are here, they are new, and what, if anything, should they and others do about it?" (1987:408)

In considering leisure services for the able elderly, one need only look through the offerings of municipal parks and recreation departments to detect the scarcity of programs or the lack of diversity of those programs which are offered. Most frequently, programming includes, and may be limited to, only sedentary activities such as dominoes, quilting, and other programs found in senior citizen centers. It is becoming evident that as the population "grays," this limited programming concept will not meet the needs of the target population. Frances Wallach, writing in a 1986 issue of Parks and Recreation, stated:

When we think of providing services for the elderly, most of this country today is still dealing in potholders, bus trips, community sings, and birdwatching (especially for spinsters). (1986:63)

In contrast, she reported (with regard to women, in particular):

We have devised a new role for women who are brought up to accomplish, compete, succeed. Today women enter the work world and reject the role of

housewife. These women will spend 40 years in a work role, and then will be told to revert to the women's traditional role when they retire. Let's think about this situation.

If, for 40 years, I looked down my nose at the housewives who whiled away their afternoons in card playing, can I accept it now? If, in my working career, I laughed at those women with time on their hands who visited museums and art shows, for lack of a job, should I want to do that now?

If, for 35 years, I was superlady--raised my family, succeeded in my career, was important in my profession, are you going to make me happy in the arts and crafts program of the senior center? (Wallach, 1986:64)

Finally, she suggested a new direction which recreation providers might follow for this increasingly active segment of the population:

The elderly will require challenge from you and massive changes in direction on the part of public agency recreation providers. They are more fit than they have ever been. They will be interested in hiking, biking, backpacking, camping, and all kinds of new experiences. (Wallach, 1986:64)

Landon Jones, writing about the baby boom generation, reinforced Wallach's position. He wrote:

We will gain an elderly class that promises to be relatively healthier, better educated, and more certain of its desires. We will almost certainly learn that all old people do not always live in nursing homes, are not all disabled, are not mentally defective, and can lead full and satisfying lives. (Jones, 1980:384)

As the "graying of America" takes place, the demand placed upon the leisure services delivery systems for programming for the able elderly will increase. As the baby boom generation anticipates retirement, and a possible three

decades of life past their work years, the need for quality recreational programs will become critical. An approximate future trilogy of life is taking shape: the first thirty years spent in preparation, the second thirty years spent in active employment, and the third thirty years spent in retirement, or as Kelly (1983) defined them: preparation, establishment and culmination.

While it is not a legal mandate of the Oklahoma municipal recreation agencies to meet this demand, perhaps it is an ethical obligation. If the Oklahoma municipal agency provides a full range of services for the rest of its citizenry--the children, the young adults, and the handicapped, is it unrealistic for the able elderly to expect creative and desirable programming as well? Weiskopf (1982) reinforced this expectation:

The basic needs of aged persons are the same as for anyone at any age: new experiences, security, recognition, response, participation, self-expression, and creativity. (Weiskopf, 1982:320)

Research has shown a need for new programming ideas for this aging segment of the population; are they being met? Is this need even recognized by those in a position to address it? This investigation seeks to supply answers to the following questions:

1. What percentage of the population of each community is composed of elderly?
2. What services are currently offered by

municipal recreation agencies in the state of Oklahoma?

3. What is the relationship between the percentage of the population which is elderly and municipal recreation services which are available?

Before addressing these issues in greater detail, however, it is useful to examine several theoretical approaches to understanding aging and the adjustment of individuals to aging and retirement. In addition, it is important to examine broader social theories and theories of leisure behavior to understand more fully the complex issue under study here.

General Sociological Theory

When examining broader theoretical perspectives which attempt to examine social life in general, three general approaches become apparent: 1) functionalism, as suggested by Durkheim, Comte, and others, 2) conflict theory, as advanced by Marx, Coser, and others, and 3) symbolic interactionism, as presented by Mead, Goffman, Blumer, and others. Functionalism views social life as an organic-type system, the parts of which work in a functional relationship to the whole. Conflict theory looked at society in terms of its typical conflicts or competitions over scarce commodities--power, wealth, and so on. While both of these paradigms have merit, symbolic interaction is the most

applicable to the premises of the current study.

As a major sociological theory, symbolic interactionism presents a fairly broad perspective. In general, it states that the focus of the study of human behavior must be on the interaction between persons and within the individual. It stresses the importance of meaning--of significant symbols, as discussed by Mead, of the situation, as presented by Thomas, of the self, as described by Cooley. (Ritzer, 1983; Martindale, 1960). In describing contemporary symbolic interactionism, Ritzer lists the following principles which are pertinent to the present discussion:

In social interaction people learn the meanings and the symbols that allow them to exercise their distinctively human capacity for thought. Meanings and symbols allow people to carry on distinctively human action and interaction. People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols they use in action and interaction on the basis of their interpretation of the situation. People are able to make these modifications and alterations because, in part, of their ability to interact with themselves, which allows them to examine possible courses of action, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and then choose one. (Ritzer, 1983:306-7)

These notions closely parallel the concepts of Viktor Frankl as expressed in Man's Search for Meaning (1946). Based on his professional background as a psychiatrist and his experiences in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, he devised a new psychotherapeutic technique which he termed logotherapy. Contrary to previous therapeutic modalities, Frankl believed that man is motivated by his

"will to meaning" rather than a "will to pleasure" (Freudian psychotherapy) or a "will to power" (Adlerian psychology) (Frankl, 1946:121). He further posits that this "meaning" can be discovered in three ways:

... (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. (Frankl, 1946:133)

Later researchers have attempted to quantify and operationalize this will to meaning. Crumbaugh and Maholick defined it in this way:

...The ontological significance of life from the point of view of the experiencing individual. (1964:201)

It is thus interesting to refer back to the methodological techniques of the symbolic interactionists and note the similarities. Herbert Blumer urged a very similar approach to the study of human behavior:

In other words, there is need to see social action in terms of the actor since it is only actors who act. It is the position of symbolic interaction that the social action of the actor is constructed by him; it is not a mere release of activity brought about by the play of initiating factors on his organization. In this sense, ..., symbolic interactionism sees social action in a markedly different way from that of current social and psychological science. (Blumer, 1969:55)

Manford Kuhn (1964), while disagreeing with Blumer in some aspects of methodology, concurred with him on the "essential subject matter of symbolic interactionism--what goes on 'inside the heads' of humans" (Ritzer, 1983:319). Kuhn felt that a more empirical technique was needed than Blumer had

suggested.

For instance, the answers of respondents to a series of questions should be the data for the symbolic interactionist to work with, not the 'unreliable' and 'unscientific' intuition of the sociologist. (Ritzer, 1983:320)

Comparing the theoretical premise of symbolic interaction and the work of Viktor Frankl, an essential similarity can be seen--that the meaning of the situation or experience is the critical issue of study.

Max Weber, a precursor to symbolic interaction, discussed in his works the concept verstehen. Literally translated from the German, it means "to understand." H. Stuart Hughes, writing much later, explained this approach to understanding social life:

In short, it was the effort to 'feel oneself into' a historical or social action by putting oneself in the place of the actor or actors. It was a method of psychological sympathy--the method that most sharply distinguished the 'inner' investigation of the human world from the merely external investigation of the world of nature. (Hughes, 1977:311)

This concept, as it has been applied by Weber and others writing since him, is a valuable method to understanding the special needs of the older adult with regard to their leisure activities and desires. If, in fact, the desires of the able elderly are changing from the more sedentary activities traditionally planned for them to the more energetic and vibrant activities that Wallach (1986) and Jones (1980) have suggested, then leisure programmers must

understand this changing view, and understand it from the point of view of the participants rather than from that of a program director. They will need to interact with and recreate with their participants rather than to simply guide or direct them.

Along with this understanding of general sociological theory, there is also a need to understand the impact of the Protestant Work Ethic upon the leisure behavior of society and upon this generation of able elderly, in particular.

The Work Ethic and Leisure

Max Weber, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, addressed the notion of the work ethic or the "Protestant Ethic" as it is frequently called. Dahl (1972) writing about work, described the work ethic this way:

Basically, however, the work ethic consists of two elements: The first is that a man's work, i.e. his job, his occupation, his craft, his profession or whatever he does that pays off in terms of money or its equivalent is the most important aspect of his life and takes precedence over all other aspects. The second is that each man will be rewarded for his work, but he must not seek to enjoy that reward until his work is finished. (Dahl, 1972:42)

Weber addressed, in blatant terms, the role of leisure according to the work ethic, which was prevalent at the time:

Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election (into the ranks of the saved). Loss of

time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health...is worthy of absolute moral condemnation....Thus inactive contemplation is also valueless, or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one's daily work. For it is less pleasing to God than the active performance of His will in a calling. (Weber, 1930:158)

This type of philosophy so thoroughly permeated the thought of modern man that the generation of persons who grew up through the Great Depression found leisure pursuits antithetical to their way of life. Fontana wrote:

The work ethic has reduced leisure to that which we do while waiting to go back to work; we recuperate from a hard (but of course meaningful) day at the office or we relax to regenerate ourselves for tomorrow's workday. (Fontana, 1977:39)

Succeeding generations, with different life experiences, have failed to subscribe as fully to the work ethic. They have elevated leisure from a means to an end (recuperation for work) to an end in itself (as pleasure for its own sake). Fontana suggested:

This is where we are today, no longer forcefully driven by the work ethic, but not quite comfortable without it. (Fontana, 1977:55)

Ekerdt (1986) suggested that Americans have replaced the work ethic with a modern variation which he called the "busy ethic" which calls for the retired person to stay busy--that is, active and involved. Though leisure pursuits are now tolerated and, in fact, encouraged, it is important to "stay busy." He wrote:

The busy ethic serves several purposes: it legitimates the leisure of retirement, it defends

retired people against judgments of obsolescence, it gives definition to retirement role, and it 'domesticates' retirement by adapting retired life to prevailing societal norms. (Ekerdt, 1986:240)

Still another broad area that needs to be examined is that of gerontological theory which seeks to explain aging and the adjustment or reaction of the individual to that aging process.

Social Theories of Aging

Each of the three sociological paradigms described above suggests a corresponding gerontological theory.

Functionalism has its gerontological counterpart in disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry, 1960). Although in disrepute in contemporary circles, it is interesting that the 1985 national meeting of the Gerontological Society of America program profiled a theme ("Markers of Aging") heavily laden with the physiological and sociological (functionalistic) roots of disengagement. Similarly, although not so obviously stated, exchange theory (Dowd, 1975), in gerontological literature, finds its archetype in older and newer conflict theory. For example, the advocacy movement stresses the inequity of the older population in their negotiating milieus leaving them with humiliating "compliance" as the only alternative. Symbolic interactionism, of sociological theory is complemented by the social breakdown syndrome and social reconstruction

model of community psychiatry (Kuypers & Bengston, 1968). Upon examination of the major theories of gerontology seeking to explain adjustment to aging, one finds two divergent, nearly polar, perspectives. Disengagement, as presented by Cumming and Henry (1960), suggests that successful adjustment to aging comes through the mutual withdrawal of the individual from society and society from the individual. One can find some physiological (homeostasis), social psychological (increased interiority of events, privatization of experiences), sociological (functionalism), and biological (the older years are characterized by increased vulnerability and decreased viability) parallels for the broad area of disengagement. Havighurst (1963) and others posit, in activity theory, on the contrary, that good adjustment comes through continued participation--active participation--in middle-aged roles or by substituting other roles. The statement by Maddox (1963:203) concretely linked symbolic interaction and activity theory: "The social self emerges and is sustained in a most basic way through interaction with others." Other frequently mentioned theories (such as role theory, subculture theory, age stratification, reference group theory, and exchange theory) suggest still other "paths to successful aging."

Role theory (Burgess, 1960) was an early precursor of activity theory. Burgess discussed the concept of the

"roleless role" of the elderly. Subculture theory (Rose, 1965) viewed the elderly as a separate subculture within society, similar to, for example, the adolescent subculture. Age stratification theory (Riley, et al, 1972) viewed each birth cohort as a subgroup of society with unique experiences and needs which would affect their adjustment to aging. Reference group theory (Romeis, et al, 1971) defined adjustment to aging in terms of groups, real or imaginary, past or present, with which the aging individual identified himself. Finally, exchange theory (Dowd, 1975) stressed the idea that each person seeks to maximize the benefits of interaction and minimize the costs (in prestige or self-esteem, for example).

One less frequently cited theory upon which the present study is based, the congruence theory (Seleen, 1981), suggests that neither disengagement nor activity theory in themselves can explain good adjustment but rather that the activity or disengagement needs to be "congruent" with the desired choices made by the individual. This is very similar to cognitive personality theory, as explained by Thomae. He stated:

Cognitive personality theory concentrates on how the individual perceives the world around him. As a theory of aging it involves the conceptualization of the aging personality in terms of an integrated system of processes rather than as a set of stable traits. (Thomae, 1971:64)

In an effort to synthesize the existing theories of social

gerontology, Seleen (1981) has integrated these diverse perspectives into a single workable theory, with particular application to life satisfaction and leisure satisfaction studies. Seleen used an instrument which she developed which asks for the actual number of hours which the respondent spent on an activity, the desired number of hours which the respondent would like to spend, and an explanation of the difference. Activities studied were: sleep (including naps), work for pay (full-time, part-time, and commuting time), volunteer work, personal care (hygiene and meals), family care (includes housework, shopping, and caring for others), organizations, media, social life, recreation, and other leisure. She found that as the discrepancy between desired and actual use of time decreases, life satisfaction scores increase, both with regard to each category of activity, as well as to the overall congruence score. She stated:

The degree of congruence between the actual and desired time spent in activity was significantly correlated with life satisfaction. Based on this finding it seems that it could be said that persons who are spending their time as they wished seemed to be more satisfied with life than those who wanted to make changes in their allocation of time, regardless of the direction of those shifts. (1981:99)

She suggested, for future study, the following:

In general, more studies of this type are important because they dispel the myths associated with old age, that is, that older Americans are disgruntled with their lives, in poor health, and spend their time only engaged in a few activities out of the mainstream of life. These data offer convincing

evidence that the majority of these respondents are leading fulfilling and satisfied lives as functioning members of their communities.
(1981:102)

The work of Diane Seleen has reinforced the need for municipal recreation agencies to make available those types of programming which are appropriate for and desired by the able elderly of their respective communities, by being attentive to the changing needs of this segment of the population, and, indeed, the changing nature of this part of the citizenry.

Finally, to understand the importance of leisure to any part of the population it is necessary to examine definitions of leisure and to understand the concepts upon which notions of leisure have been based.

Leisure Definitions and Trends

The final area of theory, which needs to be presented to understand the perspective of this research, is in the area of leisure. It is necessary to understand what is meant by the term, leisure, today. To fully understand leisure it is worthwhile to examine leisure and its meaning to the Greeks and Romans and other cultures since. The Greek word for leisure, schole, meant "serious activity without the pressure of necessity." From that Greek word for leisure derived the English word for school. Similarly the English word "leisure" seems to derive from the Latin word licere

which means "to be free." From the Latin roots came the French word loisir, meaning "to be permitted." From these classical roots comes the English word license.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle viewed leisure as "a state of being in which activity is performed for its own sake." (Bucher, 1972:245). Included in this notion of leisure were such activities as art, politics, philosophical dialogues, and learning. Work, to the Athenian Greeks, was boring. Kando wrote:

Greek civilization defined work as a function (namely the absence of leisure) whereas we do the exact opposite, defining leisure as non-work. (Kando, 1975:23)

Pieper (1952) compared this classical view to a later notion:

Among other things, it might be pointed out in reply that the Christian and Western conception of the contemplative life is closely linked to the Aristotelian notion of leisure. (Pieper, 1952:27)

Relating this classical view of leisure to modern times, Kraus suggested:

It is linked to the idea of an aristocratic class structure based on the availability of slave labor. In modern society, leisure cannot be a privilege reserved for the few. Instead, it is widely available to all. It must exist side by side with work that is respected in our society, and it should have a meaningful relationship to work. (Kraus, 1978:38).

In general, there are four ways to explain leisure: 1) as activity, 2) as free or discretionary time, 3) as a state of mind, or 4) in a holistic manner. For the purpose of

this study, this final view is the most cogent, that is leisure viewed from an approach which integrates activity, attitude, and setting. Kaplan (1975:19) expressed it his way: "Leisure to the participant, like his religion and his love, is what he thinks it is." In a similar way, Dahl (1972) explained:

Leisure is rather that sense of freedom which is realized when a person experiences more fully both his uniqueness and worth as an individual and his acceptance and relationship as part of the world around him. A person finds leisure when he discovers who he is, what he can do with his life, and what an abundance of happy circumstances and relationships in which his life is cast. (Dahl, 1972:70)

With this understanding of leisure, then, it is possible to integrate the theoretical notions presented.

Symbolic interaction, as already discussed, states that the meaning of an act arises in and through the act. That is, it does not have predetermined meanings attached to it. Adding to this, the congruence theory of aging suggests that adjustment to aging is found in the ability to choose how to fill one's time. That is, adjustment is found in the ability to discover one's own meaning in an activity or lack of it. Finally, viewing leisure in terms of Kaplan's definition, in light of the broader theories of symbolic interaction and congruence, suggests that it is important to the satisfactory adjustment of aging individuals that they be able to choose their own use of time in terms of their own definition of leisure which has meaning for them

regardless of its meaning to others who may observe or participate. Fontana summed this up in his study of leisure and aging:

...the meaning that leisure has to people shapes the way in which they grow old. The activity ethic has dominated the way in which most of the elders studied view old age. (Fontana, 1977:110)

It is with this theoretical orientation and this approach to understanding aging and the individual that this study has been undertaken. That is, if leisure service providers truly seek to serve their constituencies, they will need to be able to view the needs of their participants from that participant's point of view. They will need to go beyond "what has always been done" to include in their offerings new ideas and innovative programs that would not have suited an earlier generation of the able elderly, but which are seemingly being demanded by this generation. The goal of this research then is to discover how well, if at all, Oklahoma municipal recreation departments are responding to this challenge.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To better understand the problems of adjustment to aging and retirement and to understand the various types of leisure programming for the elderly, both well and frail, it is useful to examine those studies which have preceded the present investigation. This review of the literature will be divided into four primary sections dealing with individual adjustment to aging, traditional views of leisure and aging, more recent innovative approaches to aging and leisure, and municipal programming approaches for the able elderly.

Individual Adjustment to Aging and Retirement

In order to be able to facilitate adjustment to aging and retirement, it is necessary to determine those critical variables which predict and/or promote adjustment. Since the development of the Life Satisfaction Index A (LSIA) by Neugarten, et al, (1961), there has been a vast amount of research endeavoring to discover those variables which predict life satisfaction among the elderly. Among those examined have been the usual demographic variables--income, family size, marital status, education, and so on. Subsequent studies have used this measure of life

satisfaction, or modifications of it. Adams (1969) analyzed the LSIA by means of factor analysis with a sample of respondents (n=1716) in Missouri. The analysis examined the reliability of the items, the number of "factors" measured, and the number of component parts of the scale. The LSIA was found to be an adequate measure of life satisfaction. Adams also found that a modified ten-item version of the LSIA was equally successful in assessing life satisfaction. Edwards and Klemmack (1973) compared twenty-two variables to life satisfaction seeking to find the most significant predictors of it. Life satisfaction, in this study, was measured with the modified LSIA (ten-items, Adams, 1969). Socioeconomic status, non-familial participation, and health status appeared to be the most significant. Pollman (1971) found high life satisfaction among early retirees from skilled jobs. He suggested that this high morale would continue during retirement.

A second measurement of adjustment which has received minimal usage is the Purpose-in-Life Scale (PIL) developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964). The PIL seeks to address a somewhat different aspect of adjustment based upon the work of Viktor Frankl (1946). The first study using the PIL with an exclusively older population was completed by Acuff (1967). This study, as well as several later ones (Acuff and Gorman, 1968; Acuff and Allen, 1970) examined matched pairs of professionals, retired professors and retired

clergy, and found professional engagement, health, and religiosity, to be critical variables predicting higher PIL. Crumbaugh (1972) subsequently suggested the PIL as an applicable measure of adjustment for older populations. Bynum, et al, (1978) studied participants (n=327) in a senior adult education program at an urban junior college and found the programs to function effectively in easing the transition to retirement and to produce high PIL scores among the older students. Most recently, a study by Baum and Boxley (1983) examined elderly persons (mean=75.4 years) from several types of living arrangements (n=308) to study how "young" they feel and reasons for this. They found that high purpose in life, as measured by the PIL, was the best correlate of identified age. They stated:

Maintaining a meaningful sense of purpose and existence was associated with younger perceptions of self and better emotional, physical, and social well-being. (Baum and Boxley, 1983:536)

Other recent studies have examined several measures of adjustment and have compared them for use with older populations. Spreitzer and Snyder (1974) endeavored to repeat the findings of earlier studies seeking to determine the critical predictors of life satisfaction as measured by personal interview techniques. The most significant variables found by this study were self-assessed health and financial satisfaction. Lohmann (1977) analyzed seven of the most frequently used scales measuring life satisfaction,

adjustment, and morale. Data were collected from subjects over sixty years of age (n=259). Strongest correlations were with original scales and their subsequent modifications. Palmore (1979) sought to discover the predictors of successful aging and found that activity was as good a predictor as physical functioning and happiness. Most recently, D'Amata (1987), using secondary data from the National Survey of the Aged, 1975, studied life satisfaction with special emphasis on race. She found income, health, marriage, social contacts, family support, and contact with the labor force as significant in assessing levels of life satisfaction.

More closely related to this study are several investigations dealing with leisure and retirement. It is suggested here that satisfaction with leisure and with leisure activities is a critical variable affecting adjustment and should be explored. A few studies have addressed this. Beard and Ragheb (1980) developed a leisure satisfaction scale (LSS) which addresses this issue. Ragheb and Griffith (1982) used the LSS in conjunction with the LSIA in studying a sample of older adults. Their study examined 565 subjects in Florida. Respondents were fifty-five and above (mean=70) and were fifty-five percent (55%) female. Instruments used were the LSIA, abbreviated to eighteen items (from twenty), the LSS (short form, 24 items) and McKechnie's Leisure Activity Blank, which were

delivered to subjects' homes and collected after twenty-four hours. They concluded:

...this finding shows that gaining a sense of accomplishment from engaging in leisure activities, gaining self-confidence, utilizing one's skills and abilities, and doing interesting activity (psychological component) are important to one's life satisfaction. (1982:304)

An earlier study of leisure satisfaction and its effects on life satisfaction (Guinn, 1980) studied elderly recreational vehicle tourists at five parks in Texas (n=406). He found that satisfaction with leisure did, in fact, enhance life satisfaction. Riddick and Daniel (1984) tested a life satisfaction model for older women (n=1101). Leisure activity participation proved to be the most important factor in the life satisfaction of this sample of older women. Romsa, et al, (1985) endeavored to address life satisfaction of retirees from the viewpoint of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs and built a recreational model using it to explain life satisfaction in terms of need satisfaction. Most recently, the work of Sneegas, (1985,1986) examined the relationship of perceived social competence, leisure participation, leisure satisfaction (as measured by the LSS), life satisfaction (measured by LSI-Z) in middle-aged and older adults. She concluded:

Leisure service professionals should be at least sensitive to the social demands of various activities, cognizant of the social abilities of participants, and skilled in facilitating reinforcing social environments and interaction for positive leisure engagements. (1986:256)

Traditional Views of Aging and Leisure

Traditional views of aging and leisure are easily found in the literature. The studies reported here span more than three decades of leisure research.

Chalfen (1956) discovered a decided lack of dependable research regarding older adults, especially in the realm of recreation and leisure. He studied persons sixty-five and older in homes for the aged or attending recreation centers. Donald and Havighurst (1959) found that when respondents in New Zealand and Kansas City were asked to define leisure and relate their activities to those definitions, the most frequent definition was: "just for the pleasure of it." Stability of meanings over socioeconomic groups was found. Cowgill and Baulch (1962) surveyed persons sixty and older (n=224) in Wichita, Kansas. Respondents were asked to describe their use of leisure time. More than half (52%) reported television as their most frequent leisure activity. Maddox and Eisdorfer (1962) looked at the relationship between age and activity and activity and morale. They found that the type of activity was as important as the quantity of activity. Maddox (1963), in a subsequent report, again found that a positive relationship existed between morale and activity. He also found environment to be more important than social

contacts. Miller (1965) described the aging leisure participant and stated:

...the 'most challenging problem of solving the present roleless role of the aging' is not so much inventing new leisure patterns and functional roles for the aging--which will only become culturally defined as 'for the old'--as determining what roles presently exist in the social system, related to a specific sub-system and offering vicarious satisfactions, that can reduce the socially debilitating loss accompanying occupational retirement. (1965:92)

Havighurst and Feigenbaum (1968) interviewed older adults (n=234) regarding their use of time and compared these with lifestyle patterns.

Bultena (1969), studying retired men in Wisconsin, found the highest morale among those subjects who did not experience major life changes after retirement. In a later study, Bultena and Wood (1970) studied males in four retirement communities in Arizona (n=322). Interviews were conducted with men who had moved there following retirement in the Midwest. They found activity levels before and after retirement to be stable, and interest in leisure participation to be a motivator for migration to the retirement community. Atchley (1971) found that the use of leisure can contribute positively to the transition from work to retirement roles. With the increasing importance of leisure, this association will likely increase in the future. Nystrom (1974) examined the activity patterns, leisure "notions," leisure uses and meanings of leisure

among sixty-five elderly residents of a low-income housing project. Types of activities and reasons for participation were studied. Types of leisure participation and the resulting effects on life satisfaction were discussed by Peppers (1976) who found significant correlations between leisure and life satisfaction.

Tinsley, et al, (1977) looked at the relationship of need satisfaction to five leisure activities: watching television, attending cultural events, reading, bicycling, and socializing. Needs most often satisfied by these activities were: sex, catharsis, independence, understanding, getting along with others, and affiliation. McAvoy (1977) described the needs of the elderly (sixty-five and older) in terms of the taxonomy developed by Mercer (1973): normative needs, felt needs, expressed needs, and comparative needs. He explored the recreational needs of the elderly in terms of this model. He also outlined barriers to participation in leisure activities, and suggested the importance of including the elderly in planning for leisure. He stated: "While progress has been made recently, much remains to be done to plan with and for this substantial and growing population." (McAvoy, 1977:55) In a later study, McAvoy (1979) assessed the leisure activities and leisure preferences of non-institutionalized persons sixty-five and older in Minnesota and found that socializing with friends and relatives, watching television,

and reading to be the most frequent choices of leisure activities. Davis and Teaff (1980) described roles which can be created and adopted by the elderly in extended care facilities to promote better adjustment to aging.

Kleiber and Thompson (1980) explored, in depth, in their philosophical article, some of the myths of aging, citing the pluses and minuses associated with each one, as they relate to leisure behavior. Fly, et al, (1981) focused on the relationship between leisure activity and adjustment to retirement. Indices of life satisfaction and alienation were employed. Respondents with more leisure activity showed higher life satisfaction and lower alienation. Bosse (1981) compared the activity levels of retired and non-retired elderly (n=581) in four categories: solitary, physical, social, and cultural activities. He found that self-perceptions (as leisure participants) did not change after retirement.

In a study by Roadburg (1981), elderly respondents (n=245) were interviewed and asked to define work and leisure. Comparisons were made with similar research studies and found to be quite similar to those results obtained by Nystrom (1974) and McAvoy (1977). Weiner and Hunt (1981) examined the meanings of work and leisure among residents (n=130) of a Florida retirement community. Spillover from work roles most significantly determined meanings derived from leisure. Krout examined (1984b) data

on 755 senior centers in thirty-one states with regard to facilities, budget, and organization. He noted, in particular, the special needs of the rural elderly, whom he suggested have greater needs and fewer resources.

Most recently, Mobily, et al, (1984) analyzed the relationship between leisure participation and other factors and found age and self-reported health to be the most important factors studied.

Recent Views Leisure and Aging

As Wallach (1986) has pointed out, new directions are needed for leisure programmers. As stated earlier, she suggests to recreation programmers the following ideas:

The elderly will require challenge from you and massive changes in direction on the part of public agency recreation providers. They are more fit than they have ever been. They will be interested in hiking, biking, backpacking, camping, and all kinds of new experiences. (Wallach, 1986:64)

A few other articles and studies have also addressed this need.

In a special supplement to their regular journal entitled Leisure Today, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance collected the views of several writers expressing innovative ideas for leisure for older adults. Pomeroy (1977) described the needs of the elderly living in public housing developments and their special leisure needs. Mulac (1977) suggested

planning for retirement by beginning earlier leisure activities which can be continued throughout life. Teaff (1977) presented several policy alternatives regarding leisure for the older adult in response to a dilemma he addressed. He asked:

...how can a major segment of the population be expected to value something that the larger society does not value, particularly when there are no policy alternatives to help the citizenry appreciate leisure. (1977:8)

Murphy (1977) described the traditional patterns of leisure and work lifestyles and suggested that a different approach might be needed in the future which integrates work, education, and leisure throughout the life cycle.

In other writings, Isaac and Bynum (1977) discussed the role of education in the solution of the work/leisure conflict. They recommended phased or flexible retirement as options. Hirsch (1978) described the program of the Institute for Retired Professionals in New York City (founded in 1962) which has served as a model for other educational programs for retirees. Research by Gissal, et al, (1980) described the use of a fitness trail for health and fitness improvement over a twelve-week period in Wisconsin. The relationship of morale and fitness were found to be insignificant during the short-term therapeutic intervention, however. Arquitt (1983) described the philosophy and growth of Elderhostel, both nationally and in Oklahoma. He listed the following goals and functions of

the program:

1. Meets the educational needs and desires of older adults in a unique way for a modest cost.
2. Provides for new experiences.
3. Provides an opportunity to make meaningful contacts with interesting people from across the country.
4. Provides an inexpensive way to travel.
5. Provides built-in contacts with young people and gives young people a chance to learn from hostellers while they are on campus.
6. Provides an opportunity to have fun.
7. Provides for many a "new lease on life."
(Arquitt, 1983:43-44)

Changing values and attitudes of the next generation of elderly were the focus of Terry's (1983) futuristic article. Expected differences from current elderly were explored. MacNeil (1984) examined the changing demographics of society and the need for aging services in recreation. He also examined college curricula in both aging and leisure classes and the textbooks used. Kelly, et al, (1986) examined participants (n=400) aged forty and older in Peoria, Illinois, and their leisure activities. Health and physical ability were found to be more important than age in choice of activity. They concluded:

There was considerable evidence that leisure was important to later-life adults achieving personal satisfaction with life: (1) as a context for expressing and maintaining primary relationships and (2) as an opportunity to express and develop self-definitions of ability. (1986:534)

McGuire (1985) examined reasons why older persons do not participate in leisure. He stressed the need to facilitate leisure activities as compensation for lost roles (worker,

parent, spouse) and to provide an opportunity for a sense of control over life. McGuire, et al, (1986) studied the reasons why participants of all ages fail to engage in outdoor recreation. Most frequently named limitors were lack of time, lack of companions, and health. Prohibitors to participation most often named were poor health, lack of time, and lack of companions. Chepesiuk (1986) described the Elderhostel experience and emphasized the fast growth of this leisure time experience for the older adult sixty and over. In describing the program, he cited the philosophy of Elderhostel:

They both (the founders) shared the belief that a lifestyle should be actively engaged with one's physical and social environments.... Education should be used to help older citizens in their search for fulfillment and a feeling of self-worth. (Chepesiuk, 1986:4)

Morris and Bass (1986) examined the role of the able elderly in today's society and suggest "employing" this group to supplement human services and to provide productive roles for the elderly. They suggested:

If we can test a new approach to the situation of able surplus elders that does not exploit older workers or displace younger ones, we are then responding to the larger economic and social needs of all citizens, not just to those of the elderly. (Morris and Bass, 1986:19)

Riddick (1986) examined the importance of leisure for ten age groups (n=221) and found no significant difference in leisure satisfaction. She concluded:

Indeed, assessing a client's leisure values and

knowledge of community leisure resources could result in being able to identify individuals at high risk of experiencing low leisure satisfaction and possibly less than optimum mental health. (1986:264)

Municipal Recreation Programming for the Able Elderly

A number of studies, finally, address the area of programming concepts for municipal recreation agencies with regard to programs for the older adult (fifty-five and older). Trela and Simmons (1971) studied several dimensions of senior-center membership (n=719) and found that outside activities were the most frequent reason for joining and that competing activities were the most frequent explanation for failure to participate. As early as 1973, Verhoven stressed the importance of new concepts in recreation programming for the elderly. He emphasized:

Professional recreators working with the elderly should assume fewer direct leadership roles and function more nearly in the capacity of resource consultants. In this manner, programs and services would tend to be more nearly planned with the older person and not just for him. (Verhoven, 1973:404)

More emphatically, he stated:

The recreation professional must assume the role of social engineer and change agent. In so doing, he will witness a future in which retirement may become the major "career" of most older men and women; education will change its emphasis from one of preparing for occupational competency to one of fostering unlimited creativity; and above all, leisure will become more revered than work. This is the challenge for those who provide recreation services to the aging. (Verhoven, 1973:404)

In a special supplement to their regular journal entitled Leisure Today, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance collected the views of several writers expressing innovative ideas for leisure for older adults, in the context of municipal programming. Corbin (1977) stressed the need to avoid stereotyping senior citizens and to provide a broad array of recreational options. He suggested:

In other words, we can prevent 'rusting out' through enjoyable activities that include emphasis on the physical. Since our lifestyle tends to exclude older people from participation, communities need to assume responsibility for providing recreational opportunities for this vital segment of society. (1977:28)

Guadagnolo (1977) stressed the need to design leisure programs which fit the desires and needs of the targeted population. He stated:

However, programmers must realize that while bingo, card parties, and the production of one thousand ashtrays may prove self-fulfilling to some, others may derive enjoyment or a sense of self-worth through enrollment at the university, community service, or a host of other life enriching experiences. (1977:5)

Finally, Gunn (1977) compared the labels applied to old age and to youth and described the similarity of the two groups in an "ageist" society. She discussed three crises which the young and the old share: identity, sex, and responsibility. She stated:

For those of us who have not yet reached the age of retirement, perhaps the reality of old age in our

society can best be understood by reflecting on the crisis of youth. Ironically old people and young people face many of these same crises. Neither are taken seriously, and both are often beset by seemingly benevolent despots intent on running programs resembling glorified playpens. (Gunn, 1977:3)

In other writings, Cross (1977), in a very insightful article, reported the changing leisure desires of senior citizens and challenged recreation programmers to meet these changing needs. Ong and Coleman (1978) described two camping programs for seniors, one in Iowa (a float trip down the Mississippi) and one in New York (camping in the woods). Benefits to the participants of each program were described and suggestions for similar programs were included.

Ray (1979) studied respondents in Maryland (n=124) and found that activity is important to life satisfaction. He stated:

Leisure services should recognize its role as facilitator and advocate for maintaining quality leisure experiences which allow for social interaction and activities which are congruent with the needs and desires of older clients. (1979:118)

Godbey, et al (1982), reported on an earlier survey of leisure facilities usage by AARP members (n=4500) residing in large cities (100,000 and above) on the East Coast. Data were included on transportation, income, education, age and employment status. From their study they make several observations about the changing leisure needs of an aging population. They pointed out:

An aging population means that, in order to meet the recreation and leisure needs of the public in the next few decades, public leisure services will have to be retrofitted to suit an older population as surely as will an uninsulated house in the face of rising energy costs. (Godbey, et al, 1982:46)

Regarding the next generation of elderly, they suggested:

The coming generation of elderly Americans is likely to differ from the present one in being more active in recreation pursuits, in better health, and more integrated into society. All these changes are likely to mean that local park, recreation, and leisure services must prepare for a greater demand for services and a reorientation of all services to more closely correspond to the leisure interests of older people. These changes, combined with decreasing financial support for local recreation, park, and leisure services, means that there is a desperate need for fresh thinking, experimentation, and new ideas. (Godbey, et al, 1982:48)

They conclude their timely article by suggesting: "Public recreation, park, and leisure services must find ways to redirect their services to an aging population or start to fade away along with the 'Pepsi Generation.'" (Godbey, et al, 1982:48)

Ewert (1983) described the changing demographics with regard to age and suggested:

Many of us reading this article will be in our 50s and 60s by the year 2000. Are we going to choose the sedentary, spectator activities which permeate the recreational scene, or will we demand different, more exciting recreation experiences? (Ewert, 1983:64)

The barriers to adventure participation for the older adult may include the following, Ewert posited:

The nearest program may be too far or the schedule may be inopportune. For their part, programmers may exclude the older adult simply because they have not marketed activities to make them known to this

population. More seriously, many organizations do not offer outdoor adventure programs for the older adult at all. One cannot attend something that does not exist. (Ewert, 1983:65)

Program development, implementation, and evaluation guidelines for outdoor adventure programs for this rapidly growing segment of the population were also described.

Carpenter (1984) discussed the leisure needs of persons of middle age (thirty to sixty) and the importance of programming for this portion of society. She stated:

Some professionals in the leisure fields see clear and frequent indicators confirming the evolving leisure-centeredness within individuals in our more leisure-oriented society. (1984:58).

Krout (1984a) studied the knowledge of senior center activities among both participants and non-participants (n=250). He stated:

For if, as the data for this sample indicate, elderly nonparticipants have very little knowledge of center activities or of the community services connected with the center, it is possible that these elderly might not avail themselves of needed services. At the same time, it may also be that the low levels of center knowledge among nonusers simply reflect their lack of interest in or need for the activities and services available at the center. (1984a:80)

DiGilio and Howse (1984) described the work of a fitness program for older adults and strategies for planning safe and successful programs for this segment of the country. They suggested a program with five components: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition.

As Wallach (1986) has pointed out, new directions are needed for leisure programmers. As stated earlier, she suggests to recreation programmers the following ideas:

The elderly will require challenge from you and massive changes in direction on the part of public agency recreation providers. They are more fit than they have ever been. They will be interested in hiking, biking, backpacking, camping, and all kinds of new experiences. (Wallach, 1986:64)

This vast array of studies presents various viewpoints on the subject of aging, with regard to individual adjustment, leisure, and the role of leisure in good adjustment. It particularly points out the role of municipal recreation agencies in providing leisure services for this segment of society. With this increased understanding of the importance of leisure for the well-being of the older adult and the role which the municipal agency can play in providing those leisure opportunities, the need for further study becomes evident. Thus, this study will examine the response currently being made by municipal recreation agencies in the State of Oklahoma to the leisure needs of their able elderly constituency.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In order to address the issues identified in the literature review and, earlier, in discussing the theoretical framework supporting this research, an exploratory study was undertaken. Babbie, in discussing the purposes for which research is undertaken, defines exploratory studies this way:

Much of social research is conducted to explore a topic, to provide a beginning familiarity with the topic. This purpose is typical when a researcher is examining a new interest or when the subject of study is itself relatively new and unstudied. (Babbie, 1986:72)

Although there have been suppositions about the nature of leisure services for the able elderly, there is not, to this point in time, any documentation available, on a statewide basis in Oklahoma, of those services. Thus, this task was deemed a suitable undertaking for the current investigation.

The specific purpose of this study was to determine what leisure services are offered to persons over the age of fifty-five by municipal parks and recreation agencies in the state of Oklahoma. A secondary goal of the investigation was to compare this information, gathered by surveying municipal agencies within Oklahoma, with secondary sources of data (U.S. Census, 1980) which reflect the percentage of

older adults (fifty-five and older) within each community, the percentage of the population twenty-five and older who have completed high school and who have at least four years of college, the median age of the town or city, and the per capita income for each town or city.

Research Questions

The following research questions were considered by this investigation:

1. What is the relationship between the number of recreational programs designed to serve adults fifty-five and older and the percentage of persons in that age group within the community?
2. What is the relationship between the percentage of full-time staff assigned to administer programs for adults fifty-five and older and the percentage of persons in that age group within the community?
3. What is the relationship between size of community and quantity of programming for older adults (fifty-five and over) offered by the municipal recreation agency.
4. Do activities offered to older adults (fifty-five and older) which are basically sedentary outnumber those activities which are physically challenging; that is, do arts and crafts activities outnumber sports activities for this age group?

Design of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to assess the extent of municipal recreation programming for the older adult (fifty-five and older) in each community. (See Appendix A.) Municipal employees completing the questionnaire were asked to indicate their job title and the department of city government by which they were employed. They were further asked to indicate the applicability of the study to their community. Agencies were asked to indicate the size of the staff of their department, both full-time and part-time, as a whole and those designated to serve senior citizens only. Departments were asked whether they operated senior citizens' centers and about programming within them. In addition, they were asked to identify the number of programs for older adults other than in the senior citizen center. To better assess the extent of programming for this age group, each responding department was asked to indicate the number of facilities operated by them in each of eight categories: ballfields, recreation centers, golf courses, senior centers, parks, swimming pools, crafts centers, and gymnasiums. They were then asked to indicate how many of each of these categories of facilities were programmed specifically for older adults (fifty-five and older). Finally the agencies were asked to indicate which activities they offered to older adults in two major categories: arts

and crafts and sports. Within the category of arts and crafts, the named choices were: ceramics, painting, quilting, sewing, macrame, jewelry making, photography, calligraphy, woodworking, and stained glass. In addition, they were given the opportunity to indicate other arts and crafts activities which they might offer. Within the category of sports, the choices listed included: golf, tennis, swimming, softball, Senior Olympics, basketball, volleyball, bicycling, and hiking. Once again, they were invited to add other activities which they might offer. The agencies were also invited to send any supporting materials (flyers, brochures, etc.) which might assist in explaining their programming philosophy for this age group (fifty-five and older).

Two issues which must be addressed with regard to the questionnaire are reliability and validity. Reliability is defined as: "That quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon." (Babbie, 1986:558). Since the survey instrument was designed specifically for this study and has not been used since this study, the reliability of it cannot be assessed. With regard to validity, Babbie states:

A descriptive term used of a measure that accurately reflects the concept that it is intended to measure....It is important to realize that the ultimate validity of a measure can never be proven. Yet, we may agree to its relative validity on the

basis of face validity, criterion validity, content validity, construct validity, internal validation, and external validation. (Babbie, 1986:560)

This instrument was deemed to have face validity by two separate means: 1) according to Babbie's definition of face validity--"that quality of an indicator that makes it seem a reasonable measure of some variable (1986:555) and 2) by submitting it for consideration by experienced reseachers who agreed that face validity existed.

Choice of Sample

Respondents for this census of municipal recreation agencies were chosen from the Directory of Oklahoma, 1985-86. Included in the study were all incorporated towns and cities within the state of Oklahoma which had a population of 2500 or larger as indicated by 1980 Census data. This method of selection was chosen to coincide with the Census definition of "urban:"

Urban/Rural: All persons living in urbanized areas and in places of 2500 or more constitute the 'urban' population, all other constitute the 'rural' population. (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980_)

This method of selection resulted in a census of 116 communities. (See Appendix B.) Questionnaires, along with return postage, were then mailed to the Director of Parks and Recreation of each community. Addresses for each agency were obtained from telephone directories for each community. In communities which did not list a separate

address, the questionnaire was mailed to the city hall. Responses were received from fifty-four (54) communities (46.552%) which thus constitutes the studied sample. (See Table 1.) In addition, two surveys were returned unusable and two were returned by the Postal Service as undeliverable.

TABLE 1
COMMUNITY SIZE OF SURVEYED AGENCIES
November, 1986

Size	Number Contacted	Number Responding	Percentage Responding
2500-5000	51	23	45.10%
5000-10000	32	16	50.00
10000 & over	33	15	45.45
Total	116	54	46.55

Description of Sample

Before examining the collected data in terms of the research questions to be examined, it is useful to look more closely at the responding towns and cities (the sample). Upon consultation with experts in the area of leisure services in Oklahoma, it was deemed that the non-respondent communities were such because, for the most part, recreation

departments do not exist in those communities. Of utmost importance to the present study was the response to the inquiry regarding the applicability of the study. Four choices were offered: 1) no recreation department, 2) no programming for older adults, 3) senior citizen program not handled through municipal government, and 4) the survey applies. Responses to this question can be found in Table 2:

TABLE 2
APPLICABILITY OF STUDY

Applicability of Study	Number of Cities	Percentage
No Recreation Department	14	25.93%
No Older Adult Programs	5	9.26
Senior Program not by City	12	22.22
Survey Applies	23	42.59
Total	54	

It is this last category of communities which will become the focus of this investigation. By examining these twenty-three (23) cities, the most useful information regarding leisure programming for older adults, to be found in Oklahoma towns and cities, can be gathered. These twenty-three (23) communities will be designated as "core cities" for the purpose of this study.

It is useful to examine the demographic characteristics of these core cities, in particular, the size of the overall population and the percentage of that population which is fifty-five and older. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3
POPULATION AND OLDER POPULATION
OF CORE CITIES
Bureau of the Census, 1980

Town or City	Population	Older Population	Percentage 55 and older
Ada	15,902	4,846	30.47%
Claremore	12,085	2,798	23.15
Edmond	34,637	4,148	11.98
Eufaula	3,159	1,240	39.25
Hominy	3,180	824	25.91
Hugo	7,172	2,143	29.88
Idabel	7,622	1,924	25.24
Jenks	5,876	809	13.77
Kingfisher	4,245	1,255	29.56
Lawton	80,054	11,332	14.16
McAlester	17,255	5,173	29.98
Moore	35,063	2,508	7.15
Muskogee	40,011	11,420	28.54
Oklahoma City	403,136	82,999	20.59
Owasso	6,149	638	10.38
Ponca City	26,238	7,023	26.77
Seminole	8,590	2,676	31.15
Stillwater	39,268	4,373	11.14
Tulsa	360,919	73,531	20.37
Vinita	6,740	2,297	34.08
Walters	2,778	931	33.51
Weatherford	9,640	1,249	12.96
Yukon	17,112	1,824	10.66
Mean Percentage of Older Adults:			
	All Cities		25.80%
	Core Cities		22.64

TABLE 4
 SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
 OF CORE CITIES
 Bureau of the Census, 1980

Town or City	Median Age	Percentage High School Graduate	Percentage College (4 yrs or More)	Per Capita Income
Ada	32.5	61.1%	19.0%	\$6114.
Claremore	30.4	61.1	12.8	6447.
Edmond	27.1	87.7	36.7	9148.
Eufaula	45.9	52.0	9.6	4910.
Hominy	31.1	51.7	5.5	5254.
Hugo	32.8	49.4	8.9	4658.
Idabel	30.2	51.8	13.3	4747.
Jenks	30.1	72.8	19.5	7469.
Kingfisher	33.6	63.9	12.1	7263.
Lawton	25.5	74.1	15.8	5904.
McAlester	35.7	61.9	8.7	5609.
Moore	25.2	78.8	13.8	6868.
Muskogee	32.6	61.7	13.8	6203.
Oklahoma City	29.9	72.4	19.0	7891.
Owasso	26.6	75.0	13.1	7173.
Ponca City	33.2	72.2	20.0	7923.
Seminole	34.5	57.4	11.7	6565.
Stillwater	22.2	83.6	41.7	5517.
Tulsa	30.0	77.3	21.7	8841.
Vinita	38.9	51.2	9.9	5379.
Walters	35.9	55.0	6.4	5169.
Weatherford	22.5	76.0	30.6	6706.
Yukon	27.2	78.6	15.8	7721.
Means:				
All Cities	32.8	61.1	12.9	6384.
Core Cities	31.0	66.4	16.5	6499.

It is worth noting the broad range of percentages of older adults in the communities under study. The range goes from a low of 7.15% (Moore) to high of 39.25% (Eufaula).

Likewise, it is interesting to view the socioeconomic data for each of these twenty-three towns and cities. (See Table 4.) Here again, it is interesting to notice the broad range of each variable presented. Median age in the core cities ranged from 22.2 years (Stillwater) to 45.9 years (Eufaula). The percentage of those persons twenty-five and older who have completed high school ranged from 49.4% (Hugo) to 87.7% (Edmond). The percentage of those persons twenty-five and older who have completed at least four years of college ranged from 5.5% (Hominy) to 41.7% (Stillwater). Finally, the range of per capita income went from \$4658. (Hugo) to \$9148. (Edmond). The relationship of these variables to the extent of leisure programming for older adults in these communities will be discussed in Chapter 4. Another interesting collection of data regarding these core cities related to the interest in and participation in Elderhostel programs by the eligible citizenry of each community. As already mentioned, Elderhostel is an educational program for persons sixty and older which is held on college and university campuses nationwide, and, in fact, internationally. Participants stay for a week in campus facilities and participate in one to three courses designed particularly for them by campus staff and/or faculty. Designed to emulate the youth hostel movement in Europe, it provides a low-cost opportunity for older adults to travel, learn, and have fun. The rapid growth of this

program in the eleven years it has existed demonstrates the interest of this age group in such a program. The numbers shown in Table 5 represent the number of names on the mailing list (expressed interest) and the number of participants from each town or city. The percentage participating was derived by dividing the number of participants by the number on the mailing list. It is, of course, possible, and indeed, realistic that participants may not have previously been on the mailing list prior to enrollment as a participant and learned of the program by some other means. The final figure in the table refers to the percentage of the age-eligible population (those sixty and older) in each community who actually participated in an Elderhostel program. It must be noted that those entries in the table represented by "... " are so stated because the derivation of the percentage of those on the mailing list who are Elderhostel participants requires division by zero which is deemed a mathematical impossibility. In examination of Table 5, again a wide disparity is seen from no inquiries to 658 inquirers on the mailing list (Oklahoma City). These figures and the figures for participation (in raw numbers) are meaningless because of the varying size of the responding cities. More valuable then are the figures on percentages of participation, based on interest shown and on the number of age-eligible persons (sixty and older) in each town or city. While none of the percentages of the

eligible population participating are high, the highest numbers come from those communities that have colleges or universities which have participated in Elderhostel programming during the history of the program (Edmond and Stillwater).

TABLE 5
ELDERHOSTEL INQUIRY AND PARTICIPATION
IN CORE CITIES
1980

Town or City	Inquiry	Participation	Percentage Participating	Percentage Eligible
Ada	35	8	22.86%	0.20%
Claremore	15	6	40.00	0.27
Edmond	89	14	15.73	0.47
Eufaula	11	0	00.00	0.00
Hominy	0	0	..	0.00
Hugo	6	5	83.33	0.28
Idabel	0	0	..	0.00
Jenks	0	0	..	0.00
Kingfisher	0	0	..	0.00
Lawton	61	23	37.70	0.27
McAlester	16	0	00.00	0.00
Moore	13	5	38.46	0.30
Muskogee	51	0	00.00	0.00
Oklahoma City	658	89	13.53	0.14
Owasso	0	0	..	0.00
Ponca City	66	19	28.79	0.35
Seminole	20	0	00.00	0.00
Stillwater	244	46	18.85	1.32
Tulsa	515	149	28.93	0.28
Vinita	0	0	..	0.00
Walters	0	0	..	0.00
Weatherford	19	6	31.58	0.58
Yukon	25	0	00.00	0.00

The considerably larger percentage found in Stillwater (1.32%) can perhaps be attributed to the location of the state director in that city and the fact that the campus located in Stillwater has participated in Elderhostel longer than the other communities. Of related interest to the core city data regarding Elderhostel is the data from non-responding communities and from responding communities which had no senior programming (non core cities). Of the remaining ninety-three cities, fifty-six of these communities have older citizens who have at least shown an interest in Elderhostel (by their presence on the mailing list). This represents 60.2% of these non-core cities. Relating back to core cities, 69.9% of the cities had older citizens who were, at the least, interested in Elderhostel. Shown in Table 6 are those cities and towns, other than core cities, which had older citizens who actually have participated in Elderhostel.

Once again, those communities with the highest percentage of age-eligible persons participating in Elderhostel (Bartlesville, Norman, and Tahlequah) are communities which have a college or university which has participated in the program.

TABLE 6
ELDERHOSTEL INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION
IN OTHER CITIES
1980

Town or City	Inquiry	Participation	Percentage Participating	Percentage Eligible
Altus	22	9	40.90%	0.30%
Ardmore	29	7	24.14	0.13
Bartlesville	199	109	54.77	1.74
Broken Arrow	26	7	26.92	0.33
Duncan	36	12	33.33	0.25
Enid	96	11	25.45	0.16
Midwest City	52	19	36.54	0.34
Norman	122	36	36.54	0.53
Sapulpa	13	10	76.92	0.32
Tahlequah	19	9	47.37	0.50

Leisure Activities for Older Adults

The final area to be considered before addressing the actual research questions presented is that of the activities offered by the core city recreation departments, as reflected in the survey responses. Of the twenty-three communities responding, twenty of them indicated that their agency operated a senior citizens' center for its older population. One community (Ada) indicated that while there is a center, no programs are sponsored by the department. For the other nineteen communities, the range of programming goes from one program (Oklahoma City) to fifty programs

(Muskogee). The mean number of programs offered in senior citizens' centers in the core cities was 8.17 programs. In addition, seventeen of these towns or cities indicated that they sponsored other programs outside of the senior center environment. Within this context of programming, the number of other programs ranged from one to twenty, with the mean number of other older adult programs being 2.65 programs.

Each of the communities responding were asked to indicate the number of facilities operated by their department in each of eight categories: ballfields, recreation centers, golf courses, senior citizens centers, parks, swimming pools, crafts centers, and gymnasiums. In addition, they were asked to indicate the number of each of these facilities which were programmed specifically for older adults (fifty-five and older). Because of the widely varying sizes of the communities involved, the number of each type of facility is best represented by employing the mean for the entire subsample of core cities. (See Table 7.)

Again, it is interesting to notice the low levels of programming for this segment of the population, especially with regard to ballfields and parks; that is, the facilities seemingly more conducive to active types of leisure pursuits.

TABLE 7
OPERATION AND USAGE OF RECREATION
FACILITIES IN CORE CITIES

Type of Facility	Mean Operated	Mean, Senior Programmed	Percentage Programmed
Ballfields	9.87	0.48	4.86%
Rec. Centers	2.78	0.65	23.38
Golf Courses	0.61	0.39	63.93
Senior Centers	1.61	2.18	135.40
Parks	10.48	1.90	18.13
Swimming Pools	3.17	0.65	20.50
Craft Centers	1.48	0.60	40.54
Gymnasiums	1.35	0.61	45.19

The final area of interest is in the actual types of activities offered in each of the communities which indicated senior citizens programming. The first category of activities which were assessed were arts and crafts activities. Table 8 indicates the number of communities offering each activity and the percentage of communities offering that activity, of the twenty-three core cities.

TABLE 8
ARTS AND CRAFTS ACTIVITIES
IN CORE CITIES

Activity	No. of Cities	Percentage of Cities
Ceramics	19	82.6%
Painting	16	69.6
Quilting	14	60.9
Sewing	12	52.2
Macrame	8	34.8
Jewelry Making	3	13.0
Photography	3	13.0
Calligraphy	1	4.3
Woodworking	6	26.1
Stained Glass	3	13.0
Other Crafts	8	34.8

Finally, and of special interest to this study, considering the research which is emerging with regard to recreational activities for the older adult, are the sports activities offered in each of the twenty-three core cities.

It is particularly interesting to note the number of towns and cities which offer, for instance, softball for older adults. If cities (of the twenty-three core cities) had been asked if they offered softball (or correspondingly, baseball) for the rest of the citizenry, it is likely that the number would have been twenty-three. Only four of the core cities offered a softball program especially for the older members of the community (Claremore, Kingfisher,

Lawton, and Walters). With the exception of Lawton, the size of these communities is 13,000 or less.

TABLE 9
SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN CORE CITIES

Activity	No. of Cities	Percentage of Cities
Golf	8	34.8%
Tennis	7	30.4
Swimming	15	65.2
Softball	4	17.4
Senior Olympics	6	26.1
Basketball	1	4.3
Volleyball	2	8.7
Hiking	3	13.0
Bicycling	5	21.7
Other Sports	7	30.4

Further relationships of the activities offered will be presented in conjunction with the discussion of research questions and the responses to those questions.

Statistical Analysis

Statistics employed in this investigation were frequency distributions, means, and correlations. Frequency distributions are used to summarize data in a form which can be quickly understood and interpreted by the reader and by the researcher. The mean, a measure of central tendency, is

"defined as the sum of the scores divided by the total number of cases involved." (Blalock, 1979:56) Means are used to indicate the "typical" response. They are particularly useful in comparing widely varying responses as they indicate the central tendency of the data; that is, the tendency of the data to cluster or group around a particular number. For this purpose, the mean was used to analyze the number of facilities operated by each agency (Table 7).

The final statistical procedure employed in this research was Pearson's correlation coefficient (denoted by "r") in the tables. The values of "r" range from -1.0 to +1.0 depending on the direction of the relationship. As "r" increases from 0.0 to +1.0 the relationship between the variables under study increases or becomes stronger. Similarly, as the value of "r" goes from 0.0 to -1.0, it implies or indicates that the relationship between the two variables becomes stronger, but that as one variable increases, the other variable decreases. Another concept that is necessary to understand in order to interpret the correlation coefficients is the idea of statistical significance. Statistical significance considers the likelihood that the findings of the data analysis might have occurred by chance. Thus if the correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.001 level, this states that the probability of that correlation occurring by chance would be found in less than one out of one thousand tries (1/1000),

and so on.

With this new understanding of the statistical concepts employed, it is now possible to consider the research questions presented in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine what leisure services are offered to persons over the age of fifty-five by municipal parks and recreation agencies in the urban areas of the state of Oklahoma. A second goal of this investigation was to compare this information, gathered by surveying municipal agencies within Oklahoma, with secondary sources of data (U.S. Census, 1980) which reflect the percentage of older adults (fifty-five and older) within each community, the percentage of the population twenty-five and older who have completed high school and who have at least four years of college, the median age of the town or city population, and the per capita income for each town or city population.

This chapter presents the statistical consideration of the research questions under study with data gathered from fifty-four agencies, of which twenty-three communities were designated as core cities (self-reported to offer older adult programming). The traditional 0.05 level of significance was used to consider the research questions under study.

Testing the Research Questions

Research Question One

What is the relationship between the number of recreational programs for adults fifty-five and older and the percentage of persons in that age group within the community?

Correlation coefficients were used to determine if there was a significant relationship between the number of communities offering programs for older adults and the number of persons in that age group in each town or city. To understand more fully the findings with regard to this research question, the correlation between the percentage of the older population and the facilities operated by each community are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10

RELATIONSHIP OF PERCENTAGE OF OLDER
POPULATION TO FACILITIES OPERATED

Facility Operated	Percentage of Older Population	
	r	p
Ballfields	0.67	.0005
Recreation Centers	0.99	.0001
Golf Courses	0.88	.0001
Senior Centers	-0.10	.6627
Parks	0.66	.0007
Swimming Pools	0.72	.0001
Craft Centers	0.70	.0002
Gymnasiums	0.69	.0003

Note that for each category of facility listed, there is a statistically significant relationship between the population of older adults in the community with the notable exception of senior citizens centers. There is a negative relationship between the older population and the number of senior centers. This finding applies only to the core cities since they are the only communities which indicated the number of facilities operated in each category.

Expanding the examination to include all responding communities, the number of programs might appropriately be judged by considering the applicability of the study to that community. That is, does the city have a program for older adults at all? The results of this comparison can be found in Table 11.

TABLE 11
RELATIONSHIP OF OLDER POPULATION
TO APPLICABILITY OF STUDY

	Percentage of Older Population	
	r	p
Applicability of Study	-0.14	0.29

Thus, it can be concluded that there is, in fact, no significant relationship between older adult programming and the percentage of the older population in each community. There is, in fact, a negative relationship between the size of the older population and the likelihood that the survey applied to that community. That is, the larger the percentage of persons fifty-five and older in the community the less likely it was that the community offered municipal recreation programming for that segment of its populace, with regard to all cities responding to the survey.

It is most interesting to notice that the correlations for each category of facility are exceptionally high excluding senior centers. Reasons for this particular finding will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between the percentage of full-time staff assigned to administer programs for adults fifty-five and older and the percentage of persons in that age group within the community.

To consider this question fully it is useful to look at both the number of fulltime employees designated to serve the older adult (fifty-five and older) and then to compare the correlations of all fulltime employees to older population and the special (older adults) employees with the percentage of older adults. Table 12 shows the number of core cities which employ a given number of fulltime employees to serve older adults.

Viewed alone, these numbers are not startling. However, when considered with the numbers of older adults in at least two of the communities (Tulsa: 73,531 and Oklahoma City: 82,999) these numbers take on new significance. When the correlations are examined (as shown in Table 13), the disparity in staffing priorities becomes even clearer.

Table 13 clearly shows that the assignment of fulltime personnel to serve the recreational needs of the elderly is not based on population figures for the respective communities in which the agencies operated but upon some other criteria which was not revealed within the scope of this study.

TABLE 12
FULLTIME STAFF SERVING OLDER ADULTS
IN CORE CITIES

No. of Employees	No. of Cities	Percentage
0	5	21.7%
1	6	26.1
2	5	21.7
3	4	17.4
4	1	4.3
5	1	4.3
6	1	4.3
Total	23	

TABLE 13
 RELATIONSHIP OF FULLTIME STAFF TO
 GENERAL POPULATION AND OLDER POPULATION

	All Ages		Population >55	
	r	p	r	p
Fulltime (All Ages)	0.67	.0004	0.68	.0003
Fulltime (Older Adults)	0.13	.5632	0.14	.5277

Research Question Three

What is the relationship between size of community and quantity of programming for older adults (fifty-five and older) offered by the municipal recreation agency.

Once again correlation coefficients were used to determine if a statistically significant relationship exists between population and the number of programs offered for older adults (fifty-five and older). Table 14 demonstrates this relationship or lack of it, with regard to the population as a whole, in the same manner that Table 10 referred specifically to the older population. Once again, there is a statistically significant relationship between the population and the number of each type of facility operated with the exception of senior citizens centers. Here, again, the relationship which exists is a negative one. As in the explanation of the findings with regard to

research question one, the data apply only to the core cities since the number of facilities operated was not reported by the other communities.

TABLE 14
RELATIONSHIP OF GENERAL POPULATION
TO FACILITIES OPERATED

Facility	General Population	
	r	p
Ballfields	0.67	.0004
Recreation Centers	0.98	.0001
Golf Courses	0.87	.0001
Senior Centers	-0.10	.6470
Parks	0.66	.0007
Swimming Pools	0.71	.0001
Crafts Centers	0.69	.0003
Gymnasiums	0.69	.0003

Again, expanding the discussion to include these other communities, and, again, using the applicability of the study to the community as a measure of programming, the relationship of programming to overall population size is shown in Table 15. From this analysis, it can be seen that no significant relationship exists between the population of the community and the quantity of programming for older adults. It does suggest, but not significantly, that as the size of the community increases, the community is more apt

to offer some sort of programming for older adults (fifty-five and older).

TABLE 15
RELATIONSHIP OF OVERALL POPULATION
TO APPLICABILITY OF STUDY

	Size of Overall Population	
	r	p
Applicability of Study	.22	.0963

Research Question Four

What is the difference between the quantity of activities offered to older adults (fifty-five and older) which are sedentary and are physically challenging; that is, arts and crafts activities and sports activities exist in equal numbers for this age group.

As the literature has demonstrated, a majority of programming for older adults has followed a sedentary model rather than a physically active one. The purpose of this research question was to ascertain if this programming philosophy exists in practice as well as in the literature. By examining the activities offered by the core city agencies, some notion of this philosophy can be uncovered.

Table 16 reveals the number of arts and crafts (primarily sedentary) activities offered as compared to the number of sports activities offered. The "activity ratio" presented in Table 16 is found by dividing the number of physically active activities by the total number of activities offered (active plus sedentary). Thus, if the activity ratio is greater than 0.50, sports activities outnumber crafts activities in that agency. Note that only two communities (Kingfisher and Walters) have an activity ratio greater than 0.50, indicating that programming is more active than sedentary. Five communities (Ada, Edmond, Idabel, McAlester, and Weatherford) have ratios of exactly 0.50 indicating that active and sedentary programs exist in equal numbers. Thus in seven of the twenty-three core cities, physically active activities equal or outnumber more sedentary programs. Stated another way, sedentary activities outnumber more physical pursuits in sixteen of the twenty-three (69.6%) communities. Most revealing is the grand total of activities of each type as shown in Table 16 and the corresponding activity ratio for the state (demonstrated by the responding communities) as a whole. From this analysis, it would appear that physically active programming for the older adult (fifty-five and older) is not a part of routine recreation programming for that age group in the state of Oklahoma as reflected in the responses of the surveyed communities.

TABLE 16
COMPARISON OF ACTIVITIES IN CORE CITIES

Town or City	Sedentary Activity	Active Activity	Total Activities	Ratio
Ada	2	2	4	0.500
Claremore	8	7	5	0.467
Edmond	7	7	14	0.500
Eufaula	0	0	0	..
Hominy	4	2	6	0.333
Hugo	0	0	0	..
Idabel	1	1	2	0.500
Jenks	6	1	7	0.143
Kingfisher	6	7	13	0.538
Lawton	8	4	12	0.333
McAlester	1	1	2	0.500
Moore	4	1	5	0.200
Muskogee	5	2	7	0.286
Oklahoma City	6	5	11	0.455
Owasso	4	1	5	0.200
Ponca City	2	1	3	0.333
Seminole	5	1	6	0.167
Tulsa	5	3	8	0.375
Vinita	7	3	10	0.300
Walters	0	4	4	1.000
Weatherford	5	5	10	0.500
Yukon	4	3	7	0.429
Total	93	58	153	0.379

Other Findings

In an attempt to make some sense of the data generated by this investigation, in the face of the analysis of the research questions, demonstrating no relationship between senior programming and any of the variables examined, the

correlation matrix generated by the analysis of the data was studied.

No statistically significant relationships could be found between any variables and the variable of operation of a senior center. Similarly, no relationships existed between any variable and the number of programs within the center or the existence of programs outside of the center, with the singular exception that the number of programs operated within the center is significantly related to the number of other programs operated outside of the senior center for this age group ($r=0.43$, $p<.04$). From this perusal of the findings, then, and within the limitations of this study, it is not possible to determine just what variables do influence the presence of and extent and variety of recreation programming for adults fifty-five and older by municipal recreation agencies in the state of Oklahoma. Speculations as to why these results were found and suggestions for improvement of agency offerings will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this investigation has been to assess the existence and extent of recreational programming for older adults (fifty-five and older) within the State of Oklahoma as provided by municipal recreation departments of incorporated towns and cities. The research undertaken and results obtained will be briefly summarized.

Summary of Research

A survey instrument was designed to determine the extent of recreation programming provided by municipal agencies to the segment of the of the population over fifty-five years of age. It was mailed to the recreation director in each incorporated town or city with population over 2,500, identified by the Directory of Oklahoma, 1985-86. (n=116). From this number, fifty-four (54) useable surveys were returned. Findings were coded and entered into the computer and analyzed by means of the SAS (Statistical Analysis System). Of the responding fifty-four communities (the sample), twenty-three (23) indicated a program for senior adults (fifty-five and older). These twenty-three communities were designated as "core cities" for purposes of

analysis to distinguish them from the responding sample. Research questions were then considered using the data from these core cities.

Summary of Findings

Cursory inspection of the findings showed that of the fifty-four responding communities, less than half (42.6%) provided leisure services especially suited for older adults. Further, of these twenty-three towns and cities, only seventeen (17) provided services beyond the operation of the senior citizens' center (73.9% of the core cities or 31.5% of the responding sample). With this background, the examination of the research questions becomes understandable.

Research question one examined the relationship between the size of the older population and the quantity of programming for them. While a high correlation existed between the size of the older population and the operation of all other types of facilities, there was a negative, and non-significant relationship between the operation of a senior center and the size of the older population it is designed to serve. Similarly, there was no relationship between the existence of programming (determined by the applicability of the survey to the community) and the size of the older population.

Research question two viewed the relationship of

staffing assignments of full-time personnel to older adult programming and the size of the older population. Again, no relationship was found.

The third research question looked at overall community size rather than simply the size of the older population and the relationship of this variable to older adult leisure programming. As in the case of the first research question, there was no relationship between general population size and either the extent of programming or even the existence of programming as demonstrated by the operation of a senior center or the applicability of the study.

Research question four addressed the type of programming offered by the community. Sedentary activities (arts and crafts) were compared to physically active activities (sports) and an activity ratio calculated. In sixteen of the twenty-three core cities, as well as the overall total, arts and crafts activities outnumbered sports activities.

Limitations of the Study

Before making conclusions about the findings of this study and the implications it makes for future research or policy, it is important to consider the limitations of this study. First, responses were obtained in a one-time mailing. No follow-up mailings were done in order to increase the number of respondent communities. This decision was reached for several reasons. First, initial

responses (54) were received over a period of approximately one month. A second or subsequent mailings would have added at least another month to data collection time. Second, the cost of postage to readminister more than sixty survey instruments along with return postage was deemed prohibitive. Finally, consideration of the communities which had not responded based on the expert knowledge of research advisors suggested that a majority of the remaining communities were without recreation services for any segment of their population, and thus would not add to the findings of the research underway.

A second limitation of this study was that it is based solely upon the solicited responses of each community to a mailed questionnaire. The collaboration of the findings was done by the personal knowledge of recreation services in Oklahoma by advisory members of the research team. Thus, it is possible that the findings do not accurately reflect the actual services that are offered.

A third limitation of this study is that addressed only the responses of the municipal recreation agency of each community and did not seek responses from individuals living in that community nor from other sources which might provide recreation services for the age group studied. Again, time and cost were a significant factor in choosing not to pursue this aspect of the problem.

Finally, though the research instrument was deemed to

have face validity, it is possible that questions might have been misunderstood and that answers given were not appropriate to the question asked.

Conclusions

This investigation has demonstrated that, with regard to the responding communities, neither the size of the community nor the size of the older population within the community are viable predictors of the extent of leisure programming for older adults (fifty-five and older). As expected, it was found that programming which is offered follows that traditional philosophy reported by the previous literature, that is, primarily sedentary, non-physically challenging types of activity. If, as the more recent research has shown, the needs of the older adult are changing, then it would appear that the agencies responding to this survey are not in tune with those changes. While Elderhostel and other similar programs provide an outlet for the leisure energies of some of Oklahoma's older adults, the small percentage of that segment of the population who are even aware of Elderhostel (demonstrated by the size of the mailing list) is miniscule in comparison to the burgeoning size of the over fifty-five age group.

If, in fact, the findings of this study are even close to accurate for the remaining communities which did not respond, and it is considered safe to generalize at least

for the rest of the state of Oklahoma that they are, in fact accurate, then the mission of the leisure services profession would seem clear. As Isaac and Bynum (1977) stated in their discussion of adult education, an aging society demands change. They stated:

More specifically, the behavioral and social sciences should confront and explore the effects of the aging society on our social institutions: family, community, politics, education, and economics. (Isaac and Bynum, 1977:236)

When leisure services programming effectively excludes seven to forty percent of the citizenry of the community which it is mandated to serve, this researcher believes a problem exists. If, as the earlier research cited in Chapter 2 indicates, life satisfaction is affected in a positive way by the satisfying use of leisure, (Ragheb and Griffith, 1982; Guinn, 1980; Riddick and Daniel, 1984; Sneegas, 1985, 1986; Kelly, et al, 1986) when that leisure is used in ways congruent (Seleen, 1981,1982) with the personal choice of the participant which he or she finds meaningful and worthwhile, rather than in ways dictated by impersonal agency decision, (Wallach, 1986; Riddick, 1986) the happiness and morale of a ever-growing (Jones, 1980) portion of the population would seem to be at risk. This notion is reinforced if Jones (1980) is accurate in his predictions of the baby boomers as older adults (over sixty) as he stated in Great Expectations:

In that time, we shall rethink everything we know

about what it means to be old in America. The baby boomers will be unlike any previous generation of elderly. They will change what has heretofore been the principal stereotype of old people--namely, that they are poor, uneducated, and unemployed. The baby boomers will challenge and strain every existing program and institution concerned with the welfare of older persons. They may well force the rethinking of one of humanity's oldest social contracts: the idea that the working generations will support the old and infirm...Through their numbers they will continue to reshape our collective values and goals. (Jones, 1980:369)

If conversations which this researcher has had with many members of the present older generation (fifty-five and older) are any indication of the desires of their age-mates, then the need for new programming concepts for recreation for older adults is real. If the next generation of older adults (fifty-five and older) follows the predictions of those who have studied them as they have reached their present middle-age, then the demand for new forms of recreation for older adults will become a loud roar of protest and unrest similar to the protest and unrest expressed by the Baby Boomers (the next generation of older adults) expressed in their early adulthood at injustices they saw then, both injustices to themselves and injustices to others. The stage is set for intergenerational conflict as the always demanding baby boom generation seeks its due in old age. It will be a tragedy if this conflict is found even in the area of leisure activities. Municipal agencies must begin to rethink their programming philosophy. Colleges and universities educating future leisure

professionals should turn their thinking of leisure services for the older adult from a therapeutic model to an extension of regular programming for this part of the population. Professional organizations designed to aid the leisure professional in program development should begin to see services for older adults as routine programming and not in the therapeutic modality. Those professional recreators who spend their work time in the presence of the able elderly--those persons fifty-five and older without debilitating health conditions--know the vitality and spirit of this special part of the population. Will the municipal agency in Oklahoma discover this energy waiting to be tapped or will the private sector continue to meet this need, if it is met at all? The morale and life happiness of the older Oklahoman of both today and tomorrow will depend on the answer.

One need only be aware of the media, both print and broadcast, to witness the new avenues that today's older adults are exploring. Improved health and financial resources have broadened the horizons of this special segment of the population. When the next generation arrives at the threshold of the golden years, an even more energetic and burgeoning group will await their municipal government's response to their leisure needs.

Suggestions for Future Study

One of the tasks of this research has been to document the existing leisure services available to the older adult (fifty-five and older) within the state of Oklahoma to lay the groundwork for future studies which might be undertaken. In doing so, several conclusions were reached but, as in any study conducted, the questions answered generated even more questions which need to be asked. One of the most important questions which needs to be asked is just how aging Oklahomans feel about the leisure services which they find offered by their towns or cities and how these services, or the lack of them, affect their life satisfaction. Are they troubled by the lack of tax-supported recreational programming for their age group or is the absence of such programming accepted without question? Further, where do older Oklahomans find leisure programs which do meet their needs if not in municipal programs--YMCA, church groups, Elderhostel, or still other places?

Another interesting question relates to the similarity of these Oklahoma findings to other states. Is this state, Oklahoma, behind the others in this section of the country or in the country as a whole in leisure services for the elderly or is it simply "keeping step with its companions?" It would be most enlightening to study other states, especially those which are retirement "meccas" to determine

just how extensive this seeming unconcern is. It is suggested here that future research into the leisure needs and desires of the healthy older adult is greatly needed and will prove as fruitful and valuable as the time spent with them, pursuing their leisure.

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APPENDIX A

RECREATION SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY SURVEY

RECREATION SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY SURVEY

As a major part of my graduate research at Oklahoma State University, I am interested in municipal recreation programs for older adults (55 and older). Your cooperation in completing the following brief questionnaire will be greatly appreciated.

If the survey does not apply to your town or city, please indicate this in question 5 and return in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.

1. Name of town or city _____
2. Population of town or city _____
3. Title of person completing questionnaire _____
4. Employing department _____
5. This survey does not apply to this town or city because:
 - _____ We have no recreation department
 - _____ We have no programming for older adults (55 & older)
 - _____ Senior citizen program is not operated through municipal government
 - _____ Survey applies to this city
(Please complete remaining questions)
6. Number of full-time staff _____
7. Number of part-time staff _____
8. Do you operate a Senior Citizens' Center? Yes No
9. Number of separate programs in senior center. _____
10. Do you have other programs specifically geared to older adults (55 & older)? Yes No
11. Number of programs for older adults (55 and older) outside of senior centers _____
12. Number of full-time staff designated to serve older adults (55 and older) only _____
13. Number of part-time staff designated to serve older adults (55 and older) only _____

14. Please indicate the NUMBER of facilities operated by your department in each of the following categories:

_____ ballfields	_____ parks
_____ recreation centers	_____ swimming pools
_____ golf courses	_____ craft centers
_____ senior centers	_____ gymnasiums

15. Please indicate the NUMBER of facilities programmed for older persons (55 and older) in each of the following categories:

_____ ballfields	_____ parks
_____ recreation centers	_____ swimming pools
_____ golf courses	_____ craft centers
_____ senior centers	_____ gymnasiums

16. Indicate which of the following arts and crafts activities you offer for older adults (55 and older):

_____ ceramics	_____ jewelry making
_____ painting	_____ photography
_____ quilting	_____ calligraphy
_____ sewing	_____ woodworking
_____ macrame	_____ stained glass
_____ other -- please specify _____	

17. Indicate which of the following sports activities you offer for older adults (55 and older):

_____ golf	_____ basketball
_____ tennis	_____ volleyball
_____ swimming	_____ bicycling
_____ softball	_____ hiking
_____ Senior Olympics	
_____ other -- (please specify) _____	

Please feel free to enclose any flyers, brochures, etc., which describe and/or explain your programming strategies for older adults.

Please return to:

Linda L. Curtis
 Department of Sociology, OSU
 006 Classroom Building
 Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

A self addressed, self stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

APPENDIX B

MAILING LIST FOR SURVEY

MAILING LIST FOR SURVEY

Questionnaires were mailed to:

Director of Recreation Services,
Parks and Recreation Department,

at each of the following addresses:

13th and Townsend Ada, OK 74820	115 North Broadway Checotah, OK 74426
301 S. Lee Altus, OK 73521	City Hall Chickasha, OK 73018
City Hall Alva, OK 73717	City Hall Choctaw, OK 73020
City Hall Anadarko, OK 73005	P.O. Box 249 Claremore, OK 74017
200 S. High Antlers, OK 74523	100 South Broadway Cleveland, OK 74020
Hardy Murphy Coliseum Ardmore, OK 73401	City Hall Clinton, OK 73601
107 S. Pennsylvania Atoka, OK 74525	1200 West Main Collinsville, OK 74021
Box 699 Bartlesville, OK 74005	300 Commerce Commerce, OK 74339
6700 NW 36th Bethany, OK 73008	101 East Main Cordell, OK 73632
226 E. Jefferson Bixby, OK 74008	206 Seminole Coweta, OK 74429
201 Urbana Blackwell, OK 74063	City Hall Cushing, OK 74023
110 W. 7th Bristow, OK 74010	301 East Main Davis, OK 73030
1613 South Cedar Broken Arrow, OK 74012	4505 SE 15th Del City, OK 73115
215 North Main Broken Bow, OK 74728	City Hall Dewey, OK 74029
1001 Steele Chandler, OK 74834	City Hall Drumright, OK 74030

Box 969
Duncan, OK 73533

201 North 3rd
Durant, OK 74701

P.O. Box 2970
Edmond, OK 73083

Municipal Building
El Reno, OK 73036

401 W. O.K. Garriott Road
Enid, OK 73701

64 Linden
Eufaula, OK 74432

206 East Broadway
Fairview, OK 73737

200 West Grand
Frederick, OK 73542

City Hall
Glenpool, OK 74033

104 West 3rd
Grove, OK 74344

City Hall
Guthrie, OK 73044

219 West 4th
Guymon, OK 73942

204 North Harrah Road
Harrah, OK 73045

310 Franklin
Healdton, OK 73438

City Hall
Heavener, OK 74937

4th and Broadway
Henryetta, OK 74437

111 East 3rd
Hobart, OK 73651

City Hall
Holdenville, OK 74848

208 West Jones
Hollis, OK 73550

610 South Wood
Hominy, OK 74035

201 South 2nd
Hugo, OK 74743

207 South Central
Idabel, OK 74745

211 North Elm
Jenks, OK 74037

301 North Main
Kingfisher, OK 73750

1405 SW 11th
Lawton, OK 73501

308 SW 2nd
Lindsay, OK 73052

City Hall
Lone Grove, OK 73443

City Hall
Mangum, OK 73554

City Hall
Marlow, OK 73055

Municipal Building
McAlester, OK 74501

City Hall
McLoud, OK 74851

129 5th NW
Miami, OK 74354

1114 S. Air Depot
Midwest City, OK 73119

P.O. Box 7248
Moore, OK 73153

City Hall
Muldrow, OK 74948

P.O. Box 1927
Muskogee, OK 74401

470 W. State Highway 152
Mustang, OK 73064

City Hall
Newcastle, OK 73065

6407 Avondale Drive
Nichols Hills, OK 73116

Jeffords and Nichols Drive
Nicoma Park, OK 73066

City Hall
Noble, OK 73068

P.O. Box 370
Norman, OK 73069

113 South Pine
Nowata, OK 74048

502 West Broadway
Okemah, OK 74859

201 Channing Square
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

111 East 4th
Okmulgee, OK 74447

207 South Cedar
Owasso, OK 74055

City Hall
Pauls Valley, OK 73035

City Hall
Pawhuska, OK 74056

626 Cedar
Perry, OK 73077

City Hall
Pocola, OK 74902

905 W. Hartford
Ponca City, OK 74601

City Hall
Poteau, OK 74953

6 North Adair
Pryor, OK 74361

230 West Main
Purcell, OK 73080

111 North Elm
Sallisaw, OK 74955

1801 North McKinley
Sand Springs, OK 74063

116 East Dewey
Sapulpa, OK 74066

102 West Main
Sayre, OK 73662

P.O. Box 1218
Seminole, OK 74868

Drawer 1448
Shawnee, OK 74801

2nd and Broadway
Skiatook, OK 74070

8300 NE 36th
Spencer, OK 73084

115 South Broadway
Stigler, OK 74462

P.O. Box 1449
Stillwater, OK 74076

City Hall
Stroud, OK 74079

City Hall
Sulphur, OK 73086

101 South Cherokee
Tahlequah, OK 74464

114 North Broadway
Tecumseh, OK 74873

2201 West Britton Road
The Village, OK 73120

201 South Capitol
Tishomingo, OK 73460

113 South 7th
Tonkawa, OK 74653

200 Civic Center
Tulsa, OK 74127

422 Main
Tuttle, OK 73089

104 East Illinois
Vinita, OK 74301

Box 509
Wagoner, OK 74477

129 East Colorado
Walters, Ok 73572

5930 NW 49th
Warr Acres, OK 73122

City Hall
Watonga, OK 73772

522 West Rainey
Weatherford, OK 73096

123 South Mekusukey
Wewoka, OK 74884

310 West Main
Wilburton, OK 74578

1219 8th Street
Woodward, OK 73801

207 West Robert S. Kerr Blvd.
Wynnewood, OK 73098

Box 850500
Yukon, OK 73085

VITA²

Linda L. Curtis

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: MUNICIPAL RECREATION SERVICES FOR THE ABLE ELDERLY
IN OKLAHOMA: AN UNEXPLORED FRONTIER

Major Field: Sociology

Biographical:

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