

AGEING AND LEISURE

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A thesis
submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Recreation and Leisure Studies

Victoria University of Wellington
1996

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on *policy-makers* whose agendas impact on the *leisure needs of an ageing New Zealand population*. It aims to test a hypothesis that such agendas impact negatively on provision for such needs. The theoretical approach is from leisure studies, sociology and social gerontology, although relevant psychological research is also drawn upon.

The thesis discusses the development of leisure over time. The findings suggest that the ageing population does not have as many unmet leisure needs as might generally be thought, but that it would welcome an increase in the level of leisure policy-maker involvement in their leisure lives. The findings also suggest a willingness on the part of the leisure policy-makers to focus more deliberate energies on the leisure needs of the ageing population.

Arising from an examination of the relationship between active engagement in later life and longevity, a tentative 'Theory of Ageing Actively' is posited.

KEYWORDS: *ageing; boredom; disengagement; flow (optimal arousal);
leisure policy-makers; needs.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, thanks go to my supervisor, Allan Laidler, without whose challenging, prodding and academic guidance this thesis would not have been completed.

A 'thank you' also to Jenny Neale for her time and critical evaluation of my two interview question formats, and for steering me clear of some of the potential pitfalls when studying the ageing population.

Heartfelt thanks to 'Bea' Ashton for her time, direct honesty and critical evaluation of my interview style. Having enlisted her services as a 'naive' other, I knew that such a role was impossible and her wisdom of 'age' thus proved invaluable.

Thanks also to Diana O'Neill from the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure for her help in shaping the interview question formats and sharpening the focus.

Another group of very important people in this research project deserving a high level of appreciation and thanks are my research respondents, without whose generous gift of time and knowledge there would be no thesis.

I also owe a major debt of gratitude to my manager, Mary Iwanek, for her unflagging encouragement toward the completion of my study.

Finally, my sincerest thanks go to Janet and my two sons, John and Alexander, for their continuous support of my efforts to see this project through. It was always going to be a difficult exercise while juggling home and work responsibilities. To my family: thank you!

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AGEING AND LEISURE

INTRODUCTION

Scientific, medical, and technological developments have made ageing easier for contemporary Western societies, as exemplified by the fact that living to 'three score years and ten' is now commonplace. That people might live to enjoy those years is no longer rare. It is a fact that New Zealand's population is ageing quickly, both comparatively and proportionately, when considered against recent historical population statistics. In 1992, nearly 24% of the population was over the age of 50 years. In 1994, the Government Statistician, releasing New Zealand population projection figures, stated that:

half the population of 3.54 million was older than 32 years of age...[and] given the prospects of lower birth rates, increasing life expectancy, and the passage of the baby boomers into retirement ages, the median age is expected to increase by nine years from 32 years to 41 years by 2031¹.

Not only is the New Zealand population ageing rapidly, the numbers of older people in each of three older age groups (those 65 and over, 75 and over, and 85 and over) are all expected to grow exponentially in the next thirty to forty years. This is based on an analysis of census data from the period between 1951 (when the ageing population comprised 9% of the population) and 1991 (by which time it comprised 11%). A further rise to 19% by 2031 is projected². Collectively, those figures suggest that the New Zealand population is moving rapidly toward having a disproportionate number of people in the older age groups.

Most [people in New Zealand] can now expect their later years to include some fifteen years of active life beyond the period spent in the pursuit of career or the raising of a family³;

a majority can reasonably expect to live to age seventy-five and beyond: the fifteen 'extra years' beyond sixty.

1 - *The Dominion* Newspaper (Friday, 2 December 1994) (front page)

2 - *New Zealand Now: 65 Plus* (Report by the Demography Division of Statistics New Zealand) (May 1995) (p25)

3 - *The Extra Years: Some Implications for New Zealand Society of Ageing Population* (Report of the Social Advisory Council) (February 1984) (p11)

What has this meant for leisure policy-makers, and have they developed structural and operational processes to address the leisure needs of the ageing population? These, and other related questions, will be explored in the thesis.

With increasing longevity have come two positive spin-offs for people in the ageing population: there are now far more people surviving to share leisure-time pursuits in later life, and there is an increase in the time available during ‘the extra years’ for members of the ageing population to enjoy the life, vitality and enthusiasm of younger people.

Prior to my research, I held the view that people in the ageing population should be supported in their pursuit of positive and meaningful leisure, as well as being encouraged to enjoy their increasing longevity and potential for societal involvement. It was from this viewpoint that I developed my research questions: what does the growth of an ageing population mean for leisure policy-makers, and what will be expected of them as they plan for the future?

I decided then to look at the agendas of leisure policy-makers and their understanding of the leisure needs of the ageing population, and refined my research question:

How effective are the efforts of leisure policy-makers in addressing the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing population in New Zealand?

A secondary aim was to determine whether, through engagement and social interaction and tapping into their collective wisdom, members of the ageing population might face a better future. The sense I had, was that such a strategy might begin by identifying and developing concepts of leisure pertaining to the ageing population.

Chapter 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Ageing

Human Need

Everybody has needs: be they basic survival needs or needs of a higher order. Maslow (1943) identified and described five levels, or classes, of needs and divided them into higher and lower orders. He postulated that:

the 'lower' needs require some measure of satisfaction (or past experience of satisfaction) before the next, the 'higher' needs become motivationally activating. Firstly, the physical, biological needs; secondly, the safety needs; thirdly, the affection or belongingness needs; fourthly, the self-esteem needs; and fifthly, the self-actualisation or self-development needs¹.

In Maslow's hierarchy there exists an underlying principle that the maintenance of social order is necessary so that individual actors/agents in any particular social construct are able to have their basic needs met. The ability to meet basic and 'higher order' human needs is critical to the promotion of a homogeneous society and the maintenance of social order. It was Maslow's view that the satisfaction of needs is a prerequisite to people feeling that the social order is in tune with their wishes to participate in any chosen society. It would appear, consequently, that the role of social and leisure policy-makers is critical, as they find themselves in a position to exert influence over the process by which people's needs are identified and met.

With particular reference to the formation of social policy and the significance of its imputation to need satisfaction, Harris (1987) suggested that:

social policies should be directed toward guaranteeing a range of life chances to the citizens of a society. The relevant life chances are those required to protect the status of individuals as full members of the community. Their purpose is to offer material opportunities to participate in the way of life of the society. Needs, by

1 - Fitzgerald, R. (ed.) (1977) *Human Needs and Politics* (p7) [Maslow's 1943 paper is Chapter 5 in his *Motivation and Personality*, Harper and Row, New York, 1954]

implication, are defined as whatever is necessary to that end. An individual is 'in need' for the purposes of social policy to the extent that he [or she] lacks the resources to participate as a full member of society in its way of life¹.

Seemingly, Harris' notion of need satisfaction should be applicable in the development of leisure policies when overlaid on the 'basic need-satisfaction' requirement that might exist for a sizeable portion of New Zealand's ageing population. Often, it could simply be 'material opportunities' that members of that group are seeking: clearly, when those opportunities are available, the individual has a choice, and it may be this perceived or actual freedom of choice (and corresponding control over one's leisure) that determines whether or not individuals feel accepted in their chosen community. Research suggests that locus of control is also important in the enhancement of both a sense of independence and psychological well-being/mental health among the ageing population (Mobily, Lemke, Ostiguy, Woodard, Griffiee and Pickens, 1993; Riddick and Daniel, 1984; Riddick and Stewart, 1994; Searle, Mahon, Iso-Ahola, Sdrolias and van Dyck, 1995). It has also been contended, however, that it is inappropriate to try to focus on leisure requirements as a distinct needs category. Coalter *et al.* (1986) have endorsed the Rapoport's assertion, that:

people do not have 'leisure needs' as such. Rather do they have a range of needs, some of which may be met by activity in their leisure time or possibly by activity in other domains of their life (R. & R. N. Rapoport, 1976).

Clearly, human needs are more than simply the materialistic needs as previously identified; namely, food, clothing and shelter. It does appear, therefore, that Maslow's hierarchy constitutes a helpfully broad identification of human needs. In the course of the research I intended to test my hypothesis that Maslow had omitted one (a sixth) 'higher order' class of need: the need to give in return, or a need for reciprocal engagement that is inherent in most social relationships; noting, that many have refined Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Mills, 1985; Mykyta and Burr, 1987). In this research, however, the aim is not to refine or redefine, but

1 - Harris, D. in Doyal, L. and Gough, I. (1991) *A Theory of Human Need* (pp51-52)

to highlight the relevance of the hierarchy to the so-called disengagement years of people's interaction with their respective communities.

Arousal Theory

There exist many different theories of arousal, most of which have resulted from psycho-physiological studies into the relationship between cognitive and motor performance and/or activation stimuli: seldom, however, have these theories been applied in a leisure context. Consequently, it is to Csikszentmihalyi's theory of optimal arousal (in a leisure context) that this research turns, in an attempt to ascertain the potential for on-going, sustained arousal in members of the ageing population.

As suggested earlier, in Maslow's hierarchy, need satisfaction is based on engagement rather than disengagement, and therefore has high potential for the on-going enhancement of life. It is also likely to be full of potential for arousal and to contribute to the leisure experience. This was recognised by Ellis (1973) when he postulated that people strive to maintain arousal throughout life.

There would appear to exist a level of arousal at which people function at an optimal peak, a point at which they are neither over-stimulated nor under-stimulated. This has been described by Csikszentmihalyi (Mannell, Zuzanek and Larson, 1988) as a state of being in balance. In sporting and some other contexts, this would translate to people being able to engage in their chosen endeavour without being fearful of delivering a sub-standard performance or giving a less than satisfactory account of themselves. For members of the ageing population, this optimal arousal state is likely to emanate from their being exposed to stimuli capable of triggering their memory of previously exciting, stimulating and arousal-generating experiences; but not entirely so, as new experiences do also offer the same potential.

Stephenson (1967), when referring to the state of arousal maintenance, suggested that:

Humans, at least, are also capable of maintaining arousal by the manipulation of symbolic experiences. The rearrangement of old ideas, or the process of fitting new ideas into existing frameworks carries with it uncertainty. The higher processes of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are activities that are fraught with uncertainty and can be arousing... The exercise of the higher processes, in the absence of any overt response, may [in themselves] be arousing¹.

Earle (1992), in his study of social network needs of older Australians, classified 'five major elements of social-psychological need (involvement, satisfaction, autonomy, integration and creativity [ISAIC]) which may be achieved in varying degrees at any time'². Each of these elements is singularly, and collectively, contributory toward the achievement of an optimal arousal state. Figure 1, which could have been portrayed in circular form, illustrates Earle's needs striving/satisfaction process in leisure contexts.

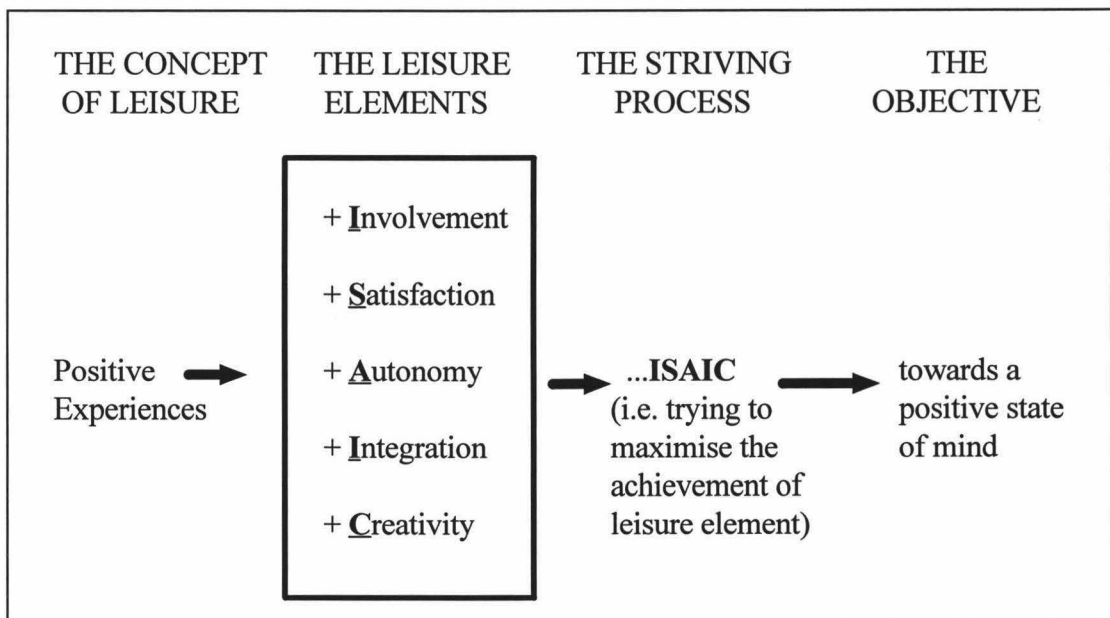


Figure 1: **The Leisure Striving Process**

Source: adaptation of Earle (1992:75).

1 - Stephenson, W. in Ellis, M. J. (1973) *Why People Play* (p99)

2 - Earle, L. (1992) *Social Network Needs Among Older People* (p74) (author's own emphasis)

Consequently, if the leisure time of members of the ageing population does have the potential to be filled with their striving to fit new leisure ideas and opportunities on to historically known, tried-and-true and comfortable experiential bases, then leisure, recreation or *play* should easily be able to become what Ellis called ‘that behavior that is motivated by the need to elevate the level of arousal towards the optimal’¹. It is, then, the heightening of the level of arousal that is the primary source of stimulation, rather than participation in any particular activity.

The concept of play is further discussed in Chapter 4. However, given that play could be an important consideration for leisure policy-makers looking at the leisure needs of New Zealand’s rapidly-ageing population, it might be worthwhile asking the question: should leisure policy-makers use play in a deliberate way to develop and enhance the leisure experiences of the ageing population, or would it be better, and safer, for them to simply focus on the more rational concept of recreation (defined as: sanctioned activities, socially organised for social purposes)? Hopefully an answer will emerge.

Concept of a Better Society

The ‘Warrant of Commission’ in the Terms of Reference for the 1988 (New Zealand) Royal Commission on Social Policy stated that there was value to be found in striving for ‘a fair society’. The ‘Warrant’ clearly linked the idea of ‘a fair society’ to the concept of a better outcome for all, which, when linked with arousal and heightened levels of satisfaction, has the potential to produce a positive outcome. Cushman and Laidler (1988) further highlighted this idea of ‘a fair society’ in their chapter, listing concepts that might be found in the establishment of such a society: ‘social wellbeing, a sense of belonging to the community, opportunity to develop potential, [and] commitment to the country’s children’². With respect to the development of worthwhile leisure policy as a valuable

1 - Ellis, M. J. (1973) *Why People Play* (p110)

2 - Cushman, G. and Laidler, A. in *The April Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy* (Volume IV: Social Perspectives) (April 1988) (p507)

contribution toward the attainment of 'a fair society', the identification of these concepts was not at all unreasonable, and was in tune with rationales elsewhere. For example, Coalter *et al.* (1986) had suggested of the earlier British experience, that:

ideology of 'community', with its presumptions of consensus and integration, has [long] been a prevalent strand in [British] government (and quango) statements about leisure provision and its wider social functions...[with] leisure and recreation provision [being] regarded as having an important role in developing community cohesion¹.

Disengagement Theory

While the ideology of community may be underpinned by presumptions of consensus and integration, for many (especially those in the ageing population) the reality might well be quite different and include exclusion and disengagement.

There is, however, some support for encouraging the movement of members of the ageing population back into the community, through their engagement with other groups. Two international examples of this re-engagement can be found in Britain and the United States of America where social experiments centred around getting children to school safely by focusing a sense of community responsibility among members of the ageing population. Other examples, such as the 'Youth 2000' Campaign² and the 'Work Connection'³ in the United States, used the skills of members of the ageing population through a process of re-engagement and psycho-social interaction to assist less advantaged young people.

In a somewhat different perspective, Cumming and Henry (1961), in their sociological studies of leisure, interpreted the changing role of the ageing population as its members moved from paid work into retirement. They suggested

1 - Coalter, F. *et al.* *Rationale For Public Sector Investment In Leisure* (Report of The Sports Council and Economic and Social Research Council) (October 1986) (p142)

2 - Elder, J. K. *Ageing* No 356 (1987) (p17)

3 - Platt, B. *Ageing* No 357 (1988) (p14)

that a specific process occurred, which they called disengagement. It was their assertion that:

Ageing is an inevitable mutual withdrawal or disengagement resulting in decreased interaction between the ageing and others in the social system to which he [sic] belongs. The process may be initiated by the individual or by others in the situation. The ageing person may withdraw more markedly from some classes of people while remaining relatively close to others. His withdrawal may be accompanied from the outset by an increased preoccupation with himself; certain institutions in society may make this withdrawal easy for him¹.

In support of that assertion, Achenbaum and Bengtson (1994) suggest that disengagement occurs in certain developed Western societies, and that as a theory of how people in ageing populations absent themselves from participation in leisure activities and pursuits, it has some validity. However, Harris and Boden (1978) contend that another movement exists that promotes engagement (or re-engagement), and that this opposite movement, based around Activity Theory, is a desirable and achievable goal for which society should be striving. Earle (1992) noted that there existed three main theories: the first, Disengagement Theory, was in accord with Cumming and Henry; the second, Activity Theory, was promoted by Havighurst (1968), suggesting 'that older people do not want to disengage, but prefer to remain active'. Earle, however, went further and suggested that both theories fell short of the mark in that they implied that there must exist 'obstacles in society which cause people to lose the will to continue active participation'. Earle's major disagreement with the two theories was in that they failed to allow 'scope for changing society to facilitate a wider involvement of older people'. So it was to the third school of thought, based around Cowgill's (1974) Modernization Theory, that Earle turned his attention and in which he found most worth. This theory addressed 'societal structures' that were both negatively and positively impacting on older people and their 'life situations'. One of the primary tenets of Cowgill's thinking was that 'major aspects of modern living, including technology, education and urbanization, have all contributed to an erosion of the position of older people in modern societies'².

1 - Parker, S. (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure* (p61)

2 - Earle, L. (1992) *Social Network Needs Among Older People* (pp2-3)

In respect to the notion of disengagement, Streib and Schneider (1971) had earlier postulated that there did exist activity within disengagement, if disengagement was indeed a legitimate theory. They had sought to define the extent of disengagement by dividing the activity associated with the process into two main categories:

the leisure role (which involves seeing the later years of life as 'leisure years') and the citizenship-service role (programmes by private and governmental agencies, including activity as foster grandparents and manning 'dial-a-friend' services)¹;

the British and North American examples that I referred to earlier, fall into the second category.

Essentially, Streib and Schneider were refocusing on what individuals' want from their engagement with, rather than through their disengagement from, society. People's needs change over time, as do their abilities to participate actively in leisure activities and pursuits. Crawford (1972) added to this hypothesis when she suggested that it is a change that most people in the ageing population experience in relation to their leisure, rather than any form of absolute disengagement. Crawford's study of the North American retirement experience also indicated significant class differences in relation to leisure time usage and access. She concluded that it was 'change rather than a cessation of anticipated involvement after retirement [that was experienced] by most groups'².

However, Laidler (1994) writing on the New Zealand ageing and leisure experience proffered the notion that neither the disengagement theorists, nor for that matter the activity theorists, have totally encapsulated the notion of ageing. He postulated that a more helpful definition can be found in the 'attribution theory of ageing'. He suggested that attribution follows a particular pattern:

1 - Streib, G. F. and Schneider, C. J. in Parker, S. (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure* (p61)

2 - Crawford, M. P. in Parker, S. (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure* (p61)

- (a) we look for meaning in human behaviours;
- (b) we assign meaning to our own and others' behaviour by attempting to find causes for it; [and then]
- (c) we attribute cause to dispositional [qualities, that include our own strengths and skills] and/or environmental factors...which include luck and bad luck, powerful others, government legislation and so on¹.

Laidler, through espousing the preferability of 'dispositional' attribution, begins to question the *raison d'être* of the disengagement and activity theorists by bringing a new dimension to those discussions.

Even taking Laidler's 'dispositional' attribution theory into account, if ageing and leisure in a New Zealand context is to be explained in any reasoned way, then cognisance must also be taken of the fact that many members of the New Zealand ageing (and aged) population do not currently avail themselves of the existing leisure or recreation resources: although the *Life in New Zealand Survey* (LINZ) (1991) described levels of involvement and uptake indicators. This LINZ survey indicated that older New Zealanders remain active primarily in home-based activities such as gardening (men and women), housework (women) and lawn-mowing (men), and that they tend to have low participation levels even in the 'recognised' sports for the elderly, such as lawn bowls and golf. That research, in reporting those uptake levels, did indicate that there had been experienced a gradual process of disengagement.

Leisure

The New Zealand Context

When considering concepts of leisure in a New Zealand context, it is often aspects of physical exertion and striving for new pinnacles of human endeavour, rather than notions of sedentary or passive leisure, that dominate. As an example, the 1994 Hillary Commission publication, *Solving the Mystery of Inactivity*

¹ - Laidler, A. (1994) Physical Activity and Ageing, in *Journal of Physical Education New Zealand*, Vol.27, No.3 (Spring 1994) (p21)

described the image of New Zealanders participating in physical leisure from the perspective of inactive people as 'the super-race - beings with supreme skill, super-fitness, physical beauty, utmost dedication and commitment, who achieve ultimate glory'¹. That image has long been seen as the backbone of New Zealandness. However, other research, such as the LINZ survey, counters that contention and suggests that there has been a shift away from such an historically narrow focus.

Within Pakeha (non-Maori) New Zealand male society, from before the 1950s through to the 1970s, a physical expression of a person's development was not only honourable and noble, but it was also socially and politically correct. Developmentally, the transition from boyhood to manhood was very much based on the pioneering spirit: an ability to display a mastery over the elements and of personally never-giving-an-inch; anything less was unmanly. A more recent phenomenon, and something that has gathered momentum over the past twenty or thirty years, has been the emergence and acceleration of a sense of New Zealand womanhood.

Physical leisure activity in New Zealand (seemingly for both Pakeha and Maori males) has been the essential historical expression of self-gratification; to the point, as suggested by the Social Advisory Council (1984), that:

It is perhaps a little unfortunate that among New Zealanders there has been so much emphasis on physically strenuous sport, particularly for men. For many men this is the only active leisure pursuit they know, and when that is no longer appropriate, there is little to replace it².

Strenuous physical sport, however, was often only a smoke-screen. Phillips (1996), when writing about the historical development of Pakeha maleness, has suggested that 'the myth of the New Zealand male disguised racial differences'³: the myth being, that New Zealand males (of all races) were drawn

1 - *Solving the Mystery of Inactivity* (Published Paper of the Hillary Commission for Sport, Fitness and Leisure) (1994) (p19)

2 - *The Extra Years: Some Implications for New Zealand Society of Ageing Population* (Report of the Social Advisory Council) (February 1984) (p24)

3 - Phillips, J. (1996) *A Man's Country* (Revised Edition) (p286)

together in an environment of social and racial cohesion born of a sense of mateship, an 'equal community of mates'. Phillips went on to suggest that this typifying of the New Zealand male as an amalgam of homogeneity and physical strength was 'a Pakeha phenomenon, emerging very largely out of Anglo-Saxon traditions and focusing primarily on Pakeha heroes'¹. It might be suggested, for Pakeha males, that championing the physical aspect of activity (as being the ultimate extrinsic expression of one's manhood) could easily lead people to think that there existed no intrinsic value or worth in that self-expression, which is not necessarily true. People (be they males or females, and from all cultures) have always searched for the intrinsic values that are to be found in leisure activity.

The Study of Leisure

Kelly (1987) formed two premises about leisure that are fundamental to its study; they are, that:

1. leisure is a complex rather than simple concept and phenomenon;
2. leisure is part of the process of existence rather than a static and unchanging idea or phenomenon².

Even so, while 'leisure is a complex rather than a simple concept and phenomenon', it does have the potential to be studied in uncomplicated ways. It is not essential that all aspects of leisure have to be studied simultaneously. It is possible, as with the study of other forms of social behaviour, to break it into rudimentary parts, focusing then on the leisure experience or on the social actors/agents involved.

Kelly's second premise, that 'leisure is part of the process of existence rather than a static and unchanging idea or phenomenon', suggests that leisure, as with the passage of life (and thus time), is about change and development. Leisure certainly grows with the individual, as well as with that individual's maturing

1 - Phillips, J. (1996) *A Man's Country* (Revised Edition) (p286)

2 - Kelly, J. (1987) *Freedom To Be* (p18)

cohort. Rojek (1995) suggests, however, that leisure is a somewhat elusive goal:

rather like the concept of utopia, leisure seems to be one place on the map of the human world where we are constantly trying to land, but which perpetually evades our reach¹.

Even without being able to 'land on the map of the human world', it is clear that something is happening at 'ground level', as life experiences do change from birth, through maturity and into old age, as does the way that people choose to express themselves through their leisure. This is evident from studies of the type and frequency of leisure-taking and the existence, or not, of what has been termed disengagement that is experienced by members of the ageing population (Cumming and Henry, 1961; Crawford, 1972; Earle, 1992; Freysinger, 1995; LINZ, 1991; Ragheb and Griffith, 1982; Riddick and Stewart, 1994; Streib and Schneider, 1971).

Studies of leisure are numerous: they are as varied as there are reasons to study this subject area and they are approached from a variety of perspectives. There are studies of leisure across the globe. Although the North American experience has had a strong influence on leisure behaviour and leisure studies in New Zealand, it is often on British experience that New Zealanders have focused their attention when looking for an historical start-point for the study of leisure; at least that is often the start-point for Anglo-Saxon students of the subject.

British Sports Council (1986) research took a comprehensive look at leisure and recreation, following an earlier study by Young and Willmott (1973) who had highlighted some of the differences between (paid) work and leisure, and had concluded that:

Without more equality (within the British class structure) in general and without priority for public transport in particular, more and more kinds of leisure will be shut off from the poor, and the car-less, young and, even more, old².

1 - Rojek, C. (1995) *Decentring Leisure* (p1)

2 - Young, M. and Willmott, P. (1973) *The Symmetrical Family* (p238)

Included in that research was an investigation of the construction and measurement of need in relation to leisure, which has already been discussed. Also, the research looked at the politics of leisure (which will be discussed later) and identified similar difficulties to those experienced in this country, namely: ‘the problems associated with the development of recreational welfare policies are related to the low political status of leisure policy’.

In New Zealand, the LINZ survey investigated leisure patterns across the life-span, and some of those are compared in Chapter 2.

Also, closer to home, Earle developed a number of hypotheses based on the Australian experience, as well as ways of interpreting the movement from work into retirement and the corresponding availability of leisure time. This does, to some degree, have similarities to the New Zealand experience and these too, are discussed later.

A Theoretical Perspective

Parker (1976) suggested that, like so much in the study of the human sciences, the concept of leisure is defined as a somewhat nebulous aspect of social behaviour. He postulated that the absence of consensus about what leisure is, ‘indicates that we need to recognise that we are dealing with a subject which is riddled with value-judgements and preferences’¹. Even if Parker’s notion was accurate, it is unlikely to be of any great moment: most studies of human behaviour are laden with value-judgements, preferences and presumptions, including those of the researcher. It does not matter that there is no one clear definition of what constitutes leisure, as there is no one clear definition of much that is associated with the study of personal and group social behaviour. Variance in the definition of deviance is an example.

1 - Parker, S. (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure* (p61)

From reviewing the literature, I deduced that my interpretation of what leisure theory and the meaning of leisure are, is not dissimilar to those espoused by many leisure theorists (Earle, 1992; Ellis, 1973; Jackson and Burton, 1989; Kelly, 1987; Laidler, 1994; Murphy, 1981; Parker, 1976; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975; Rojek, 1995), especially where those interpretations draw comparisons between the social cohesion/structuralist and the existentialist views of what constitutes the meaning of leisure. Kelly (1987) suggested that:

leisure - like any other designated kind of human action - exists in a dialectic between the existential and the social (Kelly, 1981, 1983). Leisure is not unlimited freedom or choice, nor is it only a manifestation of the pervasive norms and requirements of an integrated social system. It is neither wholly free nor entirely determined. The task of theory building then, is to attempt to understand how leisure has real existence that is in some way both existential and social¹.

In New Zealand society, it appears that leisure theory has essential meaning in both the social cohesion/structuralist and existentialist interpretations. Kelly suggested that, at its most simple level of interpretation, the social cohesion/structuralist theory (or metaphor as he called it) has leisure directly contributing to, and drawing its design and shape from, the need for maintenance of social order and to collective striving for a sense of nationhood. Kelly's interpretation begins with the assumption that 'social forces determine behavior'² and, in the process, reflects some of the ideas postulated by Maslow. The notion here, is that there are forces within society that already contribute to the maintenance of order and that also directly influence the way that people choose to spend their leisure; the type, degree and frequency are all being shaped by those social cohesive forces.

Figure 2, that follows, serves to illustrate how leisure has evolved; or rather, how it has turned one full revolution from classical to modern and postmodern times.

1 - Kelly, J. (1987) *Freedom To Be* (p17)

2 - *ibid.* (p6)

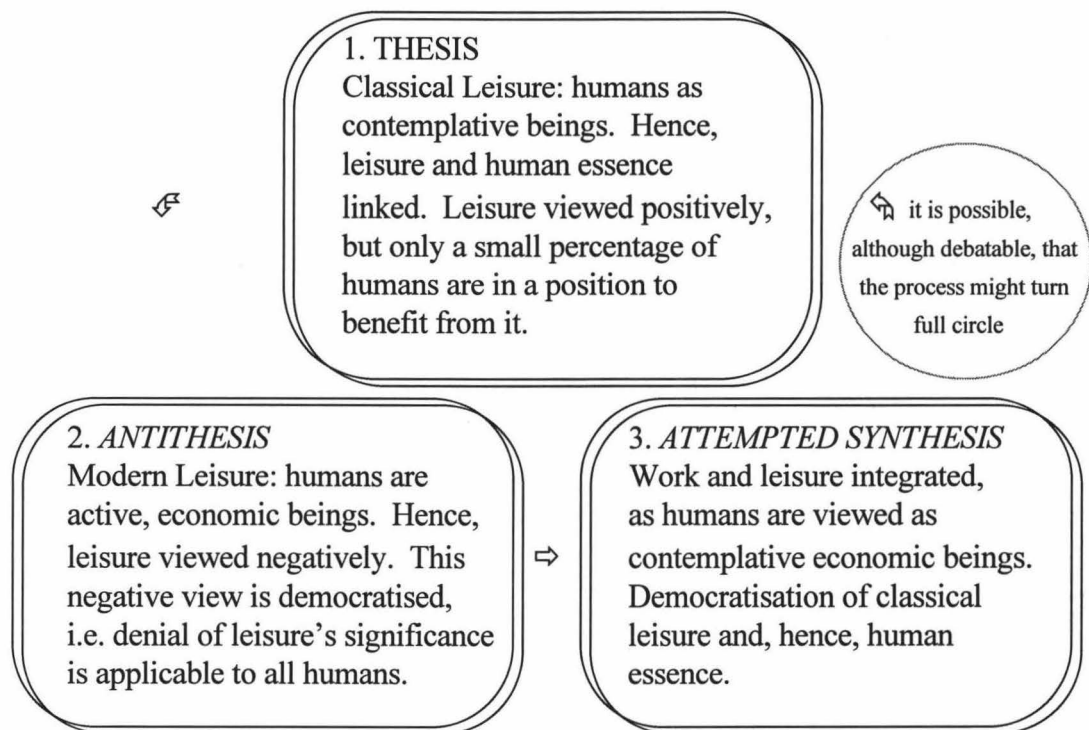


Figure 2: **Philosophy and Leisure in Context**

Source: adaptation of Dare, *et al.* (1987).

This model serves to identify that changing views toward leisure are crucial dimensions of the process of philosophy in Western civilisation. Also, it suggests that leisure has steadily moved from being a fundamental and acceptable part of human existence, through a 'denial' stage when work became all-powerful and all-consuming, through an attempted synthesis in which leisure once again became legitimised and viewed as being an integral part of human existence and so, human essence: technically available to everyone. In effect that attempted synthesis may be propelling leisure toward postmodernity (characterised as a state of existence without commitment: into a state of leisure limbo). However, some leisure theorists argue that postmodernity is 'still in gestation'¹, and if that is so, then it is possible that a transitional phase does have application in the scenario identified in the model. Because, if Rojek's (1995) notion of leisure development over time from capitalism, through modernity and into postmodernity is accurate, then it is conceivable that a secondary synthesis, beyond postmodernity, could have leisure

1 - Rojek, C. (1995) *Decentring Leisure* (p6)

returning to a more classical state (as I have suggested in the model): the difference between historical Classical Leisure and neo-Classical Leisure, being that leisure can be accessed, participated in, and enjoyed by a far greater proportion of the population.

In any event, and considering the analyses outlined above, Earle's (1992) *Ageing in Social Context Theory* falls between the social cohesion/structuralist and the existentialist theories of leisure. The importance of that in the New Zealand context should not be under-estimated, because of the strong demographic and life-style experience correlations between New Zealand and Australia.

In returning to the New Zealand experience of what leisure is, it may be possible to find illumination in a variety of leisure theories such as those advanced by Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) and Murphy (1981). As a country, often identified as bordering on the fanatical when it comes to the pursuit of leisure and sporting activities, New Zealand has tended to define leisure depending on the circumstance of its engagement or application. For example, New Zealanders identify to the point of nationalistic fervour with the country's premier sporting teams: especially, but not exclusively, in sports or activities that have large in-country followings and participation. It is noted that, co-incidentally with this increasing proportionally for women in recent times as strong female role models have emerged, there has been a corresponding reduction in the rate of involvement by men (especially in team sports, and most especially in the national game of rugby): it is, however, debatable whether or not there exists a causal relationship between the two events. Phillips (1996) does not think so, and suggests that rugby's declining ability to hold the attention of the nation's men, and therefore to be used as 'a vehicle of national pride'¹, is a direct result of the fluctuating fortunes of the national team [the *All Blacks*]: and, it could now be argued, that with the

1 - Phillips, J. (1996) *A Man's Country* (Revised Edition) (p269)

recent introduction of pay-for-play (professionalism) into the 'national game', its 'prestigious' position could come under further threat.

Examples of this shift in national focus away from one sport (or sporting team) to a wider range of sporting endeavours is now evident: they can be found in the heightened interest in sports with large followings, such as netball, rugby league and lawn bowls. Equally evident, is a heightened interest in a host of other smaller sporting disciplines, such as yachting, that have received increased exposure despite participation in them by small numbers of competitors, due to the involvement of sponsors and the availability of media coverage, especially television, that has served to draw in and engage people at a sedentary level.

All of this fervent support by the non-participant mass, it could be argued, contributes at some level to the maintenance of social cohesion and is generally structural in nature. It helps to maintain the social order by instilling the need for, and acceptance of, an hierarchical pecking order in the attainment of sporting excellence, as exemplified by the participants. It is possible that this notion of sporting excellence is but a metaphor for domination of the opposition, or foe, that has historically been tied to another arena of human endeavour: victory as experienced in the theatre of war. However, the war-time analogy may be an unfortunate one, as clearly many in the ageing population research sample were heavily impacted on by successive wars (The Second World War and The Korean War), and yet they chose, almost to a person, not to talk about those experiences, as did they keep their counsel on whether or not such occurrences produced any form of social cohesion. And while New Zealanders may no longer savour victory through witnessing the vanquishing of war-time rivals, they remain strident in their passion to see present-day rivals over-powered. The sporting prowess of the country's 'gladiatorial' representatives (historically, mostly males) is generally measured only by the degree to which they are able to exert supremacy over their

rivals. Victory over more recent historical opponents continues to be viewed as a primary contributor to the furtherance of social cohesion and order: there still exists no more obvious process that draws people in New Zealand society together. Even individuals totally uninterested in the process or outcome of the endeavour itself, cannot help but be exposed to its nationalistic effect. Many will contend that this absolute effect has reduced over recent times: that reduction, however, must be viewed in context. What has happened is that the range of sporting heroes to whom people can now direct their adoration is increasing, while at the same time diversifying. Many sporting heroes are now to be found competing in individual (rather than team disciplines) where personal strength, dedication and determination are their stock and trade, rather than 'collective muscle'. Because these combatants, both male and female, are viewed as being equally valid carriers and champions of the New Zealand psyche, their individual efforts are subsequently also the toast of the masses.

In that context, it is possible to see how the existentialist theory can be applied to the New Zealand experience. The individual combatant becomes the centre of adulation and exultation, and her or his success and vanquishing of opponents is clearly shared, enjoyed and celebrated by followers and supporters. The attainment of personal perfection in a chosen discipline is no longer reserved for such lofty figures as Edmund Hillary who was, at the time of his conquest of Mount Everest with Tensing Norkay in 1953, 'the perfect expression of New Zealand's superior Anglo-Saxon manhood'¹.

It would seem, therefore, that leisure (at least as exemplified by sport) does appear to be a social phenomenon: one born of people's need for legitimised challenge and group or self-gratification outside of the work experience. Clearly, such a notion embodies a need for an individual to be free enough to choose what form (content, shape, time, location and duration) that leisure should take: what the

1 - Phillips, J. (1996) *A Man's Country* (Revised Edition) (p264)

existentialists refer to as the freedom of leisure. Zeigler (1977), commenting on existentialism and leisure, submitted the following hypothesis:

Personal liberation is highly desirable and this is most certainly a function of play. In sporting [leisure and recreation] activities individuals can be free as they select their own values and achieve self-expression. Children can create their own world of play and thereby realize their true identities... Existentialists at play want no prescribed formulations, no coach calling the plays and destroying the players' "authenticity", and no crowd exhorting them to win at any cost¹.

It would appear, in essence, that Zeigler was identifying the individual actors/agents somewhat as noble savages, unsullied by the brutality of an over-socialisation toward well-defined, highly focused organised group play (recreation), and singularly unimpeded in their quest for self-actualization. However, the likelihood of that occurring in any modern society would appear remote: although there is always the occasional exception to the rule.

Much of what Zeigler suggested does support the observation that New Zealand, and New Zealanders, moved beyond the barbaric, the need to defeat and destroy through physical supremacy in the sporting/leisure arena. I stop short of fully embracing Zeigler's hypothesis, however, as it appears to be too restrictive an interpretation of the idea of existentialists at play. The concept of play is further discussed in Chapter 4.

Policy

Leisure Policy-Making

One primary focus of the thesis was on the agendas of leisure policy-makers. It was clear, from my understanding of the policy-making process through my professional involvement, that various agendas have been impacting on that process at the same time: be they social, cultural, economic or political, and be they local, regional, national or international. Also, 'in some societies the state may [and indeed does] employ leisure policy and provisions for political ends'², with the

1 - Murphy, J. (1981) *Concepts of Leisure* (p18)

2 - Kelly, J. (1987) *Freedom To Be* (p230)

intention of using them to promote and to enforce elements of social cohesion and/or communal compliance, or, as alluded to earlier, toward addressing social malaise.

Leisure policy, in the British context, emerged during the nineteenth century. Prior to the Industrial Revolution there were no clear boundaries between work and leisure, with:

traditional, 'popular sports and pastimes' (Malcolmson, 1973) rooted in rural and parochial social systems rather than being an area characterised by ideologies of 'freedom' and 'choice', such activities had a collective character, serving to re-affirm a communal way of life¹.

At that stage, there was little need for a formalised system of identifying recreation or leisure needs. However, with the Industrial Revolution came the requirement that people congregate around the centres of industry: the beginnings of urbanisation and a centralising of the means of production. People were, therefore, drawn away from their traditional communities of interest and flung together for the purposes of driving industrial development. Initially, little consideration was given to the non-work time needs of the people. It quickly became evident that some order had to be established and maintained for the optimal operation of industrial plant and labour, if profits were to be maximised. The early attempts of the State to become involved in this ordering of workers and time (especially leisure-time) were often recognisable simply as efforts to control disorder. On occasions, the State seemingly went too far: it tried to suppress the popular and traditional pastimes by attempting to regulate for the *best* use of leisure-time. It is clear now, that those original

roots of public policy for leisure lay in...repression... In addition to attempting to criminalise and suppress 'popular recreations', the state, from the middle of the nineteenth century, was involved in regulating and rationally organising the temporal parameters of leisure².

1 - Coalter, F. *et al. Rationale For Public Sector Investment In Leisure* (Report of The Sports Council and Economic and Social Research Council) (October 1986) (p8)

2 - *ibid.* (p9)

Consequently, or indeed in spite of those early attempts to control people's non-work time activities, it was not long before the State's intervention into the regulation of people's time began to deliver a more positive element. Whether this was deliberate or not is questionable, but it seemingly had the effect of pushing toward the development of leisure policy. The distinction between free time and work time became legitimate with the passing of a number of (British) Acts of Parliament: the availability of free time or leisure time (non-work time) was finally legislated for by the passing in 1847 of the Ten-Hour Act. Burns (1973) heralded that particular piece of legislation as 'the greatest change in [British] working conditions since Moses came down from the Mount with the six-day working week!': so was born the 'rational and systematic organisation of non-work time'¹.

The process of distinguishing between free time and work time, with its genesis in nineteenth Century Britain, flowed on to New Zealand effecting change for its workers. However, and not surprisingly, the notion of transitioning from in work to retirement did not form part of those early considerations. It has taken a long time for that to occur, and it would appear that even as late as the mid-1980s the Social Advisory Council was bemoaning the fact that 'too little research [had] been done into the preferences of older people to provide a firm base for policy making'².

Although the contents of the following model (Figure 3), which illustrates the influence of politics on leisure, are British in origin, that does not detract from the model's application to the New Zealand politics-leisure dichotomy. The model illustrates how Henry (1993) viewed the politics of leisure policy, and incorporates an extension that attempts to overlay the New Zealand experience.

1 - Coalter, F. *et al. Rationale For Public Sector Investment In Leisure* (Report of The Sports Council and Economic and Social Research Council) (October 1986) (p9)

2 - *The Extra Years: Some Implications for New Zealand Society of Ageing Population* (Report of the Social Advisory Council) (February 1984) (p21)

The Politics of Leisure Policy				
<i>The Organisational Dimension</i>	<i>The Functional Dimension</i>	<i>The Political Dimension</i>	<i>The Ideological Dimension</i>	<i>The Antipodean Dimension (New Zealand's Experience)</i>
<p>Key Tension: between the need for centralised direction and for local self-determination.</p> <p><i>A strategic concern, therefore, for leisure policy research in this dimension is establishing the extent to which leisure policy is subject to non-local influences, such as central government 'advice' or 'restrictions' or the erosion of local powers.</i></p>	<p>Key Tension: the functional division between central and local government is such that the former is allocated responsibility for production, while the latter is predominantly responsible for the consumption of services.</p> <p><i>In this dimension, the strategic concern for leisure policy research is one of clarifying whether there are important exceptions to this functional division in respect of leisure production and consumption.</i></p>	<p>Key Tension: is political, as identified by the dual-state thesis - it is between the corporatist mode of decision-making at the national level and the competitive politics of the local state.</p> <p><i>The primary issue for analysis of leisure policy in this dimension is the question of whether the politics of local government leisure policy can be accurately characterised as pluralist.</i></p>	<p>Key Tension: between central government's function in promoting conditions for the accumulation of profit, and local government's role in meeting local 'needs'.</p> <p><i>The major concern for leisure policy analysis here is one of establishing whether the local politics of leisure are concerned solely with the meeting of needs, while the politics of leisure in the central state are concerned predominantly with providing an appropriate infrastructure for capital accumulation.</i></p>	<p>Key Tension: between the primary efforts of various local governmental authorities to meet the leisure needs of their respective communities, and national government reaping the benefits of such efforts for very little or no outlay.</p> <p><i>The biggest concern for local government leisure policy-makers in this dimension is to shape, co-ordinate, and promote the leisure, recreation and social agendas of their local authorities, while remaining cognisant of, but neither subservient to nor dismissive of, the leisure intentions of central government.</i></p>

Figure 3: **The Politics of Leisure Policy**

Source: adaptation of Henry (1993).

The shaded columns in the model have been developed from Henry's (1993) text, *The Politics of Leisure Policy*: the non-shaded column at the far right is an application of the model to the New Zealand experience.

Mennell (1976) has suggested that 'rather than analyse a thing-like object, 'leisure', it is more useful to examine the politics of leisure'¹; which could suggest that the role of the leisure policy-maker is even more crucial to the establishment of focused and valuable policy in leisure.

Another point that requires serious consideration when studying the development of leisure policy, is the possibility for governments to exert political influence, or interference, in the process by trying to force it to coincide with their political ideologies and promises. It has, however, also been suggested that political 'judgements and policies concerning such areas as sport, recreation and artistic merit are regarded as being inappropriate areas for party-political judgements'².

In the pursuit of worthwhile, positive leisure-time experiences, people are likely to seek to achieve something that they feel has been both meaningful and satisfying. Whether they have devised, planned or organised the activity themselves is likely to be of secondary importance to the measure of its enjoyment. Taking into account their cumulative experience and wisdom of age, members of the ageing population are likely to be able to maximise the enjoyment and satisfaction levels of their leisure-time pursuits as a direct consequence of their not feeling the need, generally, to perform within a highly competitive, highly organised structure toward achievement of optimal arousal.

If the leisure policy-makers were focused solely on political agendas, to the exclusion of societal preferences, there would be little likelihood of them identifying anything that would be widely acceptable; it is worth noting, however, that people do accept poorly-directed policy. Burton (1974) suggested that leisure planning should help 'prevent...the undesirable effects of development while

1 - Coalter, F. *et al. Rationale For Public Sector Investment In Leisure* (Report of The Sports Council and Economic and Social Research Council) (October 1986) (p7)

2 - *ibid.* (p39)

promoting the desirable ones'¹. Parker (1976) suggested that 'planning for leisure' is really a 'misnomer', and that 'planning for recreation is [a far more] achievable and probably desirable goal'²: the reason for that, is recreation allows scope for the planner to focus on collective endeavour, rather than on individual pursuit; consequently, it is more likely to meet with general approval and involvement. The application of such planning outcomes does, of course, imply a desire on the part of people to take their recreation at some preordained time and place, and that they will be comfortable with collectivity, which is how such recreation is likely to be presented. Some studies of the history of leisure (Bailey, 1978; Cunningham, 1980; Veal, 1992) refer to the importance of the leisure and societal development paradigm, implying that 'leisure has been integral to the development of Western capitalist society'³. If that is so, then what has occurred in the New Zealand experience, noting Gray's (1983) observation that:

the present system is reinforced by the way in which society is organised. Town planning regulations rigidly separate home and work...[and] family recreation facilities are rarely found in suburban streets⁴,

is that societal development, in the creation of urban sprawl, has (in the cities at least) tended to lose sight of the importance of leisure development in the equation. Consequently, in the New Zealand experience at least, it could be that the leisure development/societal development paradigm is more aligned to the chicken and egg puzzle: was the impact of leisure development on societal development, or was it really the other way around?

The Leisure Policy-Maker

The title, leisure policy-maker, could in itself be another misnomer. The inclusion of the word *policy* in the title in a Western democratic society could, by association, be said to imply an expectation that the role carries with it the need to satisfy the political powers that be, and therefore embodies the justification for

1 - Parker, S. (1976) *The Sociology of Leisure* (p132)

2 - *ibid.* (p132-133)

3 - Veal, A.J. (1992) *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide* (p18)

4 - Gray, A. (1983) *The Jones Men* (p171)

intertwining a political agenda into all that is developed. If that is really required, then it would obviously run counter to the notion that the leisure policy-maker can be the conduit through which both variety and individual free choice in leisure or recreational opportunities are promoted. Potentially, leisure policy-makers could be the people's voice in the planning and policy decision-making process; but if that was to occur, leisure policy-makers would first need to clarify their role and determine their priorities.

In the policy equation, external forces such as those brought to bear by politicians, can have an unnerving effect on some Public Servants: even in New Zealand, where individual free choice and the integrity of the Public Service are assumed to take precedence over the forces of supposed corporatist corruption. Consequently, those external forces are not viewed as being all-powerful in shaping the way that the leisure policy-makers, or any other policy-makers, view the real world. While political parties have developed manifestos that embrace leisure and recreation, it is the role of the policy-makers to interpret and develop policies that reflect that which is desirable, valuable and realistic in the manifesto. Impartiality is critical if policy-makers are not to operate as political puppets, believing that they are never able to question, challenge or develop.

Optimal Arousal and Leisure

Flow and Positive Addiction in Leisure

Earlier, I looked at the notion of optimal arousal. I will now expand that notion, taking cognisance of the sense of meaning and satisfaction in leisure-time pursuits associated with what Csikszentmihalyi (1974) has described as the 'flow' experience. The concept was coined after extensive research interviewing that he, and others, undertook into the occurrence of optimal experience. They found that those interviewed all tended to explain what was happening to them during this

‘autotelic experience’, in ‘very similar terms regardless of the context...[and as] they describe how it feels when they are doing something that is worth doing for its own sake, use terms that are interchangeable in their minutest details’¹. Essentially, because the experiences were ‘rewarding in and of [themselves]’, what makes flow important, is that, as Inghilleri (1986) suggests, ‘it provides the key for understanding the strivings of the self and the quality of individual well-being’². Although the term, *optimal arousal*, has continued to be used predominantly by psychology researchers (Lawton, 1994; Mannell, Zuzanek and Larson, 1988; Mobily, Lemke, Ostiguy, Woodard, Griffiee and Pickens, 1993; Searle, Mahon, Iso-Ahola, Sdrolia and van Dyck, 1995), it does have other applications. Because the flow experience epitomises the state of optimal arousal, it has an obvious relevance to the use of free or leisure time. Since the earlier work of Csikszentmihalyi, there has been considerable research undertaken that suggests flow is experienced by a range of people in a wide range of everyday settings, sometimes in work, but often in leisure (Searle, Mahon, Iso-Ahola, Sdrolia and van Dyck, 1995).

Seemingly, people need to reach a state of optimal arousal from time to time and may even develop positive addiction to it, as posited by Glasser (1976). It gives immediate enjoyment and a lasting desire to continue participation in the favoured activities, be they in work or in leisure: people thrive on experiencing, on a regular basis, a state of heightened arousal, excitation and stimulation. What Csikszentmihalyi and Glasser implied was that when this state is reached, it results in more than individual pleasure: it also produces a state of positive community (when those activities are engaged in other than individually).

The flow experience appears to be both an in-mind and an in-body experience, although Glasser maintains that the positive addiction (PA) state is primarily ‘in-our-head’. So where does the experience take the person from there?

1 - Csikszentmihalyi, M. & I. (eds.) (1988) *Optimal Experience* (p29)

2 - *ibid.* (p35)

Glasser argued that, once the state has been fully experienced ‘in-our-head’, we can then discipline the strength that is gained from the state and directly apply it to whatever it is that we are engaged in. This in turn contributes to ‘markedly increased performance’, making the entire experience ‘more intense’¹.

Turner (1974) suggested that some social conventions allow for a reversal of roles that result in an experience that he identified as ‘an emotionally rewarding closeness, comparatively free from the constraints of social roles and responsibilities’. This he identified as ‘a feeling of *communitas*’². His studies and observations were from an anthropological perspective, and his findings are highly applicable to free time and leisure time activities. Many ‘well-defined ritual situations’, as described by Turner, include aspects of play in modern societies. Such occasions, like the ‘office Christmas party’, often present the individual with the opportunity for personal indulgence in an optimal experience. At the party, flow may transcend the normal boundaries of work and play. For a short time, individuals are allowed to ‘let their hair down’ and ‘go with the flow’.

So, ‘whenever the quality of human experience is at issue, flow becomes relevant. It helps explain why people enjoy their work and their leisure; it also helps explain why in some circumstances people are bored or frustrated’³.

Boredom is an important aspect to consider in relation to the functional role of the leisure policy-makers vis-à-vis what the ageing population might want in respect of leisure time activities: I will address boredom shortly, as well as in the research findings.

Flow and positive addiction appear, therefore, to be somewhat analogous to a heightened state of personal well-being. As intrinsic experiences, they could

1 - Glasser, W. (1976) *Positive Addiction* (pp70-71)

2 - Csikszentmihalyi, M. & I. (eds.) (1988) *Optimal Experience* (p9) (author’s emphasis)

3 - *ibid.* (p14)

be valuable in enhancing the well-being of the ageing population. Various classifications of what represents flow (Massimini and Carli, 1988) suggest that most people will at one time or another experience it and may become positively addicted to it. In individuals who already have the formula for flow and positive addiction stored away in their memory, recall of that formula should not prove too difficult and might be triggered through the efforts of leisure policy-makers. However, in order for that to happen, leisure policy-makers need to consider possible barriers, such as that identified by Mitchell (1983). In his reference to the experience of flow in the leisure experience, which he approached from a sociological perspective, he found that due to an intense rationalisation of people's modern-day existence, the opportunities for flow are generally restricted in ordinary everyday happenings. He also suggested that the over-rationalisation of leisure through commercialisation and entertainment, such as television, has removed many of the opportunities for individuals to experience flow.

Flow and Boredom

Boredom arises when the individual's conscious capacity is insufficiently challenged. It arises most often in events that are mundane and routine. They are often experienced in work, but not exclusively so. During his study of flow, and its association with boredom, Csikszentmihalyi (1988) found that:

when skills are above average and challenges below (conceptually this would correspond to the condition of 'boredom'), control is above average but concentration falls - the remaining variables show only slight deviations from the mean. When challenges are above average and skills are below (the condition of 'anxiety'), concentration is significantly high but control is lower. The quality of experience is lowest when both challenges and skills are below the mean (the low condition of 'apathy')¹.

In one example, Csikszentmihalyi showed that athletes who often attained extremely high levels of skill and proficiency in their chosen fields of specialist endeavour might seek to 'reproduce the state of enjoyment by playing as much as

1 - Csikszentmihalyi, M. & I. (eds.) (1988) *Optimal Experience* (p36)

possible'. The difficulty identified was that this invariably turned out to be a double-edged sword, because 'the more such individuals play, the more their skills improve'. Consequently, 'if they continue to play against opponents of the same level as before, they will be bored'. Csikszentmihalyi indicated that 'this always happens when skills surpass challenges,...[so] to replicate the enjoyment they desire, they will have to find stronger opposition'. In another piece of research, Iso-Ahola and Wessinger (1990) developed a comprehensive *Leisure Boredom Scale* which continues to be applied, especially in psychological studies, when leisure behaviour and satisfaction levels are being investigated.

Figure 4 is an interpretation of the combination of states that contribute toward a person experiencing flow, boredom or anxiety.

Boredom/ Apathy	<i>Flow</i>	Anxiety (Flash Point)	Variable
ability exceeds challenge	<i>ability matches challenge</i>	challenge exceeds ability	in all cases: the variable is the difference between challenges and abilities
body <i>out-of-sync</i> with conscious capacity	<i>equilibrium exists</i>	conscious capacity <i>out-of-sync</i> with body	
boredom/ apathy (caused by a greater skill level than the challenge requires)	<i>enjoyment abounds</i> (<i>where the skill level equals the challenge, and vice-versa</i>)	anxiety (caused by the challenge exceeding the skill level)	

Figure 4: ***Flow: an Optimal State***

Source: adapted from M. and I. Csikszentmihalyi (1988) and Massimini and Carli (1986).

Summary

The literature review has covered a range of subject areas relevant to the hypothesis that forms the basis of this research. It has followed a line that began with Maslow's hierarchy of need and lead to a short discussion of locus of control and the achievement of social inclusion and self-worth through the process of engagement. This was followed by an exploration of Cumming and Henry's (1961) disengagement theory which highlighted a process of engagement with society, rather than disengagement from it. The review closed with consideration of Csikszentmihalyi's theory of optimal arousal and its possible relevance to leisure and boredom in the experience of the ageing population.

The overview showed that no one definition of leisure can cover all of its meanings in all cultures. In the New Zealand context, a number of historically-entrenched problems exist for policy-makers, who, therefore, have a responsibility to be clear about what it is that they are attempting to achieve in the performance of their role. The concept of a homogeneous New Zealand social order and the notion that what is good for one will be good for all, appear to no longer fit comfortably.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Research Question

The notion upon which this research is based involved focusing on policy-makers whose agendas impact on the leisure needs of an ageing New Zealand population. The principal aim of the research was to test a hypothesis that such agendas impact negatively on provision for such needs.

How effective are the efforts of leisure policy-makers in addressing the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing population in New Zealand?

The research question was developed around that notion, including personal reflections on what had been happening in the area of leisure for the ageing population, and was further refined by a literature search into the topic.

Overall Strategy

The overall strategy was to gather evidence, in the New Zealand context, to determine whether or not leisure policy-making was meeting the leisure needs of members of the rapidly-ageing population. Following are the methods used.

Selection of Methods

Sampling

This was a small, urban-based research project, although the leisure policy-makers included two who had a 'national' role. No serious consideration was given to undertaking a comparative study between urban and rural population groups.

Subjects

a. Ageing Population

A 'rolling snowball' sampling method was used for selecting members of the ageing population to interview. This simple process allowed for the rapid identification of a sample group.

It was first necessary to determine the number of respondents that, as a manageable minimum, would afford validity to the research project. Following consultation with people who had undertaken similar research, it was decided to interview 20 members of the ageing population.

The original cohort was to have included only members of the ageing population who were over 65 years of age. The 'rolling snowball' sampling technique did gather a small number of people who were under 65, but who were over 60: two respondents from the younger age group (one from each sample group in the ageing population) were interviewed to ascertain whether or not they would offer an additional perspective on the ageing process as it relates to leisure.

The ageing population cohort ranged in age from 60 to 93 years old: the average age was 74.5 years.

A major disparity in the sample was the disproportionate number of male to female respondents: women were out-numbered by men in a 4:1 ratio. This was surprising, given that the gender differential nationally in this age group is significant, except in the 10-year age bracket from 65 to 74 in which men outnumber women for the only time in the ageing population (however, the difference in the 'older old' group even more significantly favours women); a possible reason for this, was use of the 'rolling snowball' sampling technique.

Respondents were sought in two of Wellington's contrasting suburbs: namely, Khandallah in the north-west and Strathmore in the south-east. Those two suburbs were assumed to be at opposite ends of the socio-economic scale, in that Khandallah has a greater proportion of people in the higher socio-economic bracket.

b. Leisure Policy-Makers

What was important in respect to the identification of leisure policy-makers, was that they should represent a range of orientations: including leisure, recreation, sporting and tourism. Following discussion with people who had expert knowledge of the field, five policy-makers were drawn from four primary areas:

- **central government (x2)**
 - [1. focus: leisure/recreation/sporting
role: *for the general population*: inform Government and develop, implement and evaluate leisure/recreation policy for national application; also develop national initiatives for local government consideration]
 - 2. focus: social/leisure/recreation
role: *for the ageing population*: inform Government and develop, implement and evaluate social/leisure/recreation policy and initiatives]
 - **local government**
 - [focus: leisure/recreation/social
role: *for a specific general population*: inform Council and develop, implement and evaluate leisure/recreation/social policy, initiatives and programmes]
 - **voluntary sector**
 - [focus: leisure/recreation/social/business
role: *for the ageing population*: inform the service provider about the leisure/recreation/social requirements of the residents and design, develop, implement and evaluate products/initiatives/services that will meet and stimulate the fee-paying resident participants]
 - **private sector**
 - [focus: business/tourism/recreation/leisure
role: *for a consumer ageing population*: inform the Company about leisure/recreation/tourism trends and design, develop, implement and evaluate products and initiatives that will attract paying participants].
-

The aim was to cover leisure in a wide range of perspectives, from national to local, across the private, public and voluntary sectors. Two leisure policy-makers from central government were interviewed in order to strengthen the research findings.

There were no age eligibility criteria for selection of the leisure policy-makers. The age of the five leisure policy-makers ranged from 37 to 55 years. There were two females and three males in the cohort. Socio-economic variables were not a consideration in the selection of the leisure policy-makers.

Interview Format

Early in the planning phase, it was decided to develop a questionnaire that would be applicable to both the ageing population and the leisure policy-makers. The same set of questions would be asked, but from slightly different angles. It had always been my intention to undertake all of the interviewing personally and that was the course of action decided upon.

a. Question Format

The data were gathered through face-to-face interviewing. The questioning style was a mixture of open (free-answer) and forced-choice (fixed-alternative/closed) questions, using a balance of direct and indirect questioning.

The interviews were standardised (same questions, in the same order), structured and undertaken in surroundings of each respondent's own choosing. That was designed to help ensure that each respondent felt as at ease as was possible, and that he or she might feel less pressure to 'perform' for the researcher.

The questions were designed to elicit information about facts, attitudes and behaviour, and sought some information from the respondents about their leisure experiences in the past. The questions focused on the five primary themes of the thesis: issues around need; re-engagement; optimal arousal and 'flow' experience; current and future leisure requirements; and changes in New Zealand leisure over time.

Each interview was designed to begin in an informal mood, with a small number of warm-up questions helping to set the scene and to put the respondents at their ease. At the start of each interview, a little time was spent checking whether the respondent had any special needs; for example, hearing, sight or comfort needs.

One option considered was to supply the respondents with a copy of the questions before the interview. To have done so might have calmed worries. It could just as easily, however, have produced negative effects by stifling spontaneity or, even worse, it could have raised, rather than lowered, anxiety levels. After discussions with experienced researchers, it was decided not to provide a copy of the questions in advance. In hindsight, that was a sound decision as respondents' expectations were not raised, and their anxiety levels were acceptably low. Nevertheless, several respondents had spent some considerable time before the interview thinking about the issues that might be raised, and had begun second-guessing the questions to the point of having produced pages of answers for 'my benefit'.

Consequently, the time spent at the beginning of each interview setting the scene and creating a comfortable atmosphere proved invaluable, in all but two cases. One of those two respondents was in a hurry to do something immediately following the interview, while the other was the 1-in-25 respondent in the research with whom only a modicum of rapport was established, possibly because he was a

little wary of being interviewed. The interview with that respondent was, however, worthwhile, as it produced some useful ideas and pointers. Incidentally, that respondent was one who had, beforehand, gone to some length to prepare written answers. Fortunately, the interview was early in the schedule and resulted in my greater determination to establish good rapport with the remaining respondents.

One important observation was that the answers and notes prepared by the 'forward planners' varied little, in the major topic areas, from the answers given by the 'unprepared' respondents, across the cohort.

All but one of the interviews were recorded on audio tapes. Audio-taping ensured that an accurate record of all answers could be kept. It was agreed before each interview that the audio tapes would be listened to and transcribed only by me, following which the tapes would be either erased or destroyed. The one respondent who did not wish to be recorded was willing to participate in every other aspect of the interview process.

On advice, the data collection also included the taking of hand-written notes to complement the tape-recordings. The combination of notes and tapes facilitated the compilation of full data for analysis.

It had originally been intended to report the research findings to all of the interview respondents. Having asked the respondents, it became clear that not all of them were particularly interested in what was found: the rationale for their taking this position will emerge in the findings. Conversely, all of the leisure policy-makers maintained a high level of interest in the project and a desire to see the final document. It was decided that those respondents who had expressed an interest, would receive a copy of the final document.

b. Pre-test

The decision made to pre-test was vital, because it helped to fine-tune the questionnaire format. Two 'test respondents' were interviewed. They helped to critically analyse and assess the question content, the suitability of the interview question design, as well as passing comments on delivery style. The first 'test respondent' was an academic experienced at interviewing members of the ageing population. She 'represented' as an amalgam of the ageing population respondents whom she had interviewed over a period of many years. The second was a 'naive' other drawn from the general ageing population.

For fine-tuning the leisure policy-makers questionnaire, the experience of my academic supervisor was called upon. His awareness of the complexities in the role of the leisure policy-maker was invaluable. As the questionnaire developed, additional critical advice was sought from a member of the leisure policy-making profession, which prompted further changes to the structure of some questions so that they became more accurately leisure-policy focused.

I also checked, using the pre-test respondents, on my use of the answers received, in order to ensure that my interpretation of what I was hearing and recording was justifiable. One of the main objectives of the pre-testing exercise was to assess the style of the questioning and respondent-friendliness. The pre-tests indicated that both were acceptable.

Pre-testing of the interview format had suggested that the optimal length would be between 60 to 75 minutes. What transpired was that, while the interviews could comfortably have been undertaken within that timeframe, the respondents prolonged the interview often by another 30 to 45 minutes and sometimes by much longer. The average time taken was 112 minutes. Whenever it became evident

that the interview would take longer than 75 minutes, a check was made with the respondent that a time extension was acceptable before it was agreed to continue.

Consideration was given to how many was the most appropriate number of questions that could/should be asked. By a process of trial and error, it emerged that 15 base questions would be the maximum. Each of those base questions would then be supported by a number of follow-up, probe or trigger questions. Questions were grouped sequentially to achieve a logical flow. In addition, issues of question content for subsequent analysis were addressed during the pre-testing exercises.

c. Timing of Interviews

The most appropriate time to interview was when both the respondent and interviewer were able to focus clearly on the process without interruption. To achieve that, an interview timetable that allowed for a maximum of two interviews each day was developed.

d. Data Analysis

Because the research findings were likely to be a collection of qualitative rather than statistical data, an uncomplicated method of analysing 'subjective data' was required. The primary method by which that was achieved, was by checking the emerging trends against other research.

The first phase of analysis required that the data collected from the two cohorts be collated and summarised. An analysis and comparison of the data between the two groups in the ageing population cohort (Khandallah and Strathmore) then followed. Those findings were finally considered in comparison with the data compiled from interviews with the leisure policy-makers.

Limitations of the Research

The major limitations of this research relate to the 'rolling snowball' method that produced a respondent sample lacking in ethnic and gender balance. The first was accidental: it simply transpired that no respondents of Maori or Pacific Islands origin (or other ethnic minorities present in New Zealand) were collected by the 'rolling snowball'. That is a fundamental flaw, given that the New Zealand Maori population and Pacific Islands groups living in New Zealand are 'ageing faster' than the population as a whole¹, in the sense that there is likely to be an increasing future need to be met for those groups.

The second, and to some extent also a co-incidental limitation, was that the 'rolling snowball' sampling method gathered respondents with similar characteristics. While this allowed the selection method to remain 'unmodified', its base was narrow. Consequently, these research findings can only be considered as illustrative of the New Zealand experience: a snap-shot in both time and representation.

Ethical Considerations

This research project raised a number of ethical considerations pertaining to privacy and confidentiality. The proposal was vetted and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts before any research began. The Professional Research Statement in Appendix A formed the basis of those ethical considerations.

¹ - *New Zealand Now: 65 Plus* (Report by the Demography Division of Statistics New Zealand (May 1995) (p23)

Chapter 3: Research Findings

This Chapter is a summary of the research findings. It covers all of the questions posed, the answers received, comparisons between the ageing population and leisure policy-maker research samples, and some of my own observations. Each section concludes with a summary of the key findings.

The Cumulative Experience of Age

People in the ageing population have one thing in common: they have all accumulated the experience of ageing. Whether they choose to use it constructively and for their personal development, is an individual decision. Similarly, members of the ageing population were typically of the view that ill-directed energy and thinking was time-wasting, energy-sapping and generally fruitless: an example given was the futility of becoming envious of others.

One thing that the majority of respondents commented on, was that they had a lot to share with the rest of their community and society in general, if only they were asked. One respondent suggested that the whole issue of when people should retire is fundamental to what they can reasonably continue to offer society:

It raises the whole question doesn't it...what is the time that people should retire. Productivity in the 60 and 70-year-olds is enormous and untapped, and we can't afford to get into a position where we have got two thirds of our population retired, being supported by the other third. So we have got to ask the question: how can we make people productive for longer? People have got a lot to contribute, but they've got to be relieved of some of the pressure of anxiety because that is the biggest sapper of all: it is the pressure. People could be used in a consulting-type capacity. Khandallah: Male (70 years old)

Another respondent was more direct in his suggestion of what the older can do for the younger members of society:

You have to start with the youth, I think: teach them to have value in themselves, in their own abilities. Khandallah: Male (83 years old)

This respondent was adamant that the ageing population could do something worthwhile for the youth of today; and, in so doing, potentially achieve a positive outcome for all of society, resulting from an exchange of ideas, skills and knowledge. Consequently, serious efforts should be made by policy-makers, including leisure policy-makers, to tap into the collective wisdom and experience of age with a view to achieving this objective.

The New Zealand Leisure Experience

I think that taking your leisure away from home is very important to ensure that you've got a balanced diet; that you keep in touch with the world; that you keep in touch with other people's thoughts. Otherwise you could...be in a little cocoon of your own.

Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Historically, much of New Zealander's leisure has been found away from the home: maybe not always for the reasons expressed in the statement above. Yet, the New Zealand leisure experience would outwardly appear to have changed quite dramatically over time, as described in Chapter 1, and the LINZ survey research data supports that assertion.

While an increase in leisure appears to follow logically from a decrease in work, that is not always an accurate correlation. One reason is that more work can often provide individuals with the necessary resources to access additional leisure. A more accurate observation is that a decrease in work is likely to result in more unemployment, rather than in more leisure. Either way, from the perspective of many in the ageing population research sample, there has been a major change in the New Zealand leisure experience over time: respondents from both cohorts were of the view that the nation's focus on sport is gradually lessening toward a more balanced involvement in leisure activity. They were of the collective opinion that the media and sporting codes often continue to overwork the notion of winning at the expense of promoting the importance of involvement and an essence of

community, or 'a feeling of *communitas*' as conceptualised by Turner. The following respondent's comment is illustrative of the ageing population's general concern about the increased emphasis on winning:

We seem to have lost the innocence of simply participating; and if winning comes out of that, then that's good - but it should not be a matter of winning at all cost. We used to enjoy just being involved; having a good time and some companionship afterwards. I think that the media, as well as some sporting codes, have lost sight of what it is simply to be involved for the love of the game - there is too much pressure now. Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

One leisure policy-maker was aware of the value that people, generally, in his community at least, placed on organised recreation and leisure:

From a recent survey the singular, most important benefit was that it helps to develop strong communities - and that floored us; it was more important than health and fitness. Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (43 years old)

Most of the interviewed ageing population grew up in New Zealand during a time of limited access to organised leisure and sporting opportunities, compared to what is on offer today: a time when there was a greater 'emphasis on physically strenuous sport, particularly for men' (Phillips, 1996). As a consequence, when the male respondents reflected on the change process, they pointed to their moving away from organised sport (and, generally, from physically demanding organised sport) as being the primary example of that change, with the most common reason being diminishing physical ability: which is what could reasonably be expected in any population, at any time, but more especially in the ageing component of a population. While it is probable that the ageing population now has greater access to a range of leisure opportunities than previously, what has really changed is the perception that some of them have of what constitutes being fully involved. This was especially evident through some of the men, in that they have moved from physically-demanding sports as their leisure, to activities that now require an application of more 'mind than muscle'.

I loved to play rugby, as it was something that I was good at; and I used to really enjoy playing softball as well - but now I enjoy the challenge of golf: it is a game that you never really master and have to be thinking about all the time - it's really challenging because of that. Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

You've got to realise that you can't bring your own youth back - it's gone, it's past, and there's not much ahead of you either; but you've just got to do things now that help to keep your mind active - and if you can pass [that wisdom] on to the youth in any way, I wonder how you do that, but I am sure that it would be of great benefit. Khandallah: Male (83 years old)

In order to tease out what effect a life-time's engagement in such 'sporting' pursuit might have had, I used the notion of competitiveness as a gauge of the degree of change experienced. What I found was that $\frac{13}{20}$ of the sample (and proportionally higher for the males) currently considered themselves to be competitive. I also found, as illustrated by the following quotations, that much of that competitiveness is tempering over time, although rather more slowly for some than for others:

I am aggressive...I love sport and I love to win, but I don't care if I don't win. Khandallah: Male (80 years old)

and from a respondent who had given thought to the morals of competitiveness:

I think that I am competitive...but here again, I go back to the rules - you've got to have a moral code, and if you lose it, I think you have lost everything. Strathmore: Male (79 years old)

This second quotation also illustrates the higher estimation of competing over winning at all cost: the need for, and the value to be found in, a life-long adherence to a moral code.

I asked respondents whether their level of competitiveness had changed over time. One respondent light-heartedly suggested:

I'm not as competitive as I used to be: I mean, if I'm driving a car, I don't mind who passes me. Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

All respondents provided an answer to this question that corresponded with how they had answered the previous question: if they had previously stated that they were competitive, then they also answered that this had not changed over time, rather that it had tempered somewhat and had become less intense. Many of the male respondents, across both cohorts, also tagged on that they are still very competitive when it comes to their work. However, the fact that a person has a competitive bent does not predispose her or him to still being involved in competitive leisure activities.

One significant thing that has changed little over time is the failure to prepare for leisure, especially through a process of preparing for retirement. Yet my research findings indicated that this area is one that should be of increasing concern for social planners and advisers on ageing. Earle (1992) noted in Australia that:

[people] who do retire to a life of "leisure" frequently have little or no preparation for this, nor do they participate in any resocialisation programmes to help them adapt. It is in this sense that resocialisation is an illusion for the many who are unprepared in terms of their capacity and willingness to pursue a lifestyle based on informed leisure.¹

And that was the same in this research. On the positive side of the ledger, I found that ³/₈ Khandallah male respondents mentioned the benefits that they had derived from being employed by forward-planning organisations, often large multi-nationals, that had required them to prepare for their retirement. Those respondents stated that it had been made relatively easy for them to consider and to plan for life after work.

One thing I did do, in fact I instituted within my Company, was all our staff within five years of retirement were given, with their wives, the opportunity of going to a seminar on all the things that happen in retirement - I went to one myself, as I thought that it would be good for me. It gave me an opportunity to consider a few things that I hadn't thought through. However, you need it much earlier than that, possibly twenty or thirty years before retirement if it is going to be any real use to you. I shortened the period for a very good reason,

1 - Earle, L. (1992) *Social Network Needs Among Older People* (p57) (author's own emphasis)

because my Company had a very good pension scheme that they fully funded. For years I have been saying, with baby-boomers coming on, we are going to be in a situation, if we're not careful, where for every three employed people we are going to have five unemployed or retired people.

Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

What had been more difficult for these respondents was having to stop work and leave the organisation: it did not matter that they each had deliberately planned for their departure. Even so, and maybe because each of them had held high-ranking managerial positions within their respective organisations immediately prior to their departure, they still did experience some difficulty with filling the activity void created by their retirement. What was striking, was that the majority of those interviewed believed that steps should be taken to prepare people for retirement, even though only a minority had benefited from such preparation themselves.

Key Findings:

- i. the majority of the males interviewed considered that they were competitive, while the majority of the females considered that they were not - although this (male competitiveness) had, generally, lessened over time;
- ii. preparing for retirement and leisure should be given serious consideration if the potential negative impact that can result from too much 'free time' is to be avoided: focusing on people being positively prepared for the constructive use of leisure.

Optimal Arousal - Flow

As previously stated, one of the central aims of this research was to determine whether or not members of the ageing population experienced a

heightened state of enjoyment and excitement when engaged in their chosen leisure activities. One member of the ageing population said:

Of course, I would not do it if it was not a good and enjoyable experience, and if I was not getting something worthwhile and positive out of it.

Khandallah: Female (82 years old)

It was widely accepted that feeling good about what you are doing in your leisure is essential. Indeed, most respondents in both cohorts believed that the achievement of excitement, whether through a process of optimal arousal/flow or under another label, is a prerequisite to enjoyment. One leisure policy-maker suggested that, for him at least, learning new skills was synonymous with excitement:

The excitement for me comes in learning or mastering something that I haven't been able to do before. Acquiring a skill - is something that is a joy to me to do - an achievement: having your endorphins released, or sort of like blowing out all your cob-webs. You feel light, clean, healthy - you have exhausted yourself and you feel healthy.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (37 years old)

Boredom was a major concern for some members of the ageing population sample; noting that boredom/apathy and anxiety are the two states most likely to result if flow is not achieved. They negate optimal arousal and reduce the chance of a positive leisure experience occurring.

That concern, however, was not because the respondents personally experienced boredom, but because they could see that if left unchecked, it had the potential to negatively impact on members of the general ageing population.

While that is not something that I am concerned with, I have seen others who simply can't get motivated enough to move outside their own little world - that's tragic. If we can do something to make sure that it doesn't happen, then it has got to be good for everyone.

Strathmore: Male (71 years old)

After describing the flow state and its associated feeling of excitement in contrast to boredom and anxiety, I asked who felt such a state when engaged in their

leisure activities. Most said that they did still feel excitement similar to the flow state. A number of respondents, when describing this state, said that it was akin to a sense of achievement. They described it variously (and with reference to sporting victory):

We bloody did it! You little beauty! However, I am quick to say that I am not a win-at-all-cost type of person.

Strathmore: Male (65 years old)

Or, less excitedly:

The time when I get the most enjoyment is when I am imparting my knowledge to other people - sharing, that is when I am really excited.. However, I also like, and get excited by, the heat of competition - I am still very competitive.

Khandallah: Male (70 years old)

Others found that excitement was not so prevalent these days:

No, not really - it's coming close to the end of my time. That's what I keep thinking about and I don't get excited about anything these days.

Strathmore: Male (74 years old)

I was excited about many things in the past, but that's gone now, I do not feel excitement like in the past. When I was a medical student I was sold on rugby. Each match was a tremendous trial and excitement for me.

Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

None of those respondents suggested, however, that excitement had been replaced by either boredom or anxiety: it had simply lessened.

Most respondents spoke enthusiastically about their past and current experiences of excitement. Most also viewed the ability to maintain a healthy body and an active mind as being fundamental to the continuation of that excitement; not just in leisure, but as a general principle. Following are some of their observations.

I like to keep both a healthy body and an active mind. I enjoy the stimulation that I get from other people; for example, through my involvement in the U₃A programme: I like the prompt that it gives me of earlier high IQ.

Khandallah: Female (81 years old)

To me it's about participation. If I didn't get up in the morning and think that I have got an important game of golf today, then I wouldn't be doing it. You have got to feel as though you want to do it and that you will get something out of it, and at the end of the day if you are still talking about it, then you know that you have enjoyed it!

Strathmore: Male (81 years old)

Some were more reserved:

I have always worked in a team. I have tended to prefer to think of it as a marked satisfaction, rather than a sense of excitement...often punctuated by team support or achievement.

Khandallah: Male (72 years old)

By asking questions about flow, I found that the respondents did strive for excitement in the things that they did; ¹⁶/₂₀ still felt that it helped to focus them on what they were doing and sharpen their involvement.

Those who were not moved to excitement in their leisure, recalled it from the past: *'most of that type of experience occurred when I was younger'*. No one said that they had never had such an experience, although one rather reserved Khandallah female was a little reticent about defining it as excitement, suggesting that it was more of *'an enjoyable experience'*. Optimal arousal/flow seems pertinent to the level of enjoyment that an individual can expect from her or his engagement in a preferred leisure activity. The research findings also suggest, however, that as people grow older they are less likely to seek to experience a heightened sense of excitation in their leisure activity. The decline is gradual for some, and dramatic for others:

It just doesn't seem to matter to me to seek that level of excitement in my leisure these days. While I really did get excited in the past, that has now dimmed greatly - I'm just happy that I can still get around to do those things that I want.

Khandallah: Male (83 years old)

Much of the excitement is replaced, over time, by stimulation and enjoyment: and this distinction was, for the ageing population sample, a fine one. By way of an example, one female respondent from Strathmore said that what she enjoyed about attending the *50s Forward* classes, other than the companionship and

exercise, was joining in the 'brown bag lunches' that followed each class. Those lunches provided stimulation by involving her in talks and discussions on a range of topical issues, including such things as general health, heart disease, diabetes, and activities for older people; and while they clearly added to the level of enjoyment and excitement gained from her participation - they were a social bonus for having participated in the physical leisure activity - they also stimulated.

Only a few of the ageing population sample spoke of boredom. It was not a state that was particularly prevalent; although a number of respondents tended to equate excitement with direct involvement and achievement, and the opposite with boredom:

To be involved in anything is half the problem of boredom,...you've got to just look round and see people/that person is bored stiff. Well, if you've got something to do, even if you are just involved in some small thing...it gives you something to do, and not only that, it keeps your brain active too, because you've got to think.

Strathmore: Male (79 years old)

My assumption that there was likely to be a reasonably high level of boredom in the ageing population was unfounded; or, at least, the research sample did not want to admit it. This might, however, have been as a result of their not having given much consideration to the state of boredom/apathy. I earlier referred to the possibility that the 'excitement years' would be long gone, and to some degree this was so. However, the notion of the 'basic existence years' was really only applicable to one respondent.

So my expectation that the experience of boredom would serve as an entrée point for the leisure policy-makers was inaccurate. Avoiding boredom, for this sample at least, did not form part of the equation for achieving a full, meaningful, exciting and stimulating life. The findings may not, of course, be representative of the general ageing population.

Key Findings:

- i. the ageing population respondents widely accepted that feeling good about what you are doing in your leisure is an essential prerequisite to enjoyment;
- ii. ¹⁶/₂₀ felt that experiencing some degree of excitement in their leisure contributed to their involvement, but not to their enjoyment;
- iii. there was a correlation between growing older and experiencing a reduction of excitation in leisure;
- iv. boredom, while of concern to the ageing population, was not particularly prevalent among that group;
- v. there is a role for leisure policy-makers to foster leisure opportunities for the ageing population.

Favourite Leisure Activities and Preferred Leisure Companions

I thought it necessary to establish respondents favourite leisure activities. I also looked at who were their chosen leisure companions.

Table 1, that follows, compares my research findings with those of the LINZ survey.

	New Zealand Population over 15 years	New Zealand Population over 65 years	This Research Ageing Population over 65 years
Favourite Leisure Activity	Life in New Zealand Survey (LINZ)		This Research
gardening	28%	57%	65%
walking	22%	35%	40%
organised sport	15%	13%	35%
reading	48%	60%	30%
visiting friends	35%	34%	30%
volunteer work	-	-	30%
TV/videos	42%	54%	20%
clubs	10%	7%	15%
driving (for pleasure)	12%	14%	15%
listening to music	32%	23%	15%
fishing	7%	10%	15%
Church activities	8%	11%	10%

Source: tabulation of LINZ Survey results, Vol. IV: Leisure (p5 & p12)

Only a small number of differences emerged. One was in the level of involvement in organised sport, with 35% (⁷/₂₀) of the ageing research population involved, against the LINZ finding of 13%. Too much should not be read into that finding, however, as it refers to only one sport: namely bowls, in which just under half (⁷/₁₆) of the ageing population males in the research sample were involved. This was probably a product of the ‘rolling snowball’ sampling method, as was club membership in general, representing an aggregation of membership in Bridge, Bowls, Golf and Old-Time Dance Clubs, Masonic Lodge, PROBIS, SeniorNet, 50s Forward, Retired Persons Association, Returned Services Association and U₃A.

An unexpected finding was the low rate of engagement by respondents in reading as a favourite leisure activity, compared to the LINZ survey. In part, that finding related to the fact that members of the research sample were very active, and that most of them were male; had there been more female respondents in the

sample, then it is likely that the rate of engagement in reading would have been higher.

The research identified participation in walking and exercises at home as being popular among both men and women. Even though the respondents did get out and about, their use of active leisure facilities was low, which was surprising taking into account that the most active leisure period of the day for the respondents was usually when many younger New Zealanders do not have time available¹ to use the same facilities. Respondents indicated that TV watching was not a preferred leisure activity. The rate was less than half that of the LINZ findings. Again, the high activity level of the research sample may have been influential. Otherwise, the leisure preferences mirrored the LINZ results. Those preference rates are illustrated in Figure 5, and were adapted from *Volume III: Physical Activity* of the LINZ survey results.

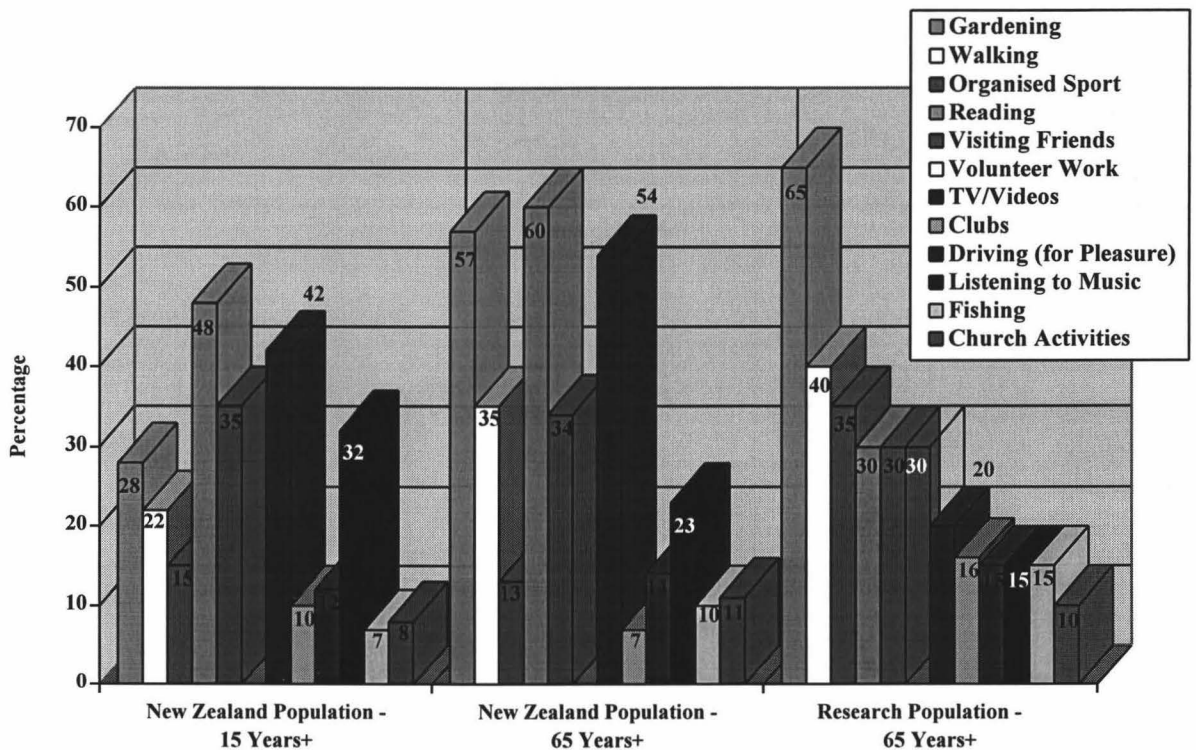


Figure 5: Preferred Leisure Activities

¹ - extracted from: Wilson, N. and Russell, D. (1994) What's age got to do with it? in *Journal of Physical Education New Zealand*, Vol.27, No.3 (Spring 1994) (p15)

With regard to whom the respondents chose as their preferred leisure companions, the first question asked whether or not they felt that a person's choice was likely to be an important factor in their enjoyment of any given activity. Of the sample, ¹⁵/₂₀ considered that the choice was extremely important. For some, companionship was no longer easy to find:

Oh, that's waned over the years; I suppose as a youth I enjoyed the company of others, and sport among them. Now I quite enjoy my leisure...I have no trouble passing time by myself. When you get to my age, you have begun to out-live your contemporaries anyway. Khandallah: Male (83 years old)

Of the Khandallah males, ³/₈ suggested that, while they felt that a person's choice was critical, they did not want to give the impression that all of their leisure time was spent in the company of others: independence and personal solitude were equally important.

My wife and I are quite fiercely independent, both individually and of one and other: although we love one and other dearly. But born of our natures we have this independent streak, plus the fact - in my business I used to be away a lot, therefore I became very independent and this has carried on - we are both great readers, my wife more so, usually with three books on the go at any one time; but me also. Khandallah: Male (69 years old)

From one of the busier people interviewed, came the comment that:

I like to do things by myself. It is not that I am a loner; it is just that I really enjoy time to myself - without having to interact with people all of the time. Khandallah: Male (64 years old)

The findings differed markedly from those reported in the LINZ survey in respect of the percentage who undertook their favourite leisure activity with 'friends'. For those 65+ in the LINZ survey, this figure was approximately 30%; in my research the rate was much higher at 70% (¹⁴/₂₀).

When I asked whether they would continue in their preferred leisure activity if their chosen leisure companions were not also similarly engaged, all but one respondent said 'yes'. The only dissenting voice was that of the Strathmore

male respondent who was having difficulty finding any degree of motivation. Even the slightest change in his routine would have been likely to throw him off balance; having failed to recover from the death of his wife five years earlier, he was, as he stated, quite happy to sit and wait to die.

Key Findings:

- i. generally, the results of this research are similar to those from the LINZ survey;
- ii. there was a small number of differences: in club participation, reading and television viewing;
- iii. ¹⁵/₂₀ of the sample believed that the choice of a person's leisure companion/s did influence the likely enjoyment of leisure activity; all of the leisure policy-makers were of that view;
- iv. spouse, partner, close friends and activity participants were high on the list of preferred leisure companions;
- v. nearly all respondents would continue in their preferred leisure activities whether or not their chosen leisure companions were also still involved;
- vi. continued independence was highly valued.

Patterns of Leisure

I'd prefer not to go out at night. I would like all of my leisure activities to happen in the daytime. Strathmore: Female (61 years old)

Members of the ageing population told me that they generally took their planned, often activity-based leisure during daylight hours. Most were not keen to

venture out after dark, primarily because of the strain of night driving and because tiredness took its toll on their metabolism. One respondent said, as a consequence, that he would much rather be up earlier and be in bed by 7.30 at night:

I don't go out in the evening, as I don't like driving at night to start with, because of the drizzle and rain which makes it difficult; but, I feel that I have a valid operation that won't stand much change, but which I enjoy.

Khandallah: Male (72 years old)

What I found was that much of the leisure (including activity-based leisure) targeted at the ageing population is scheduled to occur during daylight: which met the preferences indicated by these respondents.

When asked how often they involved themselves in their preferred leisure activity, approximately one-third of the respondents said that they participated, if possible, every day. However, when it was not possible to participate daily in the preferred activity, other activities were substituted.

Time for Leisure

I asked how time impacted on structured and unstructured leisure; that is, on the context of making or finding time for leisure. The respondents were also asked whether they felt that time had an effect on their own leisure. The majority (12/20) responded that it did, with one respondent commenting that:

While I have too much time, I am not bored. Khandallah: Male (93 years old)

Another commented:

Since my retirement, and my subsequent full-time involvement in voluntary work, I have no time for golf.

Khandallah: Male (64 years old)

This was a comment on that respondent's inability to find enough hours in the day to take part in one of his preferred leisure activities. Another respondent told me that:

My leisure activities sometimes clash, but not very often. I usually plan them well in advance and make sure that I can get everything in. I usually have the car, as my husband is a bit of a 'stay-at-home' person. But often I take the bus, especially to the Aquatic Centre, because parking can be a problem...then I have to plan my time a bit better. Strathmore: Female (70 years old)

While this theme was common among the research sample, it differs from the popular stereotype of the general ageing population not being able to find things to do to fill the 'empty hours'. Generally, for the sample, finding time, rather than things to do with that time, was far more of a problem:

There's never enough days in the week to do everything I'd like to do. Strathmore: Female (61 years old)

In a similar vein:

If there was more time, I could do more. However, I find that there is less time because I am doing things slower, it takes longer to get dressed; although I do find that I can make up time by driving, rather than using the bus. Khandallah: Female (82 years old)

However, ⁸/₂₀ said that time had no bearing on their leisure activity and that they could make time for whatever they wished to become involved in: as illustrated by the previous respondent's calculated use of the car. Another respondent suggested that time really had no impact:

Time generally does not impact on people's leisure: although it will if they let it. It simply means that you have to be aware of what you are intending to do, and then get about and do it; and that does not mean that you have to timetable everything. Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

That attitude also applied to how respondents ordered the rest of their lives and while many did not timetable their leisure, they certainly saw the ordering of time as important. A common sentiment was that of not wanting to waste their own time; nor did they want to see other people waste time:

Time is very important; if I sleep in and don't get up, I feel really ratty for the day - even though I sometimes feel like staying in bed...[I] feel as though I've wasted time. Strathmore: Female (61 years old)

Of the people I know and associate with, most of them are very fully occupied, and I think that one of the things that comes out of SeniorNet that is really surprising, and also PROBIS, by the way, is the incredible amount of knowledge and energy existing outside (between 55 onwards): it is almost shameful that we are not using it. Khandallah: Male (72 years old)

The respondents were, generally, a busy group of people. The majority did not maintain a written timetable of their structured leisure because they were of the view that 'time looks after itself' and because they had done enough timetabling and diarying during their working lives: however, a small number did continue to timetable their leisure; those respondents suggested that it was difficult to break the habits of a lifetime.

Key Findings:

- i. the ageing population respondents were a busy group of people;
- ii. the majority of the ageing population sample took its activity-based leisure during daylight hours;
- iii. if possible, the majority of respondents participate in leisure activity on a daily basis;
- iv. ¹²/₂₀ of the ageing population indicated that time does have an effect on their leisure patterns, although not detrimentally;
- v. the majority of the respondents do not timetable their structured leisure.

Wants, Needs and Aspirations

A good balanced diet, that's what I've got now - in terms of leisure wants and needs. There's recreation, there's holiday, there's involvement, there's sideline participation, I've got all those. Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

I had expected that the ageing population sample would have many clearly discernible and well-articulated unmet leisure and social needs. I was wrong. What I found was that members of the research sample were, in general, quite happy with their lot. In fact, the above comment was illustrative of the level of involvement and satisfaction felt by many in the research sample: they were rather self-sufficient people who had taken time to consider what constituted their leisure needs and how they wanted them met. And while many in the sample were full of good ideas about what leisure policy-makers should and could do, they did not want too much assistance or guidance; that was primarily because they had already developed their own plans focused on achieving their goals. That, too, was not what I had expected.

Further illustrating that position, ¹⁶/₂₀ of the ageing population indicated either that they had no particular leisure wants and needs, or that these were currently all being met. In the ⁴/₂₀ (all of whom were males) who did suggest that they had unmet needs, two Strathmore respondents identified the desire to have more money to assist them with their leisure as a major issue. Their Khandallah counterparts described physiological/neurological functioning needs as paramount: with one stating the need *'to be physically fitter'*, and the other *'to get back [my] memory'*.

The two groups in the ageing population cohort were generally satisfied with respect to their current needs, even though each suburban group tended to view their needs differently. The Khandallah group generally expected more, in a structured sense, from their leisure than did its Strathmore counterpart, but they varied little when it came to how they perceived those leisure needs being met.

There was consistency in what the leisure policy-makers thought the ageing population want or need from their leisure, as illustrated by the following comments:

Older people want to maintain their health, they want company, they want somebody to do their leisure with, they want someone to pass time with, someone with whom to try new experiences...generally, they need to have access to a number of different things to do - pluralism rules!

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (43 years old)

Companionship, soft-adventure: adventure/experience. I think that the majority of people who I market to are especially not driven by the same things as me, I could be wrong here...I think that most people like to be lead, or are OK with being lead - I don't like being lead myself...but I probably believe that the ageing population wants to be more active and involved, but don't know where to start - they need someone to lead because of fears or comfort zones.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (37 years old)

Well, I think that the most important part of leisure for older people, that they would see, would be the social contact - with the new education programmes by the Hillary Commission and lots of work that Age Concern has done, and we have done ourselves and 50s Forward and all these group - we have only recently begun to realise how important that physical activity is to health and wellness, because you can't separate health and well-being, they're totally inter-related: the body, the physical, the spiritual, the psychological, the emotional - everything is tied in. Lately, older people are understanding and recognising the benefits that they can get from shared activity, but not only from the social contacts, but from physically feeling better...but I am sure that older people do see leisure as a type of companionship; but there are also many who just enjoy their private leisure, things done singularly.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

To their credit, the leisure policy-makers did accurately identify the ageing population's wants and needs; the interesting fact was, that the ageing population research sample had not articulated them quite so deliberately.

Given that the majority of the ageing population research sample did not declare its wants and needs, the follow-on question that asked whether wants and needs were currently being met became redundant, as demonstrated by the fact that 18/20 responded in the affirmative. However, two men felt that their needs were not

being met: one responded that it would require his being '*physically more able*', while the other was the Strathmore male respondent who was still recovering from the death of his wife.

Nevertheless, the leisure policy-makers did believe that there was a role for them in meeting the needs of the ageing population, even if they varied in their estimates of the capacity of their group to successfully achieve that goal. One suggested that what the ageing population might want, was to experience a sense of self-worth and being valued for what they could still contribute to society:

I imagine that it would be involvement and satisfaction that they would get from it; but, anyone who has got anything to do with voluntary organisations accepts that no one actually does things for entirely altruistic reasons, and basically people choose to help other people because they are helping themselves; unfortunately sometimes that need gets in the way of them helping other people because their own need is so great - [which is really] about feeling worthwhile and valued. Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (46 years old)

That sentiment of needing to feel of worth and being valued was echoed by members of the ageing population in regard to having their leisure wants and needs met:

One of the greatest things that you can do for a retired person, is to make them feel useful in whatever they might be involved.

Khandallah: Male (64 years old)

I am sure that there are lots of worthy people, not me, who have the ability and would want to transfer their knowledge, if they were given the opportunity to be involved, it could be through leisure activity, but not necessarily - they would feel good for having the opportunity of doing something worthwhile.

Khandallah: Male (83 years old)

Key Findings:

- i. members of the ageing population research sample seemed generally happy with their lot;
 - ii. ¹⁶/₂₀ had few particular wants and needs;
 - iii. those that existed were currently being met; consequently
-

- iv. they did not want much assistance or guidance;
- v. the leisure policy-makers believed that they had a role in meeting the ageing population's leisure needs; they varied in their estimates of the capacity of their group to successfully achieve that goal.

Disengagement

I think...that leisure time is terribly important, although I must add that it needs to be productive - it would be terrible to think that once you retired and you had all this leisure, you just had to stop and do nothing; that you didn't take time to think about things and keep your mind active.

Khandallah: Male (64 years old)

The women in the Strathmore sample had both experienced disengagement, followed by a process of re-engagement after they had 'completed' their child-rearing duties. Once they had assumed parental responsibilities their respective opportunities for full involvement in 'personal choice' leisure activities were superseded by the expectation that they should nurture and promote their children's requirements. However, that changed quickly for both of them once their children grew up and left home.

The experience of the two Khandallah women was quite different, with neither of them having experienced any conscious period of disengagement, although only one had raised a family.

On this same tack, there had been a high level of involvement in child-rearing among the Strathmore males, while most of the Khandallah males did not view the arrival of children, nor other familial responsibilities, as having had a major impact on their leisure patterns. It could be that, because of the nature of the employment of the Khandallah males, which had generally been in management

and supervisory fields, more personal leisure opportunities were available to them than to their Strathmore counterparts who had generally been employed in manual labour jobs.

One of my assumptions about disengagement was that at some time in their lives, many of the ageing population research sample would have consciously disengaged, either by choice or circumstance, from taking part in their favourite leisure activity on a regular basis. The research, however, painted a different picture, with only $\frac{6}{20}$ having consciously disengaged. That females would have disengaged was expected; not so in the case of males. Most of the males considered that the only reason for disengagement at any time in the life-span would have been ill health, and even then as a result of diminishing physical capabilities and the loss of mobility, rather than neurological deterioration. They did not seriously consider other possibilities, such as the possible on-set of such a debilitation as Alzheimer's Disease, when considering the future likelihood of their being unable to take part in their chosen leisure activities.

While a small number of Khandallah males were resigned to the fact that some level of disengagement would occur as a consequence of the passage of time, the majority believed that at no time in the future would they be likely to experience a process of disengagement. This may have been an optimistic view of the future on their part, but it was not inconsistent with the overall pattern of responses. Often the respondents expressed the outcome of disengagement in physical withdrawal terms, as suggested in the following quotation:

Oh, if I wasn't able to get around I would ask the Doctor for a "blue pill", I think! (a light-hearted reference to euthanasia) Strathmore: Male (74 years old)

What did the leisure policy-makers think about the possibility of disengagement occurring among the ageing population? They were all of the view that disengagement and its associated triggers should be countered wherever

possible, and the best way of doing that was to identify them early in the life process. The presenting task was for leisure policy-makers to think of ways that could help to reduce the likelihood of disengagement:

Anything that you can do to prevent [disengagement should be done], because the effect on people who have been interested, active members of the community is absolutely devastating, and depression is the result, [combined with] the loss of self-esteem. Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

The most constructive proposal was to facilitate, and to accelerate, a process of engagement and inclusion of the ageing population at all levels of community involvement, and through all possible channels. However, another issue was also presented:

[Disengagement experienced by older people] is very much related to health, and the kind of health that has the most effect is physical health; for example, if they have a severe arthritis that develops and their mobility is impaired; the other thing is incontinence - those are the two major factors that affect people very greatly; and incontinence is one that makes people disengage socially ...older women in particular, and yet so much can be done for it.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

Key Findings:

- i. disengagement, followed by re-engagement, occurred more for the male Strathmore ageing population respondents than their Khandallah counterparts; it also occurred for half of the female respondents;
 - ii. only $\frac{6}{20}$ of the ageing population had disengaged from leisure at any time;
 - iii. the majority of the ageing population believed that at no time in the future would they be likely to experience a process of disengagement;
-

- iv. leisure policy-makers were unanimous in their agreement that disengagement should be countered wherever possible and suggested the promotion of engagement and inclusion toward achieving that goal.

Access to and Use of Resources

Admission fees can be more of a psychological barrier than a real barrier. The cost of the swimming costume is much more of a barrier than the cost of the swim. Now the cost of the bus ticket to get to the swimming pool is much more of a barrier than the cost of the swim, in reality. But I think, psychologically, that a lot of people come from religious backgrounds that equate leisure with guilt. "Idle hands" and all that sort of stuff, with Calvinist guilt combined, pretty heady brew! So (a), they are feeling guilty about being at leisure, and if they are having to pay for that leisure it is almost a double dose of guilt.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (43 years old)

Another assumption that my research was designed to test was that even if members of the ageing population had the desire and the willingness to take part in leisure activities, there would be insufficient leisure services and facilities to meet their needs, and that those that were available would not be sufficiently well planned, designed and managed to meet those needs. When asked whether that was the case, one respondent said that he was:

...a great believer that if a need arises, there's always something that develops to fulfil that need. I think that there are tremendous opportunities for people if they just want to go out and look for them, and I think of the University for the Aged (U₃A) on the national basis as just one example, if you want to get into that sort of thing - I have never felt the need to do it. Other countries have highly organised facilities for people in the ageing population, such as huge retirement villages.

Khandallah: Male (70 years old)

Others were of a similar opinion, typified by this quotation:

Oh yes, yes. I read about the Leisure Centre, the 50s Forward Programme opening and I have gone since the first day...and the young woman asked if I had brought my bathing costume with me and I said no, so she said, 'well bring it with you on Friday', and I have gone ever since - down there you can do everything. I have tried all sorts of things - it's wonderful, and we have fun, we still enjoy having fun. The Community Centre is just as good, although I don't use it very much.

Strathmore: Female (70 years old)

However, not everybody was so enthusiastic:

No, I don't think that the facilities are well designed or adequate - they are all designed to meet the needs of younger people, and very little thought is given to what older people want and need. Khandallah: Female (82 years old)

I also asked how much leisure took place at home, and whether or not there were benefits to be gained from taking one's leisure away from home. The ageing population respondents suggested that they did want to engage in activities outside of their usual environment, as that allowed them to meet and socialise with other people. One such sentiment was:

I think that it is very important. It is important that you get a balanced diet in your leisure and that is part of the reason why I belong to clubs...although I do also very much enjoy my gardening. Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Another respondent suggested:

that [not taking leisure away from home] would be a dreadful thing, because you would become terribly introverted and, anyhow, you need to have the interface with other people. Khandallah: Male (70 years old)

Others now enjoyed their home-based leisure more than going out to have their leisure requirements met:

I do as much, or more, around the house than I ever did in the past. Now that I am retired, my approach is totally different...there are probably two aspects to it: (1) you don't have to do it, and (2) you recognise that you can still put your feet up or read a book or something if you don't do it. It doesn't matter if it is not done until tomorrow. It is a fact that [as you get older] you work slower, more thoroughly, and you tidy-up afterwards.

Khandallah: Male (73 years old)

Another Khandallah respondent reported:

I take about 80% of my leisure at home, as I have to care for my wife. It [taking leisure away from home] is not terribly important; I mean if PROBIS packed-up it wouldn't worry me too much, but I would be terribly sorry if I couldn't play bridge again - I look forward to taking some of my leisure away from home. Khandallah: Male (77 years old)

Commenting on trends, one leisure policy-maker observed:

The biggest recreation resource [continues to be] the family home and the garden. As they get smaller we will need, as a community, to provide more public recreation space such as public parks, public recreation centres: but that logic doesn't seem to have been followed through.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (43 years old)

The ageing population respondents were asked what services and facilities, other than their own, they most used when engaged in leisure activity. Table 2 is a summary of their responses.

Table 2: Ageing Population - LEISURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES ACCESSED			
Ageing Population Respondents			
Khandallah		Strathmore	
Males	Females	Males	Females
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clubs - golf club - bowls club (x5) - Betty Campbell (City Council Community) Centre - SeniorNet (x2) - Masonic Lodge - Citizens Refuge - parks - church (x2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'self-contained, I do not need anything' - libraries (x2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aquatic Centre (x2) - church halls (x2) - Freyberg Pool - RSA - walkways - golf club - TAB - libraries (x4) (including the Mobile Library) - bowling club (x2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - walkways - halls (U₃A) - Aquatic Centre - church - beaches - family facilities - libraries (x2)

Note: the figures in brackets illustrate the number of respondents who made the same or similar responses.

In light of the level of participation in organised sport among the research sample, it is not surprising to see that bowling-clubs and publicly-provided swimming-pools were high-use facilities. However, the ageing population respondents were generally only moderate users of planned services and facilities in their leisure activities. The following response was typical of those infrequent users of public facilities:

Oh, I don't think it [the use of leisure services and facilities] is really important at all, at the present time. Possibly if we [my wife and I] get a bit older and find we can't 'do our own thing' as the young people say nowadays...we might do it then.

Strathmore: Male (79 years old)

One reason why low use might occur, is that services often miss the target audience:

When we first started going along there [to the Aquatic Centre] for exercise programmes...the music they were playing for the exercises was music my grandmother was interested in...the problem was that they were talking down to the old people.

Strathmore: Male (71 years old)

Consequently, when they were asked the follow-on question about whether those services and facilities were planned, designed and managed to meet their particular leisure activity needs, the ageing population sample were varied in their responses which depended upon the degree to which they accessed the services and facilities, and, to some degree, on whether or not they felt welcome. Half indicated that they were satisfied that the services and facilities were adequate. Three of the Strathmore males felt that the services and facilities were not only adequate, but also that they were very well planned: in all cases they were referring to the use of Wellington City Council managed services and facilities. Only one respondent (a Strathmore male) answered in the negative, suggesting that they were inadequate and that some were very poor. He went on to suggest that the best way to do something about that state of affairs was for him to get in and help to effect change:

No, they don't have that personal output [to meet my needs] that you would necessarily want; so what you do, is that you get in and change it. If it doesn't suit, then get in on the administration and change them.

Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

A small number of respondents were simply not sure, one way or the other, which generally was also a reflection of their level of usage of services and facilities. One respondent offered the following example of good services:

Walks that the Council [provide], I think that's really worthwhile...they are really well done and you feel quite safe with the leader.

Strathmore: Female (61 years old)

The leisure policy-makers were asked a corresponding question, focusing on how well they thought that services and facilities were planned, designed and managed for meeting the leisure needs of the ageing population. Table 3, that follows, is a summary of their impressions, with a contribution from each of the five leisure policy-makers, and suggests that they were not overly confident that the available services and facilities were appropriate.

Table 3: Leisure Policy-Makers - ADEQUACY OF SERVICES/FACILITIES
Services and Facilities: Planning, Design and Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'getting better, but!- 'coping at present'- 'some places [are] designed well - [however], in business [it is] not a high priority'- '[it is getting] increasingly better - [there is now a] real awareness of meeting leisure needs of older people'- 'quite significant planning into [the] ageing population's [needs] is being undertaken'

But are there enough services and facilities to meet the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing population? That question was put to both cohorts and there was a mixed response. Of the ageing population research sample, ¹²/₂₀ felt that the services and facilities were sufficient in number and of an adequate standard to meet that emerging need. And while both of the female leisure policy-makers responded in the affirmative, they also indicated that gaps were apparent. Their male counterparts, however, were unanimously of the view that the process of meeting the needs of the ageing population, in respect to services and facilities, had not yet begun: one suggesting that *'it needed a kick-start'*.

One of the common complaints from the ageing population respondents was that members of that group were unaware of the range of services and facilities available for their leisure use and enjoyment. They were not totally pessimistic, however, and from my research findings it looked as though someone at least, in the services and facilities planning department of the Wellington City Council, had got part of the formula right: namely, the timing, pace and appropriateness of

activities, as well as the balance between active and passive involvement, the number of participants in each activity, and the cost of participation (although this last factor did remain an issue for a small number of users).

Key Findings:

- i. members of the ageing population research sample were only moderate users of planned leisure services and facilities;
- ii. bowling-clubs, Wellington City Council provided swimming-pools and libraries were high-use services and facilities: with lesser use being made of halls;
- iii. half of the ageing population respondents indicated that they were satisfied that services and facilities were adequate;
- iv. ¹²/₂₀ of the ageing population, as well as the two female leisure policy-makers, indicated they felt that the services and facilities were currently sufficient in number and of an adequate standard to meet emerging needs: respondents in both cohorts, however, commented that gaps were apparent;
- v. all leisure policy-makers felt that there was room for improvement with respect to the provision of services and facilities;
- vi. a common concern of the ageing population respondents was that members of their group were unaware of the range of services and facilities available for their leisure use and enjoyment.

Leisure Limiters and Motivators

The modern world is too busy to take cognisance of the requirements, needs and enjoyments of the elderly - and that is almost across the board.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (55 years old)

What is it that limits a person's ability to engage in leisure activity? From my research it would appear that the ageing population sample, at least, is limited primarily by the level of individual desire that each can muster. However, the sample may have been atypical, especially since other researchers have identified a range of limiters that need to be seriously considered by leisure policy-makers and service and programme providers (McGuire, Dottavio and O'Leary, 1986). Although it was not evident in the research sample, there clearly are aspects of the ageing population's diminishing physical capacity that will limit its member's leisure.

A lack of money was identified by half of the Strathmore sample as another limiter. Although this limiter was mainly recognised by the Strathmore respondents, it was not exclusive to them. The majority of the Khandallah ageing population group had, however, made a deliberate effort prior to retirement to address the need for a constant flow of income to ensure a comfortable, and affordable, lifestyle once their employment-based earnings had ceased. This income was often produced from the dividends of a well-developed and managed stocks, bonds and securities portfolio. Some members of the Khandallah group had also been encouraged to prepare for retirement, in a financial, physical and psychological (mind-shift) sense, while their Strathmore counterparts had not. Another major difference was in access to the means to the end. The old adage that 'you need to have money in order to make money' rings true when a person is considering how to prepare, financially, for her or his retirement. You cannot simply decide to establish an investment portfolio without access to the necessary level of income to achieve that goal: most of those in the Strathmore ageing population group simply did not have that at their disposal.

Ageing population respondents also told me that time was a major limiter to their engagement in leisure activity: but not because it hung like a shroud; rather,

as identified earlier, because there was not enough time for them to engage in the level of leisure that they would have preferred. One factor that emerged during my research was that the majority of the research sample could, with a little effort, order the available time so that they were able to do the things that they wished.

One aspect of time did seem to hang awkwardly and it related to the loss of a spouse or partner. In my research, that phenomenon was especially evident in the Strathmore group, where it generally produced a noticeable, if temporary, decline in the leisure of those respondents who had been faced with such an event. Of the four men who had experienced the loss of their spouse, three indicated that for a period immediately following the death they had experienced a marked decline in their leisure. For three of those men, that effect was not lasting, while for the fourth the effect was still evident.

The final limiter cited by ageing population respondents was access to, and the suitability of, public transport services. One respondent suggested that:

The public transport system is abysmal - having a car is a necessity. What needs to be done is establish and operate a transport system that meets the needs of the ageing population: don't just think about the workers and the able-bodied!

Khandallah: Male (80 years old)

That same respondent lauded kneeling buses as being one way that attempts had been made to address the physical accessibility issue. He went on to say that taking such action did not, however, go far enough: '*services have to be better planned and programmed*'. Even the oldest respondent in the ageing population research sample, who had remained physically active throughout his life, was of the view that transportation should be made more accessible, although, he did state that he was now less likely to avail himself of such services:

I thought that I would use public transport [buses] but I just can't get on and off, even though I still walk a lot - and I forget where I'm going at any rate. I use taxis, but they too are difficult to get and are terribly expensive.

Khandallah: Male (93 years old)

When asked what propels a person into leisure activity, respondents referred to two categories of motivator: the intellectual (including emotional) and the physical. The intellectual motivators refer primarily to the need for recurrent stimulation of the mind, which contributes to the maintenance of a harmonious balance in a person's emotional state. The other strong motivation that fell within the intellectual category, was the need for social contact and stimulation. This was crucial to people who, for most of their lives, had been busy and engaged with their respective communities of interest. One respondent suggested that she felt intellectual stimulation was of paramount importance when it came to the promotion of a healthy life:

That's why I take part in the U₃A programme. I like to get out of the house and to meet people and to share ideas and knowledge; but playing bridge also helps, and provides a chance to meet people and to have good company as well.

Khandallah: Female (82 years old)

Another suggested that stimulation was an important aspect of motivating older people toward meeting some of their needs:

While I've never gone to Senior Citizens and I've never belonged to Historical Societies or anything like that, I feel that I've lived it, and what does it matter ...but some people are quite interested. I remember one elderly woman next door to me who played bowls - she never played bowls, she went for the cup of tea...and a lot of these people only go for the company - but that's all right also, and some older people really need it.

Khandallah: Female (83 years old)

The leisure policy-maker perspective of intellectual stimulation as a motivator was similar to that of the ageing population respondents; however, they tended to place a greater emphasis on the need to engage the ageing population at the intellectual level in order to maintain motivation throughout life, but even more importantly, at the later stages:

If the motivation doesn't come from within, then it probably comes from some organisation, or from their family who probably gives them some encouragement...what keeps them there is probably their social connections. Older people have the time and the intelligence, and they are picking-up worthwhile, useful information about how activities are good for them; and I think, that - as I mentioned earlier - older people have been very aware how

important leisure and physical activity is going to help them preserve their fitness and enjoy a better quality of life as they age: because they are very aware, as we all are, that they are going to spend more of their life in that older age stage.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

The physical motivators centred on the need to maintain a moderate level of physical challenge in a person's life. When coupled with the need to maintain a reasonable level of physical mobility, agility and dexterity as one ages, that became a strong motivator for the majority of the ageing population research sample. However, one respondent suggested that most people who are inclined toward exercise will involve themselves regardless of who, or what, is used to motivate them:

While television exercise programmes, including the 50s Forward Programme, may motivate a few, I think that the people who are going to do exercise, are the people who will go to do exercise anyway: they generally don't need much motivation anyway.

Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Table 4, that follows, is a summary of the motivators that the ageing population cohort identified. The leisure policy-maker perspective on what motivates members of ageing population is also recorded. Many of the motivators were mentioned by several different respondents.

Table 4: Ageing Population (with Leisure Policy-Maker Perspectives) - LEISURE MOTIVATORS	
Khandallah	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structure (the availability of organised leisure) - physical challenge - generally challenging - independence - mixing and socialising - stimulation
Females	- vitality, life and companionship
Strathmore	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulation (both intellectual and physical) - occupy time - need for health and balance in life - time to self - meet people and human interest - help others - relieve stress
Females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enjoyment and meeting people - personal accountability for use of time
Leisure Policy-Makers	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - convenience and accessibility - peer influence - physical/mental ability - psychological stimulation - the desire to look after each other - by being kept involved - 'need to get involved, as often too much time is spent in isolation'
Females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - motivation comes from within, or from organisations involved with, or from family - social connections keep them involved; older people have time and intelligence - older people become very aware of the value of physical activity - they are worthwhile - they encourage involvement/participation - the need for a degree of autonomy - "locus of control" - 'efficacy - having choices is very important'

Key Findings:

Limiters:

- i. physical capacity limited the ageing population's leisure;

- ii. a lack of money was identified as a limiter, especially for those in the lower socio-economic bracket;
- iii. not having enough time to do everything that is desired was identified by the ageing population as a potential limiter;
- iv. access to, and the suitability of, public transportation services for the ageing population was a major limiter;
- v. loss of a spouse or partner produced a noticeable, if temporary, decline in the leisure of respondents.

Motivators:

- vi. motivators fall into two categories: the intellectual (including the emotional) and the physical; both are linked to
- vii. the need for social contact and stimulation.

Leisure Policy-Makers

Most of these leisure people that I've come up against in the last ten years are all yuppies - they're all young, very young; some of them have been good...I think we need someone a bit more mature if you're dealing with an elderly population, because, for one thing, I think it gets the elderly population's back up a bit if they get talked to by yuppies, because I think the biggest majority of elderly people think that they know a lot more than yuppies!

Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Examining the role of leisure policy-makers was also important in this research and included an attempt to determine whether or not the leisure policy-makers had any particular agendas in respect to the leisure patterns and potential needs of an ageing population. In general, they indicated that they did not and while there was nothing to suggest that they had deliberately excluded the ageing

population from their leisure policy-making considerations, there was also little evidence to the contrary. An important finding was that leisure policy-makers do have an idea of what constitutes the ageing population's leisure wants and needs, and are therefore likely to be constantly bearing them in mind, even if often sub-consciously. Table 5 demonstrates some of that understanding.

Table 5: Leisure Policy-Makers - LEISURE WANTS/NEEDS OF THE AGEING POPULATION
Leisure Policy-Maker Impressions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- companionship- 'soft' adventure- adventure experiences- 'don't particularly want anything, [but] they don't want to go backwards'- a 'sense of belonging'- to maintain health- for companionship (need 'someone to do leisure with')- to pass time- to try something new- social contact: maybe through 'voluntary involvement in visiting other older people'- that health and well-being be seen as totally inter-related- shared activity resulting in feeling better about self- need to be physically active would be good

Clearly, there are examples to be found of leisure policy-makers focusing specifically on the fundamental leisure needs of the ageing population, with the Hillary Commission employing at least one such person with that responsibility; the development of the 50s Forward programme has exemplified that focus. However, as suggested by one ageing population respondent:

*If you are going to plan leisure policy, then you've got to plan time for leisure
- and that is where I think the total fabric of society has to be structured so
that you have leisure.*
Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Also of interest was the comprehension among members of the ageing population of the role of the leisure policy-maker. What I found was that the general level of understanding was low, as was the level of acceptance of the legitimacy of the role. Most had very little knowledge of leisure policy-makers,

with some even considering them to be a potential threat to the on-going enjoyment of their leisure. One ageing population respondent was rather scathing in his assessment of the leisure policy-maker role in practice:

Sometimes policy-makers, at that level [government] only think of their own individual pockets and what they can get out of it.

Strathmore: Male (68 years old)

Another respondent had given the policy-makers cursory consideration and discussed them in an animated description:

Mad people who have got nothing else to do, except to think up things for other people to do - if you can understand that!

Strathmore: Female (61 years old)

When they had taken time to consider the policy-makers' role in operation, ¹³/₂₀ of the ageing population felt that they were successful in developing leisure-focused policy from a range of contributory sources, such as the Hillary Commission, City and Regional Councils, voluntary sector organisations and private enterprise. In addition, my research also produced an insight into the respondents' concept of 'locus of control', especially as they felt that the leisure policy-makers might be able to reduce manipulation. One ageing population respondent suggested:

I can see it at various levels right from the very top - the Government - right down to the individual. [However,] the individual should really govern the policy, because it's what he wants that should dictate what the policy should be.

Strathmore: Male (68 years old)

Another commented:

I have never thought about this aspect of it, as I believe that if I can't make my own leisure and fun, there is something wrong with me - I am losing my marbles.

Khandallah: Male (69 years old)

A small number of the men in the interviewed ageing population sample, who did not answer in the affirmative, said that they felt the role of the leisure

policy-maker was so insignificant that it did not warrant their serious consideration: 'end of story'.

The Strathmore respondents, especially the males, articulated more ideas about what they felt leisure policy-makers could and should do for the ageing population; this appeared to be a result of their wanting more in the way of services, facilities and opportunities than their Khandallah counterparts. They spoke to the point and tended to make it bluntly:

Provide more facilities, that's all you can do! Strathmore: Male (65 years old)

This was a recurring attitude and the views were not always complimentary, with one respondent suggesting the need to make some physical changes to facilities for the comfort of not only the ageing population, but participants in general:

More facilities...those that are provided, for example the Aquatic Centre, are not right: for example, they have put the weights facilities in the wrong place, not just for us older people, but for everyone...now the smell of all that chlorine from the pool is wafting up into the weights area - it's completely wrong, so, they need to give more thought to some areas; why don't they even ask us.
Strathmore: Male (67 years old)

Table 6, that follows, outlines some of the suggested possibilities for improvement.

Table 6: All Respondents	
- MEETING THE LEISURE NEEDS OF THE AGEING POPULATION	
[THINGS THAT LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS COULD DO BETTER OR DIFFERENTLY]	
Khandallah	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - address transport issues♦ - 'research and find out where it's at!' - 'get initiatives going for the ageing population' - 'address medical needs of the ageing population'♦ - 'there needs to be more (leisure policy-makers)' - 'need planned exercise in [a] multi-disciplined approach'
Females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'no comment' - 'not sure'
Strathmore	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'chip away at encouraging older people to get out and enjoy life to the full - not necessarily highly organised even' - 'treat elderly as individuals and don't talk down to them ... don't assume anything ... get them involved in decision-making' - 'provide more facilities' - '[proactively] involve and seek opinions - ask, rather than impose!' - 'special bus trips, etc.' - 'cup of tea facilities [around the city and suburbs]' - 'reduce costs [for] admission, participation [and] ground fees'♦
Females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - '[I am] happy with what they are doing - need to have an initiative to get others motivated'
Leisure Policy-Makers	Comments
Males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'research better - knowing the impact/implications of having done too little in the policy area' - 'ask questions of the ageing population knowing that the majority of people want an enjoyable place to live/exist, and what impact does that have on the ageing population' - 'need to drive, rather than be driven - become proactive'
Females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'more resources - targeting of resources, etc.' - 'support voluntary organisations who are in the business of aiding the ageing population - keep up with shifting needs/trends in the ageing population' - identify more financial resources - 'become more involved in an advocacy role' - 'look for/seek older people's perception and input'

Note: ♦ these were common themes and emerged as important to the ageing population respondents.

As a group, the ageing population sample was unanimous in emphasising how important it was for its members to maintain control and personal freedom, and to live their lives independently. Without them maintaining individual and

collective control of their leisure, the ageing population cohort suggested that the potential for both involvement and excitement would be seriously diminished. Consequently, while they saw value in the leisure policy-maker role, they were reserved in suggesting just how much they might be prepared to allow the leisure policy-makers to do *for* them. Earlier studies have also found this to be a critical factor in the promotion, within the ageing population, of physical and psychological health. It has often been argued that positive promotion of this kind can be fostered through the provision of a focused leisure education (Coleman and Iso-Ahola, 1993; Deci and Ryan, 1987; Searle, Mahon, Iso-Ahola, Sdrolia and van Dyck, 1995).

The Role of Leisure Policy-Makers

Most of the leisure policy-makers were clear about their role. Some of their descriptions are presented in Table 7. The application of that role toward meeting the leisure needs of the ageing population was not, however, so clear for all of them: it required considered thought before a response was articulated. All of the leisure policy-makers were of the view that efforts in the past have been inadequate: too few and ineffective; hence, they saw a need for future efforts to be kept on target and intensified to meet the emerging leisure requirements of a rapidly-ageing New Zealand population.

Table 7: Leisure Policy-Makers - LEISURE POLICY-MAKER ROLE
Leisure Policy-Maker Selected Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'conduct research'- 'analyse research'- 'develop [strategic] plans'- 'develop critical path and measurement processes'- 'become more aware of grass-roots concerns and requirements of individuals'- 'develop a health promotion focus'- 'take an "holistic" approach'- 'lobby Government for sufficient money, resources, etc.'- 'should be leaders, [but] lead from behind - advocate on behalf of older people'

All were enthusiastic, optimistic and reasonably ‘globally-focused’ and while both female and male leisure policy-makers had given thought to the process in which they were engaged, it was the two female leisure policy-makers who more quickly saw correlations and made connections, in discussing the ageing population and their leisure requirements. They tended toward identification of practical, simple and immediate solutions to the physical inclusion restrictions that are often faced by members of the ageing population in their leisure. The male leisure policy-makers were no less astute; they were simply more measured in their responses: the reason for that occurring did not emerge.

Key Findings:

- i. leisure policy-makers did not set agendas in respect to the leisure needs of the ageing population;
 - ii. members of the ageing population did not understand the role of the leisure policy-maker, partly because it is poorly publicised, and partly because leisure policy-makers are somewhat invisible;
 - iii. leisure policy-makers should take cognisance of the fact that members of the ageing population want to retain the ‘locus of control’ in respect to *how*, *when* and *where* they will take their leisure: that was seen by many in the active ageing population as being fundamental to whether or not they would become involved, and whether or not they would be likely to derive enjoyment from that participation;
 - iv. leisure policy-makers should effect a shift in their focus to take account of the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing New Zealand population.
-

Structural and Operational Processes

To round out the interviews, I briefly looked at how best leisure policy-makers could determine the leisure needs of the ageing population. All respondents, across both cohorts and the policy-makers themselves, were asked how they thought this could best be achieved. Their responses were both pithy and consistent and are documented in Table 8.

Table 8: All Respondents - WAYS LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS CAN DETERMINE THE LEISURE NEEDS OF THE AGEING POPULATION	
Khandallah	Comments
Males	- ask them (3) - research (3) - access ageing population groups (2) - poll them
Females	- ask them (2)
Strathmore	Comments
Males	- ask them (4) - in meeting form
Females	- ask them (2)
Leisure Policy-Makers	Comments
Males	- research - ask them (3)
Females	- keep in touch with older people - talk to the people and ask them (2) - use IDCs ¹ to exchange ideas and information - use a Public Health-centred approach to gather information

Note: i. the figures in brackets illustrate the number of respondents who made the same or similar responses
ii. ¹ IDCs: Inter-departmental Committees - government officials committees.

Key Findings:

- i. leisure policy-makers should *ask* the ageing population what their leisure needs, wants and aspirations are;
 - ii. members of the ageing population should be included in policy deliberations.
-

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusions

The Present Situation

Following the collation of the research data, I returned to my research question:

How effective are the efforts of leisure policy-makers to address the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing population in New Zealand?

My conclusion was that, while the degree of effort put into the policy priorities of the ageing population by leisure policy-makers was not great, it could have been a lot worse.

One fortunate outcome of the research, from a leisure policy-maker perspective, was that members of the ageing population sample were generally happy with how things were going for them: they could nominate few unsatisfied leisure wants, needs or aspirations. This did not provide grounds for complacency, however, because it was clear from the research that members of this ageing population sample were, generally, focused on what they needed and were effective in putting their case where necessary and appropriate. That might not, however, be the experience of the general ageing population.

My original hypothesis was, in part, validated: little seems to have been done by policy-makers, in a 'global' sense, to meet the leisure needs of New Zealand's rapidly-ageing population; although there are examples of work that is focused on them.

The research findings suggest that although New Zealand's population has been ageing rapidly over recent years, in part demonstrated by the accelerating rate

at which people are now entering retirement, this fact has not been taken adequately into account in most leisure policy development.

Evaluation and Discussion of the Literature Review and Research Findings

A number of points that arose from the literature review can be elucidated in the light of the research findings.

Human Need

The first relates to Maslow's hierarchy of need. What I found was that Maslow's hierarchy failed to specify one class of need: the need 'to give in return'; a need for reciprocal engagement that is inherent in most social relationships. I was of the view that this class of need was different from Maslow's third stratum of need (the needs associated with affection or belongingness), in which states of reciprocity will also exist. During the course of my research I tested this hypothesis and found that such a need is evident, and while a few members of the ageing population sample wanted some things for themselves, many wanted to give things back to the various communities that had nurtured, encouraged and supported them throughout their lives. Some examples of what they were considering can be drawn from the following quotations:

My wife and I spend a lot of time visiting and helping the elderly around here. We like to do things for our neighbours and make sure that they are OK...we also check on "H" when we can, to see that he's all right, but it is hard to get him motivated. I feel that we should give something back, because life has been pretty good to us. We don't want for much, and it is good to feel that we are doing something now that we can - we also enjoy doing it, which is good.

Strathmore: Male (79 years old)

Some people help each other by supporting other older people, like "M" down there who had to go to two funerals last week. Well, she contacted some people in Churton Park who were quite pleased to take her; well see, at my age I wouldn't want to take her, I'm too old to go acting as a 'taxi driver' - see, I won't offer to do things like that, but there are other things that I can and do like to do for people - it also helps with meeting people.

Khandallah: Female (79 years old)

That need is based on a vital cause-and-effect relationship. The cause is past receipt of community support and engagement in enjoyable social experiences, as well as the sustenance that members of the ageing population sample have derived from community membership and social inclusion. The effect is one of wanting to give something back to other members of one's community. While members of the ageing population sample who demonstrated an awareness of this need were lucid in their assessment of what could be done to give something back, as were they were motivated to act, it appeared to be important to them that the right catalyst had to be identified to get things moving.

A Policy Framework: 'A Fair Society'

Following on from the question of needs is the concept of a better society, which in the last decade was addressed most directly by the Royal Commission on Social Policy. The (1988) Commission was charged with looking for ways of designing or encouraging something that, while it might well have been worthwhile and honourable, was always going to prove difficult to realise. The 'fair society' was an elusive goal for policy-making and an even more difficult concept to promote when people are seemingly cynical of the efforts of governments.

As suggested earlier, Cushman and Laidler's (1988) contribution to the Royal Commission Report listed a number of concepts that they felt would contribute to the establishment of 'a fair society', and that collectively should have served to form part of a clear focusing of a social policy agenda on the enhanced pursuit of leisure and recreational activities. After consideration of their suggestions, I felt that one additional concept should have been added that was also to be found in the Commission's 'Warrant': 'genuine opportunity for all people, of whatever age...to develop their own potential'¹. The addition of that social concept helped me fine-tune the focus of this thesis within a social policy framework already established in the terms of reference of the Commission.

1 - *The April Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy* (Volume I: New Zealand Today) (April 1988) (p.vi)

The impression gained from my research, is that striving for ‘a fair society’ has not, for many in the general population, lost its appeal over the past decade. However, not the same can be said for governments during that same period, with a deliberate and concerted drive toward a free-market economy, and away from ‘welfareism’, being the cornerstone of their social change agendas: rather than striving toward any notion of fairness. Even so, the ageing population sample, as a simple barometer of social well-being and opportunity, is united in its belief that such a goal remains both worthy and vital if the nation is to successfully address the leisure and associated issues facing a rapidly-ageing population: the concept of promoting leisure and recreation toward the enhancement of a sense of community and belonging, and ‘a fairer society’, still appears to have considerable merit.

Such an ‘ideology of community’ may, however, as suggested by Coalter *et al.* (1986), be little more than political rhetoric, disguising attempts to find cheap options for addressing society’s ailments. In that context, leisure and recreation have been considered a panacea, but that is of little value unless it attracts the necessary support to address the fundamental social and economic problems that face any given society: it is really no more than a superficial exercise in political pasting over society’s cracks. In support of Coalter *et al.*, I do not advocate the use of ‘recreation as welfare...[whereby] the instrumental use of leisure provision [is promoted] as a solution to social problems such as vandalism, problems of youth and the alienation of unemployment’¹, nor the promoting of engagement over disengagement in a rapidly-ageing population (such as in the New Zealand experience): to do so is all rather too simplistic. What I prefer to advocate is a more organised, structured and inclusive approach toward addressing the emerging needs of the rapidly-ageing population, that could be based on a theory of ageing actively, such as I have posited at the end of this thesis.

¹ - Coalter, F. *et al.* *Rationale For Public Sector Investment In Leisure* (Report of The Sports Council and Economic and Social Research Council) (October 1986) (p140)

Disengagement

When considering disengagement, it might have been worthwhile to have compared rates of general disengagement in the ageing population sample against the seven life-styles identified by an American and European team of researchers in the mid-1960s (Bernard, 1988) who suggested as one of their life style orientations, '(6) *Disengagement orientation* [a] general slowing down. The day is kept full but at a slower tempo and social interaction is decreased.'¹ To have done so, might also have compared favourably with the shift in focus, following retirement, that was experienced by male, heavy manual labourers in that research. That group, while moving toward a disengagement orientation, also experienced a corresponding move toward a greater engagement in family roles (life style 2 - *Family orientation* - in the stated research), which is something that the Strathmore ageing population male group also experienced. However, due to the sample size, any correlation would have been tenuous.

Leisure, Recreation and Social Cohesion

Leisure, in a New Zealand context, was often characterised in the literature review as being physical exertion and striving for pinnacles of human endeavour, typically in team or group activities, rather than sedentary or passive in nature. What has changed in more recent times, especially since the 1970s, is the profusion of a wide range of leisure engagement options that has served to reduce the impact of high-performance team sports on the New Zealand national psyche, as well as on the way in which the population draws its social cohesion. In respect of the ageing population, such a development is an important consideration. While it might be reasonable and acceptable for the general population to now strive to be the best in a solo discipline, that is hardly likely to impact positively on the leisure requirements and social cohesion aspirations of the ageing population.

1 - Bernard, M. (1988) Positive Approaches to Ageing: Leisure and Life Style in Later Life [as reviewed by Mark Abrams in *Ageing and Society*] (p206) (author's emphasis)

Because New Zealand and New Zealanders have matured in their leisure behaviour it is important that all future efforts to address the population's changing leisure requirements and aspirations take into account the fact that the population is ageing rapidly; if for no other reason than it is clear now that the insular, inward sporting focus of old can no longer be guaranteed to unify the people, and the responsibility for engendering social cohesion now clearly requires more than simply an occasional rugby test win by a team of 'sporting' heroes, such as the *All Blacks*.

Leisure, Recreation and Work

Another important contributor to that change has been the rate at which New Zealand's population is ageing, especially because 'the baby-boomers' are moving through adulthood, out of work and into retirement. *The Extra Years* report alluded to the fact that policy-makers had a task, indeed a responsibility, in 'fostering an understanding of old age and older people so that wider options and opportunities are open to them'¹.

Some examples of research into the leisure patterns of the ageing population mirrored a number of findings referred to in this study, in particular the work of Earle (1992) who investigated leisure in the context of the Australian ageing population. Figure 6, that follows, demonstrates Earle's holistic view of leisure, and how the work/leisure dichotomy should combine to enhance and achieve positive experiences.

¹ - *The Extra Years: Some Implications for New Zealand Society of Ageing Population* (Report of the Social Advisory Council) (February 1984) (p12)

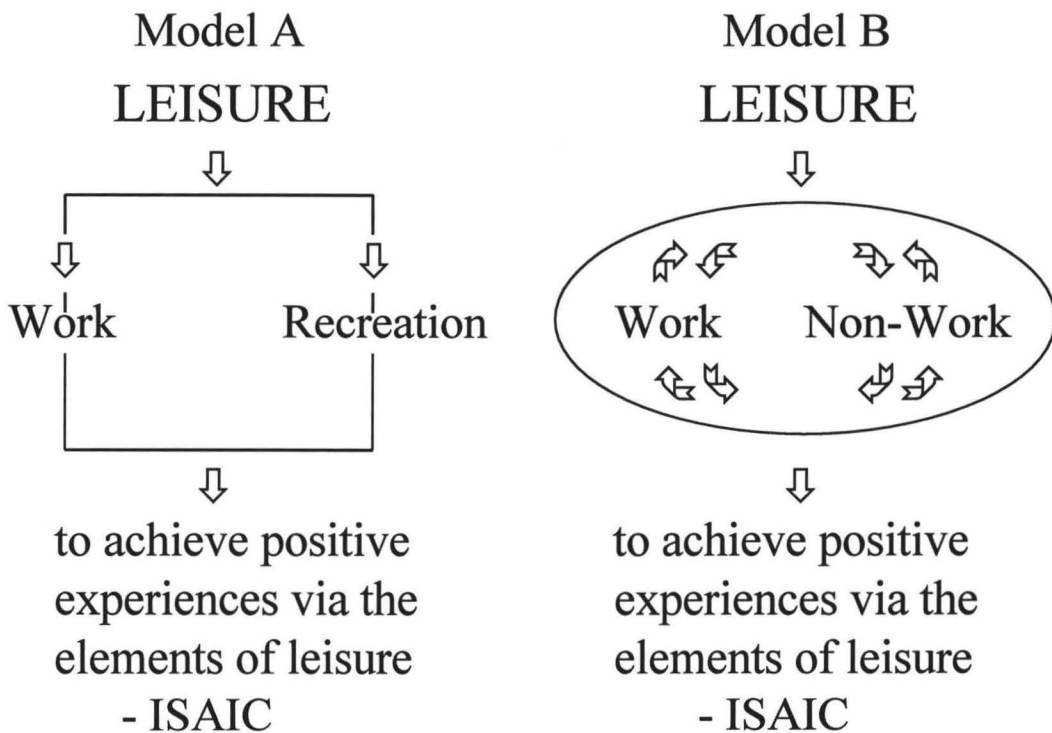


Figure 6: **Leisure In Its Social Context: An Holistic View Of Leisure**

Source: adaptation of Earle (1992:75).

Model A depicts Earle's construct. It has been applied in the changing social context of Australia's population, which is demographically similar to that of New Zealand, in that it too has a rapidly-ageing population. Earle's model is primarily uni-directional, with positive experiences resulting from task-focused activities (work and recreation) combining to create leisure. Earle views leisure as a peak experience embracing both work and recreation.

Model B is an application of Earle's model in a New Zealand context, based on my research findings. I postulate that in the New Zealand context, a two-way, circular work/non-work trend is apparent, which suggests to me that the evolving needs of the ageing population might be better met by allowing more fluidity in the process of moving in and out of work and recreation, and into leisure. This became especially applicable when the findings were overlaid on the leisure needs, engagement patterns, and aspirations of the ageing population.

Leisure is a peak experience that embraces both work and non-work, but it is a by-product of neither: leisure exists in its own right. As such, leisure has been used to establish social interaction and social cohesion, and this, I suggest, is what Earle was striving to facilitate in the development of his model.

Boredom

I had thought that if boredom was evident in the ageing population sample, then it could be used as a target for future policy options. What I found was that boredom was not reported as a common experience and would not serve as a policy guide. Having a pre-conceived notion that boredom would be apparent, set me thinking about why I should hold that view. It may have had something to do with my reading about 'flow', with the constant media bombardment with negativism toward the ageing population and with the 'social marginalization' described by Earle (1992:9); or maybe it had something to do with the fact, as suggested by Davis (1988), that 'when boredom becomes a major part of life, it helps explain the alienation and apathy underlying much of personal pathology and some of the societal forms as well'¹: something that is obviously worth making some effort to avoid.

In this context, the recent trend that emphasises 'positive ageing' seems worthy of celebration. Examples of what might be referred to as boredom avoidance are beginning to appear in media writings, as illustrated by a recent editorial in *The Press*. The Editor, writing about a woman who had recently celebrated her 93rd birthday by 'leaping out of a light aircraft', suggested that perhaps 'the handicaps traditionally ascribed to old age can sometimes be transcended and may anyway be more in the minds of those who observe the elderly than within old people themselves'². However, members of the ageing population are equally aware of such negative potential, as was echoed in the

1 - Csikszentmihalyi, M. & I. (eds.) (1988) *Optimal Experience* (p14)

2 - editorial - *The [Christchurch] Press* (Friday, 16 February 1996) *Getting older* (p7)

earlier quotation from the female respondent who suggested that as a consequence of her not making the effort to get out of bed in the morning, she was likely to feel both that she had wasted time and permitted apathy to get the better of her. Possibly, these two examples serve to illustrate why I was having difficulty accepting my research findings in respect to boredom.

Leisure Policy-Makers: Role Legitimacy

In respect to role-legitimacy for leisure policy-makers, my research findings suggest that potentially fertile ground exists for optimising positive leisure opportunities for the ageing population. The process could be enhanced by clarifying the concept of 'leisure preparation' as advocated by Earle:

The traditional social context of modern societies assumes that older adults will pursue a lifestyle based on leisure following retirement from work. Apart from the productive endeavours of several voluntary associations, little systematic work is done in the area of leisure preparation for older people... [and because of that] ...the concept of leisure requires clarification to provide a clearer meaning to facilitate the development of relevant policy ideas and strategies.¹

New Zealand's leisure policy-makers would be wise to consider the effectiveness of their role in a period when older adults will be having more leisure time as a direct result of entering that life-stage known as retirement, and doing so at a much earlier age than their predecessors.

Overall, the leisure policy-makers interviewed seemed to be clear about what they should be doing differently or better to satisfy the future leisure needs of an ageing New Zealand population; some were also aware of the need to change the ageing population's perception of them as 'artful dodgers', to a more useful and effective role of 'artful listeners'.

Another notable finding was that, as a group, leisure policy-makers were invisible to the ageing population who were unaware of the leisure policy-maker

1 - Earle, L. (1992) *Social Network Needs Among Older People* (p63)

role, or were sceptical of its legitimacy. There were suggestions that the role should be more widely publicised in an effort to gather legitimacy: however, it might be more productive to publicise the functional results produced by the leisure policy-makers in an attempt to accredit role-legitimacy.

It will be necessary, before much more can be done to meet the leisure needs of an ageing population, for leisure policy-makers to be clearer about what those leisure needs are, and what has caused them. Only then can informed action be contemplated. To that end, they will have to take time to engage the ageing population and the most obvious way of achieving that is, as the ageing population sample has suggested, simply by talking with them, then allowing them to exercise some control over the processes.

The research interviews lead to the conclusion that, despite the efforts to date of leisure policy-makers, there is room for improvement and it was encouraging, therefore, to learn that the policy-makers were aware of that.

The whole problem of meeting its [ageing population] requirements: financially, physically, spiritually, leisurely - [is that] we haven't even turned the crank-handle!

Leisure Policy-Maker: Male (55 years old)

The policy-makers, following the indications of the LINZ survey, might ask what, reasonably, they have to offer the ageing population: maybe a few more life-style television programmes focused on older people and their activities and achievements, scheduled to screen in carefully-chosen day-time slots during the week when other people are engaged in paid employment; or the designation of 'walkways for wrinklies', free of young larrikins on mountain-bikes and fanatical younger 'mountain-demolishing trampers'. Somehow, that seems too simplistic, as to do so little or to do nothing could lead to an inequitable distribution of available leisure resources, and, consequently, a potential misdirection of the benefits that could result from worthwhile leisure policy development; moreover, it could be

that such an emphasis is completely wrong. As alluded to in the literature review, a promising alternative might be a stronger emphasis on the notion of play when reflecting on the leisure behaviour and needs of the ageing population. Given that play, as opposed to structured recreation, has higher potential for promoting a state of arousal and participation satisfaction, it could be that the concept of play is what leisure policy-makers should be building into their policy deliberations; especially if the focus of that playful behaviour was on the notions of inclusion and youthful exuberance. Leisure policy-makers do believe, as demonstrated in the following quotation, that there is a lot more that they can do for the ageing population:

[New Zealand leisure policy-makers] should be leaders, basically - they should lead from behind - which is a bit of a trendy phrase. They should consult and they should advocate on behalf of the older people... I think they want the outcome (whether they actually want the process or not, I don't know), if the outcome is a greater choice of leisure activities for them.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (46 years old)

Leisure Theory Applied: Flow

In an effort to relate my research data to the leisure theory reviewed, I found it constructive to place existential theories at one end of a simple continuum, and social cohesion and structuralist theories at the other, as illustrated in Figure 7.

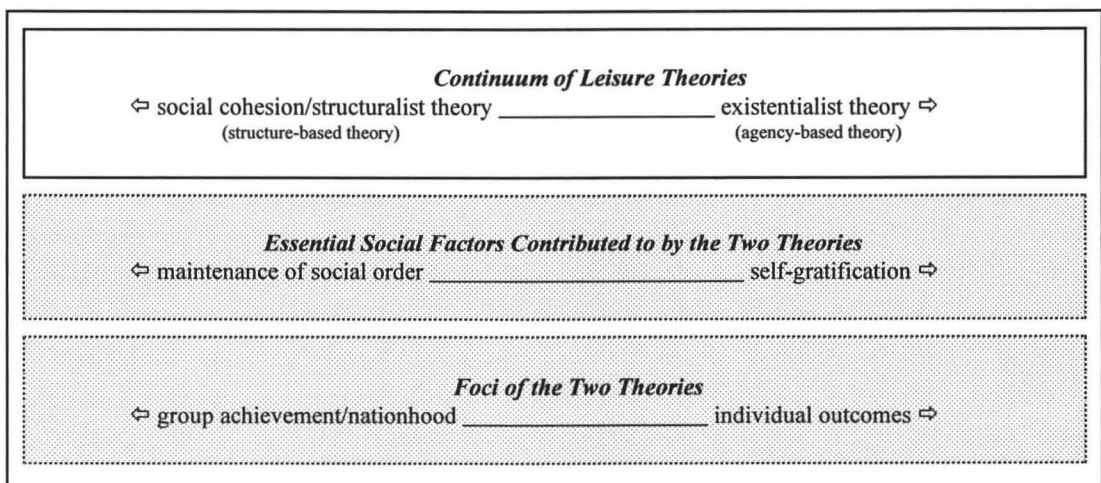


Figure 7: Continuum of Leisure Theories

And while the flow experience, as well as the consequential notion of play, were important aspects of the research focus and the literature review, there remain some important unanswered questions: for example, does flow only occur spontaneously, or can it be orchestrated to some degree? From my research, it appears that flow does have potential to be fostered artificially through the enhancement of organised recreation and leisure opportunities, while also occurring naturally. And while the flow experience, as with the state of positive addiction, remains personal to the individual, the social context is usually influential and triggers may be manipulated by a third party or other external force: which draws attention to the dichotomy that exists within the *agency/structure* theory of leisure, in that:

Agency refers to the actions of social actors in relating to the world and struggling to leave their mark upon it...[whereas,] conversely, theories of *structure* focus on the social context in which the individual is situated.¹

From a structuralist perspective, it would appear, therefore, that leisure policy could well be directed toward providing more triggers to effect arousal-generating opportunities in the ageing population. However, any policy should also match that action by providing antidotes to chronic boredom that can result from the failure to encourage individuals to maximise the positive aspects of their lives, which, as suggested earlier, can lead to the onset of personal pathological and societal depression.

Because members of the ageing population may, in later life, lack the challenges that previously stimulated them, especially in their working life, it would make sense to build challenge, and its related excitement and potential for flow, into their leisure activities and pursuits now that work has been left behind. It does appear reasonable to attempt this, not least because of the potential positive spin-offs for society as a whole. At the very least, this would involve leisure

1 - Jackson, Edgar L. and Burton, Thomas L. (eds.) (1989) *Understanding Leisure and Recreation: Mapping the Past, Charting the Future* (pp71-72) (author's emphasis)

policy-makers in developing initiatives that fit with the past and present life experiences of a diverse range of ageing people.

The Main Research Findings

The main research findings have been extracted from the subject summaries found in the preceding chapter:

New Zealand Leisure Experience:

The New Zealand leisure experience has changed over time, punctuated by a shift from more to less work time, especially for men; with that has come a shift in the amount of 'leisure time' that people, and in particular older people, have available to them.

Ageing Population:

Members of the ageing population were often content with their lot, but while they 'don't particularly want anything, they don't want to go backwards'.

The majority of the ageing population sample took its activity-based leisure during daylight hours.

Time to do all that they wanted to do, or the lack of it, was important to members of the ageing population in respect to their leisure activity.

Planning and preparing for retirement was seen as critical and as having a positive effect on how an individual manages her or his leisure and the passage from work to retirement; serious future consideration should be given to this transition by leisure and social policy-makers.

Money for leisure was also a major consideration, especially by those who had little or who had not deliberately planned and managed financially for their retirement.

Most members of the ageing population sample were busy people who continued to be fully engaged in leisure activity that took them away from their homes during each week, and for some, for a considerable time each week.

These research findings supported earlier findings that home-based activities such as gardening and reading remain the preferred leisure activity of the New Zealand ageing population.

Leisure Services and Facilities:

Members of the ageing population research sample were only moderate users of publicly-provided leisure services and facilities: among those used were bowling-clubs, City Council swimming-pools and libraries.

Leisure services and facilities were perceived as just adequate, leaving considerable room for improvement in respect to how they are planned, designed and managed to meet the developing needs of an ageing population.

Leisure Companions:

A person's choice of leisure companion/s influences the likely enjoyment of her or his leisure activity.

The fact that a person's chosen leisure companion/s might have ceased to be involved in any given leisure activity did not stop members of the ageing population sample from continuing their involvement.

Independence:

The perceived value of continued independence and maintenance of the 'locus of control' for members of the ageing population were two things that leisure policy-makers would be unwise to underestimate.

Disengagement:

Disengagement, followed by re-engagement, was rather more of a reality for the females interviewed, than the males.

Leisure policy-makers were unanimous in their agreement that disengagement should be countered wherever possible, and suggested the promotion of engagement and inclusion toward achieving that goal.

Optimal Arousal/Flow:

The ageing population respondents endorsed the view that feeling good about what they were doing in their leisure was essential to enjoyment, satisfaction and motivation.

The majority of the ageing population research sample still felt that experiencing some degree of excitement in their leisure mattered, but that it was not essential to enjoyment.

There was some evidence to suggest that as people grow older, the need to experience excitement in their leisure generally declines.

Boredom, while of concern to the ageing population research sample, was not a state that appeared to be particularly prevalent.

Future Needs:

Central themes running through the thinking of the ageing population sample about what constitutes that group's future needs, were:

- a. development of an 'inclusive' leisure planning process
- b. transportation
- c. planning for retirement.

Leisure Limiters:

Physical capacity does limit the ageing population's leisure.

Money, or rather the lack of it, emerged as a limiter: especially for some members in the ageing population lower socio-economic bracket.

Not having enough time to do everything that is desired was identified by the ageing population as a potential limiter.

Access to, and the suitability of, public transportation services was identified as another constraint.

Loss of a spouse or partner produced a marked, if temporary, change in the leisure experiences of some ageing population respondents.

Leisure Motivators:

Motivators fell into two categories: the intellectual (including the emotional) and the physical; both were linked to

the need for social contact and stimulation.

Leisure Policy-Makers:

Leisure policy-makers, generally, did not set agendas in respect to the leisure needs of the ageing population.

Members of the ageing population generally did not understand the role of the leisure policy-maker; partly because it was poorly publicised, and partly because leisure policy-makers were somewhat invisible.

Leisure policy-makers should take cognisance of the fact that members of the ageing population want to retain the 'locus of control' in respect to *how*, *when* and *where* they will take their leisure: this was seen by many in the active ageing population as being fundamental to whether or not they will become involved, and whether or not they will be likely to derive enjoyment from that participation.

Leisure policy-makers should effect a shift in their focus to take account of the leisure needs of a rapidly-ageing New Zealand population.

Leisure policy-makers believe that they have a role in meeting the ageing population's leisure needs; currently, however, they are not in agreement as to how this can best be achieved.

Leisure policy-makers have a role in ensuring that opportunities for the maintenance of positive leisure activity for the ageing population are available and optimised.

Structural and Operational Processes:

Leisure policy-makers should *ask* members of the ageing population what their leisure needs, wants and aspirations are.

Members of the ageing population should be included in policy deliberations affecting them.



Chapter 5: Some Suggestions for Leisure Policy-Making

Future Focus

My interviews confirmed the existence of untapped energy and good-will that could well be harnessed more effectually. Approximately one-third of the ageing population sample stated, without being prompted, that they would be interested in offering whatever guidance they could toward assisting others in the community, such as providing positive direction to the young unemployed or budgeting and home-maker advice and support to sole parents.

The optimisation of that goodwill and energy need not be complicated, and the ageing population did not want to be bothered with 'bureaucratic clap-trap'. The majority simply wanted to give, while some also wanted to be involved in any planning that might precede implementation of programmes.

I referred earlier to overseas examples of programmes that had been developed that engaged the ageing population with various groups within the youth population. There are already 'home-grown' examples of the ageing population engaging with the younger age groups: through 'granny (grand-parent) programmes', such as child safety (travel to and from school), and teenager and sole parent support/developmental programmes. One leisure policy-maker suggested that:

We're doing a bit to do something about that, we actually have a month that we call a 'Greats and Grans month' every October and we are involved with going to every school in the country - there has been a huge response with almost all of the Primary schools becoming involved...which meant that for the whole of October the doors were open where the older people were coming and talking with children, so that you started to mix the generations and this is the beginning of learning about older age and exchanging information. The other thing that we are doing at the moment is working on a project which will be using older people as mentors in schools - it's got to be very carefully designed, of course, but there is quite a lot of inter-connection going on now between older people and younger people.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

Clearly the overseas examples, along with the 'home-grown' ones, could be used as the basis for developing indigenous programmes that would find general acceptance.

The potential spin-offs for the wider community are great. The opportunity to engage the youth population at this level, for example, has the capacity to re-energise another section of the population that has become 'opportunity and socially marginalised'.

The major stumbling-block in attempting to get such programmes past the conceptual stage, is to find the most appropriate sponsors to promote and sustain the programme development, implementation and maintenance requirements. Such programmes need not be central government initiatives. In some respects, it would probably be better that they started as a 'pilot' at a more local/regional level, with their own momentum then carrying them on to the wider community. To get the programme development moving, however, will require that a method of engagement with the ageing population be identified in the first instance, and that the potential energy of that group be harnessed and channelled for the specified purpose.

What can be Planned?

Because the ageing population respondents in the research sample were fairly self-contained individuals, they were not vociferous in their articulation of what leisure policy-makers could do to improve things for them, or for other and future members of the ageing population. However, they did - especially the men - mention a number of areas that needed to be addressed. One of the reflections for leisure policy-makers, gleaned from the research, is that the timing of planned leisure for the ageing population is critical. The preference of the majority of the ageing population was to engage in planned, often activity-based leisure, during the

hours of daylight. Clearly there is an opportunity here for leisure policy-makers to not only meet the leisure needs of this group, but also to maximise the use of services and facilities during a daylight period of potential low usage. If the recommendations that follow are actioned by leisure policy-makers, then that should go some way to ensuring that members of the ageing population feel not only that they are being heard, but also that they are being seriously considered in the larger scheme of leisure policy-making.

Recommendations for Change

- Recommendation 1: Seek, and value, the opinion of the ageing population about what its leisure needs, wants and aspirations are: include the ageing population in leisure policy-making deliberations while ensuring that it retains its 'locus of control'.
- Recommendation 2: Concentrate on developing processes for understanding the current and future leisure wants, needs and aspirations of the ageing population.
- Recommendation 3: Find and develop new and creative ways of accessing and communicating with the ageing population.
- Recommendation 4: Keep all communication channels open.
-

- Recommendation 5: Give serious consideration to developing a process of retirement preparation, as this is seen by the ageing population to be crucial, as well as having a beneficial effect on how they manage their leisure time; and, for the men especially, on how they manage the passage from paid employment to retirement.
- Recommendation 6: Ensure that members of the ageing population are able to retain the 'locus of control' by being cognisant of their views and needs about *how*, *when* and *where* they will take their leisure: this is seen by many in the active ageing population as being fundamental to whether or not they will become involved, and whether or not they will be likely to derive any enjoyment from that involvement.
- Recommendation 7: Articulate and publicise the role of the leisure policy-maker because members of the ageing population do not think that it is clear.
- Recommendation 8: Effect a change in perception of leisure policy-makers as 'artful dodgers' to one that sees them in the more consultative role of 'artful listeners'.
-

Theory of Ageing Actively

One derivative of my research was recognising the scope for an easing of the shift from being 'in-work' to 'at-leisure' for older people. The process would most specifically meet the transition needs of older men, as, historically, the transition for women has not been so marked. While this may sound like nothing new, what is currently significant in New Zealand, to judge by the research sample, is the emanation of a high level of optimism toward the notion of 'ageing actively'.

Many in the ageing population research sample alluded to the importance of planning the process of 'exiting' from the workforce. They had developed functional plans that allowed them to maintain control over the use of their time and resources that included a gradual, yet deliberate, shift from engaging less, to engaging more, in leisure. However, it was the accompanying attitudinal shift that was the vital determinant of whether or not the transition was smooth and successful; and, as one leisure policy-maker who had already taken some initiative in this area suggested:

We are trying to promote inter-generational programmes, because the further back that you take the information, the better; so that if you start to understand more about ageing when you are fifteen, you've even got a better chance than starting at thirty... from as far back as you go, we need to be learning what we need to fulfil our lives later: in leisure and other ways.

Leisure Policy-Maker: Female (53 years old)

From the interviews, that optimism appeared to stem from the belief that while work is never totally replaced with leisure, the shifting balance of involvement can be deliberately controlled to the individual's benefit. Arguably, the long-term benefits from effecting a smooth transition from being 'in-work' to being 'at-leisure' will have a positive effect on the whole community; especially so, if older people maintain their engagement in a range of community initiatives and social interactions and continue to feel valued for so doing. Improved levels of

health and personal well-being are likely to follow, as anticipated by the research sample. Similarly, the opportunities for the ageing population to engage in a range of positive social interactions will also be greatly enhanced; all that is needed now, is for someone to optimise those opportunities.

While it could be argued that this simply amplifies the desirability of ageing actively and supports the basic tenets of Activity Theory, this study has emphasised the need to plot a course that encourages the maintenance of a high level of deliberate leisure involvement and engagement by members of the ageing population. A fertile basis might be to take an holistic view of the ageing process: of the mind (intellectual) and body (physical). Given that we know the flow of oxygen to the brain increases the connections among the brain's nerve cells, there is every likelihood that a promotion of exercise would be one way to 'help the ageing brain keep spry'. However, no matter how much physical exercise is promoted to, and taken by, members of the ageing population, it is only with a regular injection of social stimulation that any holistic notion of healthy, active ageing can be realised.

Any development of this *Theory of Ageing Actively* should include the focus of national planning and be based on an 'inclusive' model of leisure and social policy development. While this Theory will, ultimately, promote the interests of the general public, it should more especially focus on an advancement on the interests of the ageing population. It should also encourage each older person to develop his or her own *work-to-leisure transition plan* designed and managed either by herself or himself, or in conjunction with leisure/recreation planners. That plan could usefully include the ideas and recommendations identified in this research, with any development phase weaving the Theory of Ageing Actively into the process of ageing in a caring community.

Finally, this research project has been both challenging and rewarding. It has challenged the way that I view the world of the ageing population, and has reinforced my original belief that the ageing population, as a group, have a vital part to play in the promotion of a balanced, healthy society for everyone in the future.

My lasting observation of the ageing population over the period of my research has been that there exists enthusiasm for positive, active ageing. Collectively, the sample that I interviewed was energetic, witty and intelligent; evidently, they had taken the advice of the maxim:

*If you think old age is catching up on you,
walk a little faster!*

PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH STATEMENT

An objective of this research is to produce something that will be practically useful for the community. It is envisaged, therefore, that this research will:

advance social knowledge to the future benefit of members of the ageing population, the community, and leisure research and theory.

This research will embody the following principles:

- ① interviews will be conducted in a professional manner - at all times treating the research respondents fairly, respectfully and with due consideration of their personal circumstances and needs;
- ② the researcher will, at all times, maintain the confidentiality of the research respondents - from initial contact to final research write-up;
- ③ research respondents will be fully informed of the nature, scope and intended application of the research - before the commencement of interviews;
- ④ research respondents will be informed that their interview will be audio-taped, and that it will be listened to and transcribed by the researcher alone; the audio-tapes will then be erased;
- ⑤ research respondents will be able to withdraw from the research process at any stage and request to have their information deleted and/or amended at any time prior to the final write-up; and
- ⑥ the researcher will respect the privacy of the research respondents and will exercise professional judgement when determining the appropriateness of including information of a private or sensitive nature.

CONSENT FORM

Research Project:

AGEING AND LEISURE

The researcher has told me that this research is designed to produce something that will be practically useful for the community.

I have also been told that the main aim of the research is to:

advance social knowledge to the future benefit of members of the ageing population, the community, and leisure research and theory.

I have read and understand the following.

All interviews will be conducted in a professional, open manner - at all times treating me in a fair and respectful manner, and with due consideration being given to my personal circumstances and needs.

The researcher will, at all times, respect my privacy.

The researcher will, at all times, maintain my confidentiality.

I have been fully informed of the nature, scope and intended application of the research - before the commencement of any interviews.

I have also been informed that my interview will be audio-taped, and that it will be listened to and transcribed (in an edited version) by the researcher alone, following which the audio-tapes will be erased.

I am fully aware that I can withdraw from the research process at any stage, and that I can have the information I give deleted or amended at any time prior to the final write-up.

The researcher will exercise professional judgement when determining the appropriateness of including any information of a sensitive nature.

I _____ have read, and discussed the research project with the researcher, and I am satisfied that he will conduct the research in a professional and open manner. I therefore give my consent to being part of the project.

Signed: _____

Counter-Signed: _____

Mark Quinlivan
Masters Thesis Researcher

Date: _____

July 1995

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

To Potential Interview Respondents

Mark Quinlivan is undertaking research toward the completion of his Master of Arts Thesis.

The title of his research Thesis is: *Ageing and Leisure*.

This letter is to support this research project and introduce Mark to you
- I trust that you will be able to assist him in the completion of his Thesis.

Allan Laidler
Research Supervisor
Recreation and Leisure Studies

AGEING POPULATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Final Working Copy

1 ⇨ LEISURE ACTIVITY [Questions 1-5 of 9] Page: 1 of 2

⇒ NOTE: need for a *soft introduction* to set the scene**Question Base: LEISURE ACTIVITY****(I want to start with some general questions about your leisure activity by focusing on the things that you enjoy doing with your time)**

- Q. 1 *What are the sorts of things that you enjoy doing with your time?*
 F/O 1.1 What leisure activity do you enjoy most?
 F/O 1.2 What is it you like most about your preferred leisure activity?
 F/O 1.3 How often do you involve yourself in your most enjoyed leisure activity?
 F/O 1.4 What influence do your personal opinions and beliefs have on your leisure activity?

Question Base: LEISURE WANTS AND NEEDS

- Q. 2 *What leisure wants and needs do you have?*
 F/O 2.1 Are your leisure wants and needs currently being met?
 F/O 2.2 What motivates you to get involved, and to maintain your involvement, in leisure activity?
 F/O 2.3 How have your leisure wants and needs changed over time?

Question Base: LEISURE COMPANIONS**(I want to hear about who you choose to spend your leisure time/activity with - that is, to find out who are your leisure companions)**

- Q. 3 *A person's choice of leisure companions could be a very important factor in whether or not they enjoy their leisure activity. Do you prefer to share your leisure time and activities with others, and why?*
 F/O 3.1 Who do you usually share your leisure activity with, and how do you choose that person or people?
 F/O 3.2 Would you continue to be involved in your preferred leisure activity if your chosen leisure companions were not also doing it?

Question Base: GENERAL FEELINGS (SATISFACTION) AROUND LEISURE ACTIVITY

- Q. 4 *In your leisure, is feeling good about what you are doing important to you?*
 F/O 4.1 Have you ever felt, or do you ever feel, excited about what you do?
 F/O 4.2 Do you think that you are competitive?
 F/O 4.3 Has this changed over time?
 F/O 4.4 Are you more likely now to be involved in competitive leisure activity?

Question Base: TIME AND LEISURE

- Q. 5 *You sometimes hear people say that they have no time for leisure! You told me earlier that you enjoy What affect does time have on your involvement in?*
 F/O 5.1 For older people, generally, do you think that the availability of time affects their leisure activity?
 F/O 5.2 Do you timetable your leisure activity? (If so, why? If not, why not?)

**Question Base: LEISURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE
- AND THEIR USAGE**

- Q. 6 *How much of your leisure is taken at home?*
 F/O 6.1 How important is it for you to be involved in leisure activity away from your home?
 F/O 6.2 Many people use leisure services and facilities other than their own when involved in leisure activity. What leisure services and facilities do you most use when involved in leisure activity?
 F/O 6.3 When you use leisure services and facilities do you think that they are planned, designed and managed to meet your particular leisure activity needs?
 F/O 6.4 Do you think that those leisure services and facilities are sufficient in number, and of an adequate standard, to meet the various leisure activity requirements of the ageing population? (How do you know that?)
 F/O 6.5 What else do you think could be provided that you would find worthwhile?

Question Base: DISENGAGEMENT (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

- Q. 7 *Have you ever stopped taking part in leisure activity outside of your home? (If yes, why? If no, why not?).*
 F/O 7.1 Do you think that this will ever change? (Why? Why not?)

Question Base: LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS

- Q. 8 *What do you think is a Leisure Policy-Maker?*
 F/O 8.1 If the role of a Leisure Policy-Maker (at central and local Government levels and in the private sector) is to *make leisure-focused policy*, then do you think that they are currently doing a good job?
 F/O 8.2 What examples are you aware of that the efforts of Leisure Policy-Makers are meeting the leisure needs and requirements of the ageing population?
 F/O 8.3 How should Leisure Policy-Makers find out about the leisure needs and requirements of the ageing population?
 F/O 8.4 What could the Leisure Policy-Makers do better or differently in respect to meeting the leisure needs of an ageing population?

Question Base: CHANGE OPTION

- Q. 9 *If there was one thing that you could change in respect to your own leisure activity, what would it be?*

AGEING POPULATION INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

3 ⇨

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

[Questions 1-6 of 6]

Page: 1 of 1

FINALLY SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU!

Question Base: AGE

Q. 1 *What age will you be next birthday?*

Question Base: ECONOMIC IMPACT

Q. 2 *How financially comfortable do you think you are?*

F/O 2.1 Does the financial cost of becoming involved in leisure activities affect your being able to take part?

F/O 2.2 Does financial cost influence what you do for leisure activity?

Question Base: MOBILITY

Q. 3 *When you go out, do you usually go by:*

- car:	Your Own <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Not By Car <input type="checkbox"/>
- public transport:	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/>	Never <input type="checkbox"/>
- walk:	Often <input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/>	Never <input type="checkbox"/>

F/O 3.1 Do you drive? Yes No

F/O 3.2 Do you have any problems with getting:

- out of the house?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- physically mobile?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Question Base: ACCOMMODATION

⇨ **NOTE:** **ask if the interview is not being held in the respondent's own home**

Q. 4 *Please describe for me your current living situation?*

F/O 4.1 Where do you usually live? (e.g. high-rise/bungalow/large house/unit - State/private - mortgage-free...)

Question Base: FAMILY INFLUENCE IN LEISURE TAKING

Q. 5 *What influence does family have on your rate or level of leisure activity involvement?*

Question Base: PAST LEISURE ACTIVITY INVOLVEMENT
(designed to help me develop a short personal leisure history of you)

⇨ IF NOT ALREADY CLEARLY IDENTIFIED ⇨

Q. 6 *Could you please tell me a little more about the leisure activities that you have been involved with (including: the Arts, recreation, sport, holidays, dream-time, etc.) in the past?*

F/O 6.1 Which leisure activity - in the past - was your favourite, and why?

* Thank you for all your answers

* Is there anything that you would like to add?

⇨ **Finally, are there any questions that you would like to ask me?**

source: principally adapted from A.J. Veal: RESEARCH METHODS FOR LEISURE AND TOURISM (1992); also including aspects of research design from Louise H. Kidder: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL RELATIONS (1981) and Alison Froggatt: FAMILY WORK WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE (1990)

LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Final Working Copy

1 ⇨

LEISURE ACTIVITY

[Questions 1-3 of 3]

Page: 1 of 1

THE FOCUS OF THESE QUESTIONS IS IN THREE PARTS - THE FIRST LOOKS AT SOME OF YOUR VIEWS AND FEELINGS ABOUT LEISURE; THE SECOND LOOKS AT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF, AND VIEWS ABOUT, THE AGEING POPULATION AND LEISURE; AND THE THIRD LOOKS AT YOUR PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Question Base: LEISURE ACTIVITY

(I want to start with some general questions about your leisure activity by focusing on the things that you enjoy doing with your time)

- Q. 1 *What are the sorts of things that you enjoy doing with your time?*
 F/O 1.1 What leisure activity do you enjoy most?
 F/O 1.2 What is it you like most about your preferred leisure activity?
 F/O 1.3 How often do you involve yourself in your most enjoyed leisure activity?
 F/O 1.4 What influence do your personal opinions and beliefs have on your leisure activity?

Question Base: LEISURE COMPANIONS

(I want to hear about who you choose to spend your leisure time/activity with - that is, to find out who are your leisure companions)

- Q. 2 *A person's choice of leisure companions could be a very important factor in whether or not they enjoy their leisure activity. Do you prefer to share your leisure time and activities with others, and why?*
 F/O 2.1 Who do you usually share your leisure activity with, and how do you choose that person or people?
 F/O 2.2 Would you continue to be involved in your preferred leisure activity if your chosen leisure companions were not also doing it?

Question Base: GENERAL FEELINGS (SATISFACTION) AROUND LEISURE ACTIVITY

- Q. 3 *In your leisure, is feeling good about what you are doing important to you?*
 F/O 3.1 Have you ever felt, or do you ever feel, excited about what you do?
 F/O 3.2 Do you think that you are competitive?
 F/O 3.3 Has this changed over time?
 F/O 3.4 Are you more likely now to be involved in competitive leisure activity?

LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

2 ⇨

WANTS, NEEDS and SATISFACTION

[Questions 1-3 of 3]

Page: 1 of 1

(of older people from a Leisure Policy-Maker's perspective)

Question Base: LEISURE WANTS AND NEEDS

- Q. 1 *What, in your view, are the main leisure wants and needs that older people have?*
- F/O 1.1 Do you feel that they are currently being met?
- F/O 1.2 Do you think that older people are given a choice in respect to how their leisure requirements are met?
- F/O 1.3 What do you think motivates older people to get involved, and to stay involved, in leisure activity?
- F/O 1.4 How, in your view, have older people's leisure wants and needs changed over time?

Question Base: SATISFACTION IN RELATION TO LEISURE ACTIVITY

- Q. 2 *Do you feel that older people derive satisfaction from participating in leisure activity?*
- F/O 2.1 In what way do you think the ease of access to leisure services and facilities contributes to the participation rate and level of older people?
- F/O 2.2 Do you think that ease of access to leisure services and facilities adds to older people's likely level of satisfaction. I would like to you to consider this on two levels, older people's:
- i. ease of access to aged person groups that are involved in any given leisure activities?
 - ii. ease of physical access by older people to services and facilities?

Question Base: DISENGAGEMENT (RE-ENGAGEMENT)

- Q. 3 *In your experience, are you aware of a time when older people tend to stop taking part in leisure activity outside of their own home?*
- F/O 3.1 Should this be resisted?
- F/O 3.2 What can, or should, be done to reduce the likelihood of this happening?

LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

3 ⇨

TIME AND ACCESS

[Questions 1-2 of 2]

Page: 1 of 1

(in respect to older people's leisure involvement)

Question Base: TIME AND LEISURE (AND ITS IMPACT ON OLDER PEOPLE)

Q. 1 *You sometimes hear people say that they have no time for leisure!
What affect do you think time has on older people's involvement
in leisure activity?*

F/O 1.1 In your experience, do you think that older people timetable their
leisure activity?

**Question Base: LEISURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR
OLDER PEOPLE - AND THEIR USAGE**

Q. 2 *Many people use services and facilities other than their own when
involved in leisure activity. How much of older people's leisure,
do you think, is taken in their own home?*

F/O 2.1 How important do you think it is for older people to be involved
in leisure activity that takes them away from their home?

F/O 2.2 How well do you think out-of-home leisure services and facilities
for older people are planned for, designed and managed?

F/O 2.3 Noting that New Zealand's population is ageing rapidly, do you
think that existing leisure services and facilities are sufficient in
number, and of an adequate standard, to meet the various leisure
activity requirements of that group? (How do you know that?)

F/O 2.4 What else do you think could be provided that would help meet
the leisure needs of an ageing population?

Question Base: LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS - ROLE DEFINITION
(In respect to the leisure needs of an ageing population)

- Q. 1 *What role should Leisure Policy-Makers have in respect to New Zealand's ageing population?*
- F/O 1.1 *If one of the main roles of Leisure Policy-Makers is to make leisure-focused policy, then do you think that they are currently doing a good job?*
- F/O 1.2 *What examples are you aware of that demonstrate the efforts of Leisure Policy-Makers are meeting the leisure needs and requirements of the ageing population?*
- F/O 1.3 *How should Leisure Policy-Makers find out about the leisure needs and requirements of the ageing population?*

Question Base: LEISURE POLICY-MAKERS - THE CHANGE OPTION

- Q. 2 *How does who you are influence the way that you view the leisure needs of an ageing population?*
- F/O 2.1 *How possible is it for Leisure Policy-Makers to influence the way in which the leisure needs of an ageing population are met?*
- F/O 2.2 *What could Leisure Policy-Makers do better or differently in respect to meeting the leisure needs of an ageing population?*

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- iv. ***Wellingtonians enjoy better than average health, says report***
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- i. ***Dunedinites mostly couch potatoes***
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