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THE ROLE OF TELEVISION IN THE LIFE
OF THE AGED PERSON.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1968
Speech

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THE ROLE OF TELEVISION IN THE LIFE OF

THE AGED PERSON

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * * * *

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CHAPTER I

THE FOCUS UPON THE AGED PERSON

The aged person is representative of an increasingly large and significant segment of our society and, as such, would seem to merit the focus of attention reflected in this report. Within this segment of our society are many highly differentiated individuals with a tremendous variety of behavioral patterns. This report centers upon a specific behavioral pattern, the perception and use of television by the aged person. While the study is directed primarily toward a specific behavioral pattern, it is recognized that the total thrust of any effort to understand a given factor operative in the life of the aged person must include a global approach, reflecting sensitivity to the broad context of the personal and social variables affecting the life and activity of this person.

The Aged Person in Our Society

The number of aged persons in the United States of America has increased considerably. The percentage increase of persons sixty-five years and older has more than doubled in this century. This segment represented 4.1 percent of the population in 1900 and, in 1965, represented 9.4 percent of the population. Within that same period of time, the total number increased six fold, from three million to more than eighteen million. Projections have indicated that within the next twenty
years the older population will have increased almost 40 percent to a total number of twenty-five million persons.¹

Besides the total number of aged persons, there are other significant social and personal factors to be considered. Increased longevity has placed many of the older persons several generations beyond the social and cultural milieu dominant at the time their prevailing attitudes and interests were established. This presents serious problems for many in their effort to communicate with the people of the present generation. The role of elder counselor which aged persons frequently enjoyed three and four generations ago has been changed. For the most part their role is poorly defined and often seems to approach a nonentity position or, at least, one of being ignored or placed on the shelf. Many of the aged have outlived their companions and find it difficult to establish new social contacts.

The ravaging effects of disease and trauma have left many of the aged persons with sensory impairments and limitations upon their mobility. This provides a curtailment of activity and social involvement and tends to isolate the aged person.

From an economic standpoint, the aged persons represent an estimated forty billion dollar consumer market. This amount indicates the income of this segment of the population and almost all income is spent for current expenditures, with the heaviest outlays for housing and household operations, food purchases and transportation. Thirty-two

percent of the aggregate money income represents earnings from work. Reflecting some of the adverse economic conditions possible, it may be pointed out that, according to government definitions, thirty-one percent of these people live in poverty. Forty-five percent live in unsuitable housing. It is estimated that 4.5 million housing units are needed to overcome the present shortages.\(^2\)

While the personal, social and economic factors referred to are applied quite generally to the aged persons as a class, they are experienced and interpreted in a highly individualistic manner by the aged persons. The range of adaptive capacity is tremendous. The one polar extreme is represented by the individual who has faced severe handicaps and has been able to maintain a healthy attitude and outlook upon life. The other extreme may be characterized by the person who has adhered to a rigid pattern of adjustment to the point of utter inappropriateness and has given up. Between these two extremes are great individual variations.

### Recognition of and Concern for the Aged Person

Within recent years considerable attention has been given to the physical, psychological and sociological factors associated with the aging process. The great expansion in the fields of geriatrics and gerontology would attest to this. Recognition of the broadening scope of the problems of the aged is reflected in the White House Conference on Aging, held in 1961.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 4-8.
The nature of this conference is reflected in an explanatory statement:

From Jan. 9 to 12, 1961, more than 2,500 delegates met in Washington and participated in this forum. Behind them lay nearly two years of preconference study and analysis by thousands of professional and lay persons in the states and communities. The delegates represented 53 states and territories, and more than 300 national voluntary organizations interested in or active in the field of aging.3

With the problems cited for the aged persons being quite numerous, it is quite natural that we find considerable variation in the approaches to these problems by the different disciplines of study and research. In an effort designed to formulate a theory of leisure for social gerontology, Max Kaplan expressed the diversity and a classification in this manner:

The new interest in the welfare of America's aging and retired population divides itself into two general areas. By far the larger share of attention has to do with issues of health, economic welfare, housing, and other social and medical aspects. Less attention has been given to the content or consequences of longer and healthier life, i.e., the meaning of the "summation," the "golden age," the "contemplative age," or whatever we care to name this qualitatively new American, chronological increment.4

This study is related to the issues raised in the second group referred to by Kaplan. The concern has been with the content and the meaning of the life of the aged person. Although there is frequent usage of the concept of leisure in social gerontology, this term was not


employed in the structuring of the approach to the problem. The lack of a uniform theory or definition and the question of its applicability to the subjects of this study led to its exclusion.

The very broad and, undoubtedly, more unwieldy concepts of time and time usage were posited as basic to the approach and structuring of the problem. Time is the greatest commodity of the aged person. When there was an expression of appreciation for the time given for an interview, the subjects of the study were almost unanimous in their reaction that they have more time than anything else.

Time may be construed as an ambiguous or nonstructured potential and the particular use of time by the individual may then be regarded as the projection of his needs, his interests and his attitudes. The analogy may be cited, but perhaps not pressed to extremes, of time constituting a huge Rorschach inkblot and the individual's selection of and involvement in time-using activities being the projection of his unique personal needs, his interests and attitudes.

Some portions of time are quite naturally claimed by various routines, especially those associated with eating and sleeping. However, even here there is evidence of selectivity. For example, the decision of a retiree to give up his or her home and abandon housekeeping and enter the life of a member of a senior citizen community represents a selection of the security provided by the routinism of community living. In addition to the time claimed by externally applied routines, there still remains a considerable amount of uncommitted time. The total use of time and the selection of activities for the use of time reflect the investiture of content and meaning for the individual's life.
Television and the Aged Person

This study centers upon one specific activity, namely, television viewing by the aged person. However, it is also recognized that the study of a specific activity would be meaningless apart from the context of the individual's total use of time and the selection of all of his time-using activities. The selection of television viewing for this study was determined on the basis of the following assumptions: (1) it is one of the activities making the greatest claim upon the time of the aged person; (2) it lends itself very readily for use because of its accessibility; and (3) it allows for some selectivity because of the various programs provided.

Additional reasons for the selection of television for this study may be cited. While there have been studies which have provided insights into the use of television by other age groups, we have relatively little information about such use by aged persons. Illustrative of the more intensive studies of a specific age group are the ones centering on children and television by Paul Witty in the Chicago area, by Wilbur Schramm in selected communities in the United States and Canada, and by Hilda J. Himmelweit in Great Britain. There are some studies which deal generally with television and the aged person and there are some which provide information on the amount of television viewing by aged persons. These studies will be cited, in appropriate context, later in this report.

With the number of hours in the work week decreasing here in the United States and the onset of retirement coming earlier in life, it is quite natural that more persons will be confronted with a greater amount
of uncommitted time. It is hoped that the results of this study, while perhaps not having direct applicability, may have some bearing upon the use of that uncommitted time.

It is within the framework of this rationale which has been presented that this study was conceived and attention is now directed to the design of the research which was undertaken.
CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

The goals which were established suggested the need for an intensive study of a select number of aged persons and for obtaining information in greater detail from the individuals selected. The study is essentially a descriptive one and it is recognized that limitations are imposed upon generalizations for the general class of aged persons in our population. The effort was made to determine idiosyncratic characteristics of the individual, to relate these to general principles of human behavior, and to derive abstractions or generalizations within the limits imposed by the sample of subjects studied.

Subjects of the Study

Retired persons who are residents of a senior citizen city were selected as the subjects of the study, and all further references will be to this group. It was recognized that this is an atypical group within the general class of aged persons. They are to be distinguished from those aged persons who are still maintaining their own homes. They may be regarded as more dependent than the latter group. However, this has to be qualified in individual cases when their reasons for entering a senior city become known. The senior city residents are on the higher end of the age range. The vast majority are living alone, having outlived their spouses.
The selection of these subjects provided certain advantages. Basic to the approach to this study was the belief that the role of television in the life of the aged person must be sought within the context of the person's total psychological and social environment. With all of the field work concentrated in one locale, and this involving very frequent visits extended over a six-month period, it was possible to gain insights and check insights about the total environment. This allowed opportunity for informal contacts with all levels of employees and for additional contact with persons whose acquaintance had been established during the course of the interviews.

The fact that all of the subjects are residents of the same community, with a uniformity in living accommodations and routine, provided an additional advantage. This tends to provide certain constants in the physical and social environment, making any behavioral comparisons more meaningful. It may also be added that having all subjects in one locale facilitated arrangements for the interviewing which was all done by the writer.

Steps of the Study

Specific steps to implement the study were designed with the expectation that each step was to be instrumental for the next one and, taken together, they would allow for cross reference for final analysis and interpretation. After initial conferences with the officials of the senior city concerning the feasibility of the study, a situational analysis was undertaken. This involved a thorough examination of the
physical plant as well as casual contact with some of the residents in the private rooms, the hallways, the lounges, the dining room, and in the recreation areas.

Interviews were conducted, on an appointment basis, with the administrator, the social worker, the activities director, the chaplain, and the executive head of the welfare group responsible for the operation of the facility. This provided extensive information about the senior citizen community and its residents. The chaplain, the social worker, and the director of activities were most helpful because of their direct contact with the residents. The three are personally known by all of the residents and they, in turn, are able to refer to practically all of the residents by name. The complete files of the city were made available. This was extremely helpful. Each resident's file includes a personal appraisal by the social worker based on pre-admission interviews as well as notations by himself and other staff members about the individual's adjustment following admission. In addition, interviews were conducted with three residents. Their reactions to senior city life, their attitudes toward and involvement in various activities, and their use of television were included in the interview sessions.

The next step in the study was the preparation of a questionnaire. It was designed to elicit responses about the use of television, the extent of that use, reactions to liked and disliked programs and personalities and to educational television. Following a test of the questionnaire, the revised form was distributed among the residents considered capable of responding to it.
The final step of the field work was the interview schedule. Fifty residents were interviewed with the purpose of ascertaining the value of television in relation to other activities and how the use of television fits into the content and meaning of life for the individual.

The Situational Analysis

As indicated earlier, the initial effort in the study was devoted to a situational analysis. The interviews with the staff personnel were not highly structured; they were based on a general or topical outline. These topics included the following: a general description of life at senior city; activities and relative importance of these activities to residents; differences among residents in their social involvement; the relative importance of television and program and personality preferences of residents. During the course of the interview it was also possible to elicit staff members' attitudes toward the process of aging and about the needs and interests of aged persons.

This initial effort at situational analysis provided direction for the formulation and execution of the subsequent steps in the study. The description of the locale of the study, which now follows, is unquestionably the sum of all impressions gained throughout the study. There is a certain amount of circularity involved wherein initial perceptions and interpretations are checked and modified through increased exposure to the environment of these aged persons.

Lutheran Senior City, the facility involved in the study, is owned and operated by an organization representing Lutheran churches in welfare work in central Ohio. In spite of the denominational affiliation,
the percentage of Lutherans is less than half of the total protestant resident population. Of the 236 residents at the time of the study, 39.8 percent were Lutheran; 49.4 percent were other protestants; 5.6 percent had no religious affiliation; and 5.2 percent were Roman Catholic.

The buildings of the senior citizen community are ideally located in an attractive, scenic setting. A creek forms one boundary and a sizeable woods forms another boundary. The site is toward the eastern edge of Columbus, Ohio, a city with an estimated population of 573,280. The Columbus metropolitan area has an estimated population of 932,411, being served by one educational (UHF) and three commercial (VHF) television stations. Besides local programming, the program services of the three commercial television networks and also the educational television network are available for the viewer.

The facility, first opened for occupancy in 1964, is of modern design, planned as a city with nine different neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are connected by enclosed hallways. Four and a half neighborhoods are designated as health care areas and the remaining are referred to as residential areas. The provision of the health care area is considered a real advantage since a resident who becomes incapacitated need not leave the facility and can receive proper care. The health care areas have special "assist rails" in the hallways and nursing stations are at strategic locations.

Well-equipped and attractive lounges are located throughout the residential areas. Kitchenettes are located adjacent to the lounges to allow for light food storage and preparation. All meals are served in a main dining room which is operated on a shift basis to accommodate all of
the residents. If a resident is unable to come to the dining room or if he has special dietary needs, tray service is provided for him in his room. Within the past year, a questionnaire was distributed among the residents to determine their food preferences. Following that residents seemed to note improvement in the food provided for them. One still encounters individual criticism among residents that the food is not prepared the way old people like it.

All but ten of the residences are designed for single persons. Only half of the two-room suites for married couples were occupied. Staff members were not surprised at this. They felt that in the case of married couples the two could probably manage to maintain a home of their own.

A spacious chapel is centrally located and serves as a multipurpose room for religious services, a large lounge, and as a meeting room for the special programs presented for the residents. A barber shop, beauty parlor, library, large game room for shuffle board and card games, a general craft room, and a ceramics room are provided. There is no store within the city. However, residents may place orders for food, toilet articles, etc. at the service desk.

Residents provide their own furniture and carpeting for their rooms. There is staff supervision in the selection of furniture so that a fairly high standard of neatness and attractiveness is maintained. An adequate staff is maintained for weekly cleaning of all rooms. The general appearance of the entire city is neat and attractive. The residents speak very highly of the physical equipment and the manner in
which it is maintained. Many of the residents have telephones in their rooms. A special intercom system allows for instant two-way contact with each room from a central desk which is manned at all hours. Residents expressed genuine appreciation for this since they felt that they had instant access to assistance or help.

The admission procedure involves an application and, following the formal application, the social worker conducts interviews with the applicant and other members of his family. Information is thus obtained about the person's economic capability, his personal and social needs, and what his potential is for adequate adjustment to the senior city situation. Additional information is sought from the applicant's physician and pastor. The social worker compiles a résumé of the case and his recommendation is transmitted to an executive committee for review and final action. The resident pays an initial entrance fee and monthly rental thereafter.

Besides the staff required for cleaning and building maintenance, food services, nursing and medical care, there is an administrator, social worker, chaplain, and two persons in charge of activities. Regular worship services are provided on Sundays and the majority of the residents attend these. A Bible study group and a prayer group have weekly meetings. Special programs are provided, with musical groups, travelogues and guest speakers being most frequent. Bingo games are provided at regular times by different churches and have the best attendance of any special program. There are three discussion groups, with from ten to twenty persons involved on a not-too-regular basis in each group. An active ceramics program is provided and about twenty persons take part in
this, making items as gifts or for sale at the annual senior citizens sale in the fall of the year. Bus tours are arranged for residents to visit interesting historical sites. Volunteer drivers are recruited to provide transportation for shopping trips, or movies, or lunch downtown.

One of the most frequent complaints registered by residents is the feeling of isolation. They feel that the city is too remote from the downtown area. Bus service is provided but once a day and residents feel that limits them too much. They also say that taxi fares are too high. It is interesting to note that some of these complainants are incapable of boarding a vehicle without special assistance and thus wouldn't be able to take advantage of increased transportation services. Their complaints about physical isolation seem to reflect a more personal or social isolation.

There is a form of government for the senior city. A city council is elected, with each neighborhood having one representative. Council elects one of its group as mayor. Council meets once a month and is intended to serve as liaison between the administration and the residents. According to the director of activities, "it has been of tremendous help to us since the people feel free to make suggestions and bring grievances to their council representatives. The organization is being encouraged to help with the recreational programs." A monthly newspaper, The Voice of Senior City, is written and edited by residents.

The residents follow a rigid schedule. This is not only because of the institutional demands but since this provides them with something to look forward to and replace the routinism which characterized their
preretirement life. They do things together, in small friendship groups, going to meals together and attending special programs together. A good bit of visiting is done in the lounges, especially by the men. The women visit more in the individual rooms. Most of the television viewing is done in the rooms. In a few instances, where the person does not own a television set, viewing is done in the lounge. Each lounge is equipped with a good set. Occasionally small groups will arrange to watch television together and they'll have snacks to make it a viewing party. This usually occurs on Saturday nights. Some residents spend a considerable amount of time in individual activities, such as, crocheting, sewing, knitting, reading, and listening to record players.

The members of the staff are committed to an ideal of providing opportunities for residents to remain active and the program which they have planned is designed to do this. The chaplain expressed the ideal that the residents need to be involved in direct interaction with other persons, to keep alive socially. He expressed the ideal this way: "Leisure time use should go beyond mere activity for the sake of activity; it must be meaningful and, in my opinion, the most meaningful activity is that which keeps a person alive socially."

Within the limits of the resources and staff available, the program planned for the residents seems very adequate. Staff members deplore the indifference of many of the residents. There is an ambivalent attitude toward the role of television among staff members. There is the recognition of television being the most popular single activity for the majority of the residents and, at the same time, there is the feeling
that the residents should be challenged by more meaningful activities.
The director of activities expressed her reaction this way: "I sometimes
wish there were no TV because it provides such strong competition for our
programs. No, not really, television is a real blessing for these
people."

The evaluation made possible by the situational analysis proved
very helpful in the design and implementation of the subsequent steps of
the study. The next step was the design of a questionnaire and its
distribution among the senior city residents.
A questionnaire was developed to conduct a television survey among the senior city residents. The use of the questionnaire was projected with the expectation that information might thus be provided about the general and the unique patterns of television use. It was anticipated that the responses to the questionnaire would provide some useful cues for the more intensive investigation planned for the interviews and would also provide a cross reference on the information obtained by means of the interviews. While there are qualifications to be noted about the use of the questionnaire, particularly as applied to the age group of this study, it is felt that the objectives set for this step of the study were attained.

The design of the questionnaire included the following: (1) a preliminary draft incorporating rubrics considered essential to obtain the desired data; (2) checking the form and content of the questionnaire with senior city staff persons who had just recently completed a food service survey; (3) testing a second version of the questionnaire with a panel of three residents; and (4) the construction of a final, revised form which was used in the survey.

The form of the three-page questionnaire used in the survey included the following items: (1) an explanatory statement about the
survey; (2) spaces for inclusion of name, age, marital status, education, prior residence, preretirement occupation, and religious affiliation; (3) blanks for listing "my favorite TV personalities," "TV personalities I dislike"; (4) spaces for providing the average number of hours of TV viewing Monday through Friday, on Saturday, on Sunday; (5) a list of a week's TV programs with instructions to check programs "watched fairly regularly"; and (6) space provided for indicating viewing of any programs on the local educational television station.¹

It was considered essential that the questionnaire be simple in design and that it would require minimal effort for completion. Senior city staff members indicated that any forms, such as the ones required by Medicare, are regarded as quite formidable by most of the residents and practically impossible for some of them. Many of these aged persons have not been confronted with the necessity of completing forms and they are quite mystified by the demands. There also seems to be an attitude on the part of some that they have escaped the demands of organizational life and should not be bothered with such matters.

Because of the concern for simplicity and ease of completion, it was decided to rely upon recognition, by means of a listing of television programs, rather than upon recall, requiring insertion of programs "watched fairly regularly." This was based upon the advice of senior city staff members and their experience with the food service questionnaire. It was also based upon the experience gained by the writer in the exploratory interviews with residents. It was found that residents had

¹The questionnaire form is included in the Appendix.
difficulty recalling the names of television programs but, when prompted
with program names, recognized many more which they watch quite regu-
larly. There was, however, a negative factor in listing all of the
programs. The listing comprised almost two pages of the form and, no
doubt, proved to be too formidable for some of the respondents. Some of
them completed the first page but left the other two pages, including the
program listing, blank. It is still the judgment of the writer that
listings requiring simple check marks are superior to completions
requiring written insertions in a questionnaire form designed for use by
aged persons.

The Questionnaire Sample

The rubric including the names of television programs was based
upon newspaper listings of programs for the third week of May, 1967, the
time when the questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were
distributed under the supervision of the director of activities. She is
highly regarded by the residents and it was felt that her explanation of
the survey and appeal for cooperation, as the residents assembled in the
dining room, would elicit greater response than if this were to have been
done by the writer.

Most of the questionnaires were distributed among the residents
in the dining room. They were also made available in the office of the
director of activities for those who did not obtain one during the initial
distribution. They were not distributed among residents considered
incapable of completing the items. This has reference to a number of
persons in the health care areas. Assistance was offered to anyone
desiring to participate in the survey but who, because of physical handicap, would not be able to complete the items in the questionnaire. In a few cases such assistance was given. There were 170 questionnaires distributed. Ten days were allowed to obtain as many returns as possible. Of the 101 questionnaires which were returned, 85 proved to be useful in the final tabulation. The ones not used were incomplete or, as in several cases, referred to the television viewing of a couple rather than to that of an individual.

Of the 85 questionnaires used in the final tabulation, 19 were returns by men and 66 were returns by women. This represents a male-female distribution of 22 and 78 percent, compared with the senior city population distribution of 23 and 77 percent. The median age for the sample was 81 years, identical with the median for the population. The comparison between the percentage distribution of religious affiliation within the sample and that of the population is as follows: Lutheran, 30 for sample, 40 for population; other protestants, 65 for sample, 50 for population; Roman Catholic, 4 for sample, 5 for population; and, no affiliation, 1 for sample, 5 for population.

This comparison was made since it was possible to obtain the information about the three variables within the senior city population. There is, however, no claim established for the representativeness of the sample. There was a fifty percent return of useful questionnaires and this undoubtedly reflects a considerable amount of cooperativeness bias. At the outset, limited objectives were established for the use of the questionnaire. Its use was conceived as largely instrumental for the
research planned in connection with the interviews. It is with a recognition of this limited use that the data obtained by means of the questionnaires are now presented.

The Results of the Survey

The specific topics for the presentation of the data are the following: the extent of television viewing; program selection in terms of "programs watched fairly regularly"; likes and dislikes with respect to television programs; and likes and dislikes with respect to television personalities.

Extent of Television Viewing

The rubric dealing with the extent of television viewing allowed the respondents to indicate the number of hours they watched television, on the average, per day, Monday through Friday, on Saturday, and on Sunday. The results are given in Table 1.

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<th>MEAN NUMBER OF HOURS OF TELEVISION VIEWING PER DAY</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon-Fri</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>
According to the mean scores presented, there is not much variation between male and female respondents in the amount of television viewing Monday through Friday. There is, however, a greater difference in the amount of viewing done on Saturday and Sunday. The greater preference for sports telecasts by men as compared to women probably accounts for this difference, especially on Saturday when considerable time is devoted to sports.

It is important to note that the data given in Table 1 are based upon the time an individual spends viewing television. Thus comparison cannot be made with data where the reference is to the extent a television set may be used in a household or in a family situation. There is relatively little data with which direct comparison can be made. A recent study, based upon interviews with 100 pensioners in Bristol, England and 100 pensioners in New Orleans, Louisiana, is somewhat pertinent. It provides the general observation that about one-fourth of the United States pensioners watched television more than four hours per day. In the case of the British pensioners the same held true for about one-fourth of the 40 who owned television sets.²

A study conducted by means of questionnaire and interview in the metropolitan Columbus, Ohio area, in April, 1959, provides a somewhat higher average hours per day of television viewing. For males, 71 years and older, an average hours per day on weekdays is given as 4.15 hours; for females within the same age group, the figure given is 4.56. For the age group, 56 to 70 years, males averaged 2.98 hours per day and females

²Howard E. Bracey, In Retirement, pp. 141-142.
averaged 4.46 hours per day. The age range of the senior city sample was 52 to 96, making a direct comparison impossible. Information about other demographic variables would be necessary if any direct comparison were to be made.

Some variation in the amount of television viewing, at least within groups of the sample, is to be noted. Comparisons were made on the basis of demographic variables which were provided by the respondents. Occupational and educational breakdowns were carried out and are presented.

The data concerning occupation prior to retirement were tabulated according to the categories of professional, skilled and non-skilled. Thirteen professional persons provided a mean number of hours of television viewing per day, Monday through Friday, of 2.15 hours, compared with 53 skilled and non-skilled persons who provided an average of 4.10 hours per day. Among the professional persons, 8 respondents were classified as communicators, and their mean number of hours was 2.06. No great difference is indicated on the basis of the educational variable. Sixteen persons, with college education, had a mean number of hours of 3.21, while 50 respondents, having high school education or less, had a mean number of hours of 3.66.

It is significant to note that amount of television viewing time has been dealt with in terms of mean scores. These scores do not reflect the tremendous amount of individual variation that exists. For the

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3Howard E. Hopf, "Characteristics and Program Preferences of Television Listeners in Columbus, Ohio, April, 1959" (unpublished study, Ohio State University, 1959), p. 5.
senior city sample, the range extended from zero hours per day, on a Saturday or Sunday, to twelve hours per day. For the purposes of this study this variation has great significance. It would seem to point to highly unique patterns of television viewing by aged persons. There will be further discussion about the amount of television viewing in connection with the presentation of the data obtained by means of the interviews.

Program Selection

In order to provide an index of program selection, a check list of a week's television programs was provided, with the instructions for respondents to indicate "programs watched fairly regularly." The tabulations were made in terms of the number of times a program was checked by respondents, and the various programs were then arranged into a rank order listing from most frequently to least frequently watched programs. The results, indicating the ten highest ranked programs, are presented in Table 2.

The rank order list for the entire sample is quite naturally very closely related with the list for females, reflecting the disproportionate representation of women in the senior city population. The very high rating assigned to the Lawrence Welk program, as well as the unanimous choice of this program by males and females, are of real significance. Other indexes, to be considered later, place this same program at a high level of choice for aged persons.

It should be noted that the data of Table 2 are to be interpreted as reflecting program selection and not necessarily indicative of program
TABLE 2
RANK ORDER OF TELEVISION PROGRAMS WATCHED FAIRLY REGULARLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Sample (85)a</th>
<th>Male (19)</th>
<th>Female (66)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk (79)b</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk (17)</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hollywood Pal. (50)</td>
<td>Gleason (10)</td>
<td>Hollywood Pal. (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bell Tel. Hr. (49)</td>
<td>Traffic Court (10)</td>
<td>Bell Tel. Hr. (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (48)</td>
<td>To Tell Truth (9)</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lassie (44)</td>
<td>Mid. Hayride (9)</td>
<td>Andy Griffith (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Andy Griffith (44)</td>
<td>Hollywood Pal. (9)</td>
<td>Three Sons (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gleason (44)</td>
<td>Bell Tel. Hr. (9)</td>
<td>Lassie (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>To Tell Truth (43)</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (9)</td>
<td>Gleason (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>House Party (41)</td>
<td>Lassie (9)</td>
<td>To Tell Truth (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Meet Press (40)</td>
<td>Baseball (8)</td>
<td>Meet Press (32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Indicates number of respondents.

b Indicates number of check marks for program.

Preference. Program selection is dependent upon the time when the program is presented, the time a person feels he has available for television viewing, and upon the needs and interests of the person who, at a given moment, decides to watch television.

Program Preferences

In an effort to establish an index of program preference, a rubric was provided in the questionnaire to allow respondents to express their likes and dislikes with respect to television programs. Five spaces were provided for the inclusion of names of television programs under each of the two headings: "My Favorite TV Programs"; and "TV Programs I Do Not Care To Watch." The tabulation was made in terms of the number of times a program was named by respondents. In several instances, general categories were listed, rather than specific program
names. The results, indicating the ten highest ranked favorite programs, are presented in Table 3. The ranking of the disliked programs is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 3

RANK ORDER OF FAVORITE PROGRAMS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Male (16)a</th>
<th>Female (52)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8)b</td>
<td>(25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk</td>
<td>As World Turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Red Skelton</td>
<td>House Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To Tell Truth</td>
<td>Password</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bonanza</td>
<td>Today Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gunsmoke</td>
<td>Mike Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Daktari</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Walt Disney</td>
<td>Pat Boone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bob Hope</td>
<td>50-50 Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIndicates number of respondents.

bIndicates number of times program was named.

While there is some agreement shown with respect to several television programs, or program types, there is, in general, little agreement indicated among respondents on the matter of favorite television programs. In addition to the 10 highest ranked favorite programs, the 16 male respondents listed 34 other television programs; the 52 females listed 63 additional television programs. It is felt that this is again indicative of the highly unique patterns of program preference among aged persons. The high point of agreement seems to be reached with respect to the Lawrence Welk program.
TABLE 4
RANK ORDER OF DISLIKED PROGRAMS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Male (10)a</th>
<th>Female (36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Western shows (3)b</td>
<td>Western shows (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wild Wild West (3)</td>
<td>Smothers Brothers (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shows of violence (3)</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Twilight Zone (2)</td>
<td>Lucy (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Invaders (2)</td>
<td>Soap operas (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Batman (2)</td>
<td>Science Fiction (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>UNCLE (1)</td>
<td>Baseball (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (1)</td>
<td>War programs (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hollywood Palace (1)</td>
<td>Wild Wild West (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hogan's Heroes (1)</td>
<td>Batman (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIndicates number of respondents.

bIndicates number of times program was named.

There was a greater reluctance to name disliked programs than to name favorite programs. There is, again, relatively little agreement among the respondents about dislikes for television programs. In addition to the programs listed in Table 4, 10 male respondents named 12 other programs; the 36 females listed an additional 42 programs. It is interesting to note that the Lawrence Welk program was never listed as a disliked program.

Personality Preferences

Another index of preference was included in the questionnaire. This dealt with favorite and disliked television personalities. Four spaces for the inclusion of the names of television personalities were provided under each of the two headings: "My Favorite TV Personalities";
and "TV Personalities I Dislike." The tabulation was made in terms of the number of times the name of a television personality was included by respondents. The ten highest ranked favorite personalities are presented in Table 5. Table 6 includes the listing of disliked personalities.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Male (12)</th>
<th>Female (42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk (6)</td>
<td>Lawrence Welk (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Red Skelton (3)</td>
<td>Art Linkletter (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pat Boone (3)</td>
<td>Pat Boone (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lorne Green (3)</td>
<td>Perry Como (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pat Boone (2)</td>
<td>Mike Douglas (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Perry Como (2)</td>
<td>Andy Williams (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Walter Cronkite (2)</td>
<td>Red Skelton (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lowell Thomas (2)</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bing Crosby (2)</td>
<td>Lowell Thomas (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Andy Griffith (2)</td>
<td>Bing Crosby (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Indicates number of respondents.

*b* Indicates number of times personality was named.

In addition to the television personalities listed in Table 5, 12 males listed 15 other personalities; the 42 females listed 42 additional personalities. The high point of agreement is reached with respect to Lawrence Welk. It is also interesting to note that most of the favorite personalities which were included are not new arrivals to broadcasting or show business. Of the total list of favorite television personalities by men, only four are female personalities, and each of
these four received but one mention. One of these was not a direct reference to a female personality since it was a reference to a family series, The Nelsons.

TABLE 6
RANK ORDER OF DISLIKED TV PERSONALITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Male (4)a</th>
<th>Female (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (2)b</td>
<td>Jackie Gleason (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Merv Griffin (1)</td>
<td>Phyllis Diller (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Peter Gunn (1)</td>
<td>Ed Sullivan (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Joey Bishop (1)</td>
<td>Spook Beckman (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Donna Reed (1)</td>
<td>Red Skelton (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lucille Ball (1)</td>
<td>Smothers Brothers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dean Martin (1)</td>
<td>Lucille Ball (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Steve Allen (1)</td>
<td>Carol Burnett (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>John Daley (1)</td>
<td>Perry Como (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean Martin (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aIndicates number of respondents.
bIndicates number of times personality was named.

The number of respondents who completed the rubric pertaining to disliked television personalities is quite small and cannot be considered indicative of any general pattern for the senior city population. The data of Table 6 are presented, however, since it seems to point to a general pattern of reluctance to assume a critical stance with respect to television. While 54 persons were ready to name favorite television personalities, only 20 persons provided names of disliked personalities. The same trend was noted in connection with liked and disliked television programs. This phenomenon was pursued further in connection with the interviews and will be given further consideration in the report.
Educational Television

A question was included in the form to determine whether the respondents watched any programs on the local, educational television station. Only three women and one man stated they watched programs on the educational station. Of these four, none listed any programs watched fairly regularly. This low response seems to be corroborated by the information obtained by means of the interviews. While several persons expressed interest in educational television programs, they complained of not being able to get a clear signal from the educational station.

The questionnaire provided data and insights which, it is felt, resulted in the realization of the limited objectives which had been established for this phase of the study. There is the indication of a generally great dependence upon television in the total use of time by aged persons. There is great variability shown in this dependence upon television, suggesting highly individualistic patterns in the use of television. While a few general patterns emerge with respect to program selection, likes and dislikes of television programs and personalities, this same variability is again strongly suggested.

It would seem highly desirable to obtain more information about this variability and these individualistic patterns in the use of television. In an effort to attain this objective the interviewing phase of the study was undertaken.
CHAPTER IV

THE INTERVIEW

The model used for the interview phase of the study is the one presented by Merton, Fiske, and Kendall in the manual, The Focused Interview. While the model served as a general guide, there were what were considered necessary modifications in the implementation of the various steps of the study. These modifications may have been due to the unique social situation and the sample of persons studied and, it must be added, may also have been due to the idiosyncratic factors supplied by the writer who conducted the interviews.

Use of the Focused Interview

The focused interview is represented as unique and as having four distinguishing characteristics. These characteristics may be summarized in the following manner: (1) persons interviewed are known to have been involved in a particular situation; (2) the social scientist analyzes the hypothetically significant elements, patterns, processes and total structure of this situation; (3) on the basis of this content or situational analysis, an interview guide is developed; and (4) the interview is focused on subjective experiences of respondents to ascertain their definitions of the situation.1

1Robert K. Merton, Marjorie Fiske, and Patricia L. Kendall, The Focused Interview, pp. 3-4.
The inclusion of the questionnaire survey is, of course, outside of the recommendations of the model. However, it is felt that the data obtained by means of the questionnaire were quite valuable for the generation of ideas as hypotheses were being formulated and for the establishment of pertinent areas of inquiry to be pursued by means of the interview. The survey reduced the encumbrance of the interview with objective data collecting, leaving the interview sessions freer for the pursuit of subjective meanings. The survey data also made possible some cross-references with the information obtained by means of the interviews.

A set of hypotheses or propositions was constructed for direction in the development of an interview guide. This interview guide took the form of a work sheet which was used for the interviews. These hypotheses were spelled out in this manner:

1. Television has great importance to the aged person.
2. The importance of television is given unique interpretation, dependent upon the needs, interests and attitudes of the aged person.
3. The importance of television is related to the total use of time by the aged person, dependent upon his social involvement and participation in other activities.
4. The importance of television is related to certain behavioral characteristics accentuated in the aged person.

The work sheet used for the interviews was a general, three-page form, allowing for the insertion of personal data about the
respondent and for space to record interviewee responses to the major areas of inquiry.²

Shortly before an interview was to be conducted, the person's file was consulted and essential information taken from the file was recorded on the work sheet. The file for individual residents is quite complete, including a variety of information about the person. The file includes the person's application form, the social worker's appraisal, the pastor's reference, the physician's statement, statements of family members assuming financial responsibility, and other items which pertain to the adjustment of the individual to senior city living conditions.

It was possible to obtain, for the individual resident, data and information concerning demographic variables, personality makeup, social adjustment, physical handicaps or limitations, financial situation, familial relationships, and a listing of interests and activities.

The work sheet provided space for recording the respondent's likes and dislikes with respect to television programs and personalities and the amount of time which he devoted to television viewing. These responses were obtained on the basis of direct questioning, with the questions inserted at what was considered an opportune moment during the course of the interview. These data were desired in order that comparison might be made with that obtained by means of the questionnaire.

²The work sheet form is included in the Appendix.
Two pages of the work sheet listed areas of inquiry in topical form with sufficient space allotted so that the respondents' statements could be written down immediately. This procedure for recording the interview seemed to work out very satisfactorily. At the beginning of an interview session, explanations were provided about the nature of the study and that the information given would be treated confidentially. The desire was expressed that there be free and frank expression and that the whole experience would be a pleasant one for the respondent. When the first notations were made on the work sheet, there was a comment made indicating that this would be necessary to be able to retain the information provided by the interviewee.

The topical areas of inquiry can be arranged into two groups. The one group consisted of items intended to elicit responses providing insights into the respondent's personality makeup, his interests, needs and attitudes; the other group was intended to provide some indication of the respondent's use and evaluation of television. There was no rigid adherence to the order of the topical areas as provided in the work sheet. There were numerous digressions by the respondents. While this added considerably to the length of the interview, they were not generally discouraged since they provided information and insights about the respondent and aided in the interpretation of the data obtained. Digressions in the form of reminiscence were very common and frequently it became necessary to redirect these digressions to the focus of the interview.
Evaluation of the Focused Interview

There is strong emphasis placed upon the nondirective approach within the method of the focused interview and, in line with nondirective interviews generally, this is intended to maintain spontaneity of report. However, it is also recognized that at some stages in the focused interview it may be necessary to give more specific direction to the questions. The manual, The Focused Interview, provides the explanation:

In some instances it may be necessary for the interviewer to assume more control at later stages of the interview, if the criteria of specificity, range, depth and personal context are to be satisfied.3

It became necessary, however, to give more direction and structuring to questions when interviewing aged persons than advocated by the focused interview method. This proved to be necessary whenever the interview was intended to elicit a more specific reaction on the part of the respondent. Responses in the forms of cliches or vague generalities would persist in spite of restatements in the form of nondirective references. At times, a more direct question would seem to be in order and yielded good results. This problem of applying the methodology of the focused interview may be unique to the particular age group of this study.

A reaction which seems to relate to this problem is cited by Bracey, in connection with the interviews conducted with 200 pensioners. He points to one major difficulty in this type of investigation, by

3Merton, Fiske, and Kendall, The Focused Interview, p. 16.
saying: "... that people, especially old people, will often reply with less than the truth, if not with a downright lie, especially if they feel a need to draw an expression of sympathy or to 'dress the window.' 4

The general reaction that aged persons tend to falsify their responses is not shared by this writer. The impression was gained that the respondents seek candor on the part of the interviewer. At times, the nondirective references would be interpreted as something less than candor on the part of the interviewer or they would merely lead to confusion for the respondent. Concerning the use of nondirection in interviewing, the impression may also be registered that this approach is more of a frame of mind, or attitude, on the part of the interviewer, rather than a complete delineation of the modus operandi of interviewing.

**Interviewee Cooperation**

The interviews were arranged on an appointment basis and were all conducted in the privacy of the respondents' rooms. On the average, an interview required about one and a half hours. All of the fifty persons included in the sample for interviews responded favorably when requested to provide time for the interview. The experience was that these persons are most anxious to have contact with someone outside their limited environment. The acquaintances established during the interviews resulted in friendly recognition and informal conversation during subsequent encounters in the hallways or lounges.

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4Bracey, In Retirement, p. xv.
The aged person's sociability and readiness to receive the interviewer are referred to by Bracey, reflecting the experiences in connection with 200 interviews with pensioners in England and the United States. He states:

Indeed, in both countries, many pensioners welcomed the visits as reducing the tedium of the day; interviewers consumed many cups of tea (in Britain) and glasses of Coca Cola and iced-tea (in the United States).5

While this interviewer was not confronted with frequent offers of liquid repasts, a direct key to good rapport and informal conversation was the favorable response to many offers to look at family pictures.

The Interview Sample

The sample selected for the interviews consisted of thirty-two women and eighteen men. This represents a sixty-four and thirty-six female and male percentage distribution compared with the seventy-seven and twenty-three female and male percentage distribution for the senior city population. Since general sampling of the senior city population was not the primary concern, it was determined to increase the representation of males in the interest of accumulating a larger body of information about them.

The selection of the sample was guided by certain general criteria intended to provide a degree of heterogeneity. These criteria were based on the condition that the sample reflect an adequate range with respect to certain variables. An adequate range was sought with respect to the following: (1) amount of television viewing; (2) social

5Ibid., p. xv.
involvement and participation in other activities; and (3) educational and occupational background.

The units of the sample were selected in cooperation with the director of activities and the social worker. These two have direct contact with the residents and know them personally. The list of residents was reviewed in conference with these two staff members and selection was then made on the basis of satisfying the criteria which had been established. No reference was made to the list of persons who had completed questionnaires for the television survey. Based upon coincidence, thirty-three of the persons interviewed had also completed questionnaires for the survey. After the interviews had been completed, comparison was made between information obtained by means of the questionnaire and that obtained by means of the interview.

Some general characteristics of the interview sample are presented in Table 7. The two criteria, requiring range in social

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College</td>
<td>H.S. Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (32)</td>
<td>64-93</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (18)</td>
<td>56-88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (50)</td>
<td>56-93</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE
involvement and participation in other activities and in the amount of television viewing, were met by the combined judgment of the director of activities and the social worker.

Comparison of Interview and Questionnaire Data

A cross-reference was made by comparing the questionnaire data with the data obtained from the interviews concerning the amount of television viewing. The average daily, Monday through Friday, viewing was used. The amount of television viewing on Saturdays and Sundays seems to provide a less stable figure. This is probably due to other activities, as visits by family or friends and trips by the residents, being more frequent over the weekend and these tend to alter routine.

In the questionnaire, the respondent was asked to provide his estimate of average daily television viewing. When conducting the interviews, a more deliberate effort was made to arrive at a correct figure. The respondent was asked what television programs he usually watched daily, Monday through Friday, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. It was felt that this review of time segments of the day might make the recall more accurate. Based on the respondent's mention of television programs, the interviewer quickly calculated the time which would be involved and then recorded an average amount of daily television viewing for the respondent.

The comparison yielded a greater amount of viewing for the interview sample than was the case with the questionnaire sample. Thirty-three of the interviewees had also completed questionnaires. Twenty-six of these provided data on the average daily television
viewing when they completed the questionnaires. Thus, it became possible to compare data obtained by means of questionnaire and interview for these twenty-six persons. Using these identical samples, and comparing the data obtained by two different means, the difference is not as great.

When the entire samples for the questionnaires and interviews are compared, the mean number of hours of daily television viewing, Monday through Friday, is 3.56 for the questionnaire sample, and 4.27 for the interview sample. This represents a difference of 42 minutes. When identical samples are compared on the basis of two methods of data collecting, a mean number of hours of 4.50 is obtained by means of the questionnaire and 4.88 is obtained by means of the interview. This represents a difference of 22 minutes. While the first comparison seems to cast doubt upon the questionnaire respondents' estimate of television viewing time, the second comparison tends to reduce that doubt somewhat. Since the data, in all instances, are cast in terms of estimates, it is quite probable that variations will occur.

The complete data provided by the sample comparisons on the average daily television viewing are presented in Table 8.

No effort was made to compare the questionnaire and interview data concerning liked and disliked television programs and personalities. In the interviews, questions concerning programs and personalities were not posed to obtain any rank order or complete listing. Rather, the questions were instrumental for the pursuit of the personal meaning of these likes and dislikes.
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<td>36</td>
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The presentation and interpretation of the interview material become the burden of subsequent chapters of this report. Wherever appropriate, there will be reference to the questionnaire data, drawing this into the total interpretative effort.
CHAPTER V

THE UNIQUE IMPORTANCE OF TELEVISION
FOR THE AGED PERSON

The ubiquitous television antenna has been referred to as the visible symbol of the widespread popularity and use of television among people in this country. The antenna atop a ramshackle dwelling, probably lacking in many necessities and other conveniences, may well be referred to as an index of importance attached to television by its occupants. In the case of senior city residents, it is the ubiquitous television set and its central, strategic location which suggest television's importance to them.

Television's Importance to the Aged Person

The majority of the residents have television sets in their rooms. Four of the fifty persons interviewed did not have sets in their rooms. This, however, did not prevent them from watching television. There are excellent sets in all of the lounges. The four had a range of television viewing, on the average, of from one to five hours per day, weekdays, by using sets in the lounges or watching television in the rooms of friends.

The television set is an important item among the furnishings of the residents' rooms. It is often located in a manner so that viewing may be done from an easy chair, or bed, or both. The positioning,
of course, also represents an accommodation for those whose physical condition provides problems of locomotion.

There was an almost unanimous reaction of the interviewees that television is very essential to them. Genuine expressions of gratitude for television were heard. An eighty-three year old woman, referring to television, said, "That's where I stick most of the time. I'm so thankful for television."

The strongest expression of importance of television came in the form of negative reactions to the prospect of being without television. Some typical reactions of interviewees were these: "It would be terrible," "Sure, would be rough without it," "I don't know how I could live. I'd lose my mind." One of the most poignant of these reactions came from a seventy-eight year old man, a former educator, the mayor of senior city and editor of the monthly paper. He said, "Television is a must." When reference was made to the absence of a television set in his room, he explained that it was out for repair, and then added, "and I feel like a prisoner."

Many of the residents have restrictions and limitations imposed upon them because of the debilitating effects of aging, and these open the door to extensive dependence upon television. One resident, saying that she had been unable to get downtown for some time, referred to the downtown area as "a fairyland to me." She relies heavily upon television to bring the outside world to her and just a glimpse of a display case in a store on television provides some satisfaction for her. Of the programs arranged for the residents by the staff, one of the most popular is the travelogue program. Reflecting the same interest, the
residents express their appreciation for television programs which bring the outside world to them.

Sensory handicaps are quite common and may limit the aged person's choices among the mass media. Reading may be restricted by visual impairment and auditory impairment may limit the use of radio or record player. Television's provision of both auditory and visual stimuli allows the handicapped person to fill in the perceptual gaps arising from either defective vision or defective hearing.

Television assumes a central position for the majority of these aged persons. Often television viewing becomes the focal point for the reckoning of time. It delineates time, with other activities being sandwiched in to provide as little interference as possible. The research of this study would seem to confirm, at least in the case of a number of the interviewees, the assertion made by Rolf Meyersohn regarding television and the aged person. He stated:

Three conditions of the aging person might predispose him particularly to television. First of all, he grows more sedentary; second, he has more leisure time; and third, he has fewer ties with the world . . . Television may provide much form and content to the lives of older persons. Its form can serve not only as a time-killer but even as time itself.¹

Television programs often become the subject of conversation and discussion among the residents, making television important even during non-viewing time. One resident makes daily telephone calls to several of her friends in the community to discuss the day's progress in several serial programs. While recording interview notes in an

inconspicuous corner of the game room, the writer overheard the predominantly television-oriented conversation of four women playing cards. Apart from a few references to the health condition of several other residents, the remainder of the hour was devoted to a discussion of the characters and stories of two television serial programs. A favorite among the men is the discussion of sports events which they have seen on television.

**Characteristics of Aged Persons Related to Television Use**

While stressing the importance of television for aged persons, it must be recognized that there is the danger of over-generalization. It is to be emphasized that there is uniqueness and individuality among aged persons resulting in a range of variations not unlike that found among other age groups. Consequently, there are also various levels of importance assigned to television among aged persons. With this reservation clearly in mind, it is possible to point to some characteristics or behavioral patterns which are frequently accentuated by the aged person. While there can be no claim to sole usage of these behavioral patterns by the aged persons, his condition and situation in life often indicate a greater dependence upon them as he seeks to satisfy his needs and interests.

Some of these behavioral patterns or characteristics were singled out and, in the analysis of television's importance, were related to the usage of television by the aged person. A discussion of these relationships now follows.
Dependency

The first of these characteristics to be considered is the dependency of the aged person. From an economic standpoint, aged persons share the designation of being dependents with children. From a social standpoint, they are unique since their position in society is not defined by means of an adequate role. They are not considered as producers; they are not sought out for advice and counsel; and they are not listed as part of society's assets. The social and cultural factors provide the aged person with a negation of his person rather than with an acceptable role. Perhaps the greatest claim to fame is his recognition as a problem in our social structure. It is not surprising to find that the aged person feels he is at the mercy of other persons and social forces.

It is undoubtedly true that this attitude of dependence is more prominent among the subjects of this study, residents of a senior citizen community. They have given up in their effort to maintain a home and provide necessary services for themselves. In many instances, this decision to enter a senior citizen community is not made by the aged person, but by someone else. He may feel that he is there because of the pressure exerted by children, by a pastor, by a physician, or by friends. Most frequently this pressure is exerted by children who do not want an aged parent to live alone. Some of the aged persons are dependent upon members of the family for financial support. Many of the residents expressed fears about their money holding out since their assets represent fixed amounts in the face of rising costs.
Residents frequently expressed great satisfaction that others are now caring for their needs and that they are freed from burdensome tasks. A seventy-five year old man, still very active, said, "It's nice to be removed from the drudgery of paying taxes and bills." Appreciation was expressed for the protective and sheltered environment provided for them. Many mentioned the intercom system which allows continuous two-way communication because it puts them in touch with help should they need it.

Relating television usage with this attitude of dependence, we find that the majority of the aged persons heartily accept television, they place great emphasis upon its importance, and are reluctant to be critical of the programs presented. The acceptance of television is often expressed in strong emotional terms usually applied to warm personal relationships. There is genuine appreciation for the medium which provides them with entertainment, information, distraction and companionship.

The vast machinery and organization providing television programs poses a great unknown to the aged person. When referring to it, they may use a vague designation of "they"—a reference to an unknown collection of persons and forces whom they cannot approach, let alone control. There seems to be an ambivalent attitude, one part being gratitude for the provision of television programs and the other part a feeling of helplessness and being victimized.

It is felt that this attitude of dependence contributes to an acceptance of television as it is. In connection with the questionnaire
survey, it was observed that residents are very reluctant to name dis­liked programs and personalities. Their lists of liked programs and personalities were much longer. When given an opportunity to express a preference for new or additional television programs, the interviewees had little to offer. If they did express a preference, it was usually a desire to have more of the kind of programs which they were already enjoying on television. There was little evidence that they expected television to provide them with anything more or different than is now being presented. Their non-critical, accepting attitude may well reflect a feeling that their opinion wouldn't be respected.

During the interviews, attention was given to reactions to advertising on television. While many of the interviewees expressed a dislike for the interruptions, there was little inclination to express active opposition to commercial television. They seem to be ready to tolerate the interruptions since they feel that it is advertising which makes television possible. There was the frequent complaint that the commercials were too loud, with the volume greater for them than for the program. There were a few instances where the person felt he was influenced by television advertising in the purchase of merchandise. However, these were exceptional cases and referred to the purchase of some toiletry articles and food snacks. As a whole, the interviewees felt that advertising on television has no appeal for them since the products represented are for younger people. Supplementing this feeling of television advertising being inappropriate for them, was the fre­quently expressed thought that the commercials were "absurd" or "simple."
A number of the aged persons seem to be completely at a loss with reference to any technical aspects of the receiving set. They seem to be practically mystified and helpless if there is any flaw in reception. In one case, the television set would provide reception for only one channel and therefore only programs on that channel were watched. The UHF educational television station is virtually an unknown to most of the residents. Even if the set is equipped for UHF reception, complaints were registered, such as, "It is impossible to tune in," or "I don't know how to tune it in." Only one of the fifty interviewees could be considered a consistent UHF viewer.

Isolation

The use of television was related to another characteristic of the aged person, his isolation. Isolation may be construed in a physical sense. Many of the aged persons have restrictions imposed by physical impairment and they are literally confined to a very limited sphere of movement. Isolation may also be considered social in nature. The aged person may have outlived his spouse and his circle of immediate friends. His intimate social relationships may have been dissolved by a variety of circumstances. In interest and attitude, he may well be several generations removed from the people within his own family circle.

The evidence of the aged person's isolation arose frequently during the course of the study. There were frequent overt expressions of this in the form of complaints that children or other relatives show no concern and that trusted persons have let them down. There was an
indirect expression in the reminiscences reflecting a happier, pleasant
day of almost ideal social relationships. There were subtle manifesta-
tions of this reflected in expressions of jealousy over the social
successes of others and in the criticism of other residents because of
their social and romantic interests. While there was considerable
criticism of the marriage of two residents of senior city, there also
seemed to be the implicit interest in and wish for the same kind of
involvement.

The physical and social isolation of the aged person is related
to his use of television. Television becomes eyes and ears to keep him
in sensory contact with the world of reality. Television provides him
with an important segment of his social communication.

There is an almost universal dependence upon television for
news. This is especially true of those persons with visual impairment,
preventing or limiting reading. The limited vision, supplemented by
the audio signal, allows them to understand the news presentation. The
dependence upon television news was typically explained with the state-
ment: "It keeps me in touch with things." Some credited television
news with being more direct and faster than newspapers. Probings
intended to elicit from interviewees their expectations from television
viewing frequently indicated that they seek information. Information,
in turn, was most frequently identified with television news programs.

Programs providing direct coverage of sports events are very
popular with the men. There were also several women who could be con-
sidered sports devotees. Travel programs and programs depicting
adventure are very popular.
Interviewees generally tend to identify with television personalities whom they regard as warm and friendly. The questionnaire survey indicated the overwhelming preference for Lawrence Welk. He was also singled out as a favorite during the course of the interviews. This held true for both men and women. Women made references to "his friendliness," to "his dancing with older people," to his clothes, to his "being tired after dancing a lot with Bobby last night." Men referred to his "having come up the hard way," his "hard work in putting a show together," "his fairness in recognizing other performers on the show," his "ability to handle the musicians." Both men and women expressed appreciation for the "clean show" he presents and for "the kind of music he plays."

The interviews reflected virtually the same tendency indicated in the questionnaire survey about television personality preferences. Besides Lawrence Welk, other preferred personalities were older persons, or persons who have been in radio, movies or television for some time. No female performer was named in the questionnaire survey list of the ten highest ranked favorite personalities. This held true for the lists by men and women. In the interview phase of the study, two female performers were named as favorites. It is interesting to note that they were named by women.

The question arises whether these television personality preferences reflect a sexual interest on the part of aged persons. This might be the case with the women who selected males as their favorites; it would not seem indicated in the case of the men who also selected males as their favorite personalities.
Before dealing with this, it might be appropriate to consider the more fundamental question of whether sexual need is operative in the motivational pattern of aged persons. There seems to be ample evidence that it is. The social worker indicated this by saying, "There is every indication that sex, or at least a heterosexual interest, is quite active as a need among these people." The chaplain, referring to the behavior of aged persons, said, "Sex plays a dominant role." While the men and women usually sit in separate sections at the programs, it is not uncommon to see a couple holding hands in the hallways or to see couples walking about showing quite a bit of interest in one another. Elaine Cumming and William E. Henry provide support for this view in their statement:

Much current writing assumes that while older people of high morale have outgoing, rich and satisfying relationships, these relationships are entirely free of sexuality. In spite of Plato's relief at being freed of the tyrant desire, there is clinical evidence that sexual relationships are often lifelong.2

It is recognized that the sexual appetite is not as strong or dominant in aged persons as in earlier years. The diminution of the sex drive is to be considered gradual and age alone is not a guarantee of a lack of sexual desire.

Returning to the original question about television personality preferences and sex interests, it is the writer's judgment that the relationship does hold true in some of the women. It may be argued that the men did not display this heterosexual interest when they failed to

select females as their favorite personalities. A preferred explanation is that television may not provide women performers, in a context or situation, who evoke a strong sexual interest in these older men.

Many women listed daytime television serials as favorite programs. Men usually professed no interest in them. The women displayed an intimate knowledge about the story lines and the characters of these programs. It became slightly embarrassing at times because there seemed to be the assumption that the interviewer, with an obvious interest in television, would have an equivalent knowledge about these programs. This preference for these programs was explained in several ways. The gist of some of these explanations is found in such statements as: "they show real life"; "they show how people live"; "It's interesting to see what happens to people in these stories." That these programs also become the topic of conversation and discussion among the residents has been indicated previously.

Physical Condition

Another relationship to be considered is the physical condition of the aged person and his use of television. When reference is made to the physical condition of the aged person there is the implication that these are the effects of a degenerative process. However, this does not imply a disease entity to be equated with old age. The term, degeneration, is used here in a broader sense than in the clinical field where the reference is usually to neural tissue damage, as in the classification of "senile brain degeneration."

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The concept definitions of Cameron and Magaret are employed at this point. They describe degeneration as "the occurrence of progressive ineffectiveness of organs or tissues at a physiological level of description." The term, deterioration, is construed as a behavioral characterization. When dealing with the physical condition of the aged person, the degenerative changes as well as the accompanying deterioration, are implied. From the standpoint of this study, the behavioral changes are the most significant.

The aged person is very sensitive to the decline of physical energy, to the decrease in motor capacity, to the weakening of sensory acuity, to the increase in reaction time, and to the interferences in his mental capabilities. He is faced with disease or illness, which in youth are often regarded as momentary, but with his lowered recuperative powers they place him in the category of being sick or incapacitated as over against those who are well. He faces the prospect of death in more imminent fashion than do younger people.

The sensitivity to real or pending loss of physical abilities was very apparent throughout the study of the senior city residents. Persons in the residential areas have a dread of being removed to the care sections. There is a sharp cleavage between these two groups and, because of this, there is a division made between them in the arrangements in the dining room. Persons in the residential areas will visit acquaintances who are in the care sections. However, these visitations

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4 Norman Cameron and Ann Magaret, Behavior Pathology, p. 524.
5 Ibid., p. 523.
are usually on the same basis as when a healthy person makes a visit to a hospital to see a sick friend. While there is concern and interest in the sick friend, there is the feeling of gratitude that the visit to the hospital is very temporary and on a social basis.

The most significant threat to the aged person does not seem to be the imminence of death, but rather the imposition of limitations and handicaps as a result of the degenerative process. The chaplain expressed the belief that these people have already "come to terms with the prospect of death." He said that the dread of the care sections is there because "they are responding to a greater degree of incapacity, illness, inability to get around. They are reacting to the realization that the self is now less than complete." James E. Birren refers to some attitude studies which depict young people operating with certain stereotypes about aged persons, including the assumption that their greatest fear is death. Older people, in turn, list other concerns well ahead of this fear. Birren summarizes, by saying, "This corroborates the currently developing point of view that the attitudes of older persons reflect more concern with conditions of living than a fear of death."\(^6\)

Quite naturally, the physical condition of the aged person provides some implications for his use of television. The aged persons who were interviewed for this study did not display a general interest in religious television programs. This provides no support to the view that, because of physical degeneration and the imminence of death, there

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is a natural interest in religion. The interest shown in religious television programs is by the aged who are religious. It is true that religious television programs are the primary interest of a select few, but they are also the ones who are most active in the Bible study groups, the prayer groups and the religious services provided for the residents.

The majority of the interviewees were ambulatory. However, many move about with pain or discomfort with the aid of cane or walker. Movement is then restricted to what they consider the most essential and these persons spend considerable amount of time alone in their rooms. Television is so readily accessible and they spend many hours viewing.

Auditory and visual loss is very common among the aged persons. Those suffering auditory loss say that they can still manage to hear what is presented on television programs although they may have difficulty in conversation and particularly when several persons are talking. Most of these people shy away from the group discussions since they say that it is impossible to adjust to the different voices and the confusion which results when more than one person is speaking. For television, they simply turn up the volume, or they have special connections for ear phones and they experience no distraction from others.

Visual impairment may limit the perception of television presentations, but it does not seem to limit television viewing. There are instances where the visual loss is so great that there is almost complete dependence upon the auditory stimuli. An eighty-four year old man, who is legally declared blind, watches television, particularly
television news. He cannot read because of his visual limitation. He has to be within three feet of the television set while watching. He said that he can identify general forms of the image presented, but cannot detect any of the detailed features. He receives two "talking books" per week from the Library of Congress, but feels that television is more satisfying since it does present a partial visual image for him. This man also watches every football, basketball and baseball game presented on television.

One interviewee, an eighty-one year old woman, probably represents the most extreme accommodation, in spite of sensory impairment, to television viewing. She has severe hearing loss and her vision was so poor that she was unable to distinguish the interviewer's features within a distance of three feet. She turns up the volume, is seated with her face within two or three feet from the television screen, and watches this way on the average of ten hours per day weekdays. She resents mealtime schedules since they interfere with some programs she enjoys. If she cannot sleep at night, she listens to the radio. A seventy-four year old woman, who admits to eight hours of television viewing per day, wears a patch over one eye. Her physician prepared the patch for her since a halo forms around her viewing image if she does not wear it.

It would seem reasonable that persons with impaired vision would listen to radio. According to the information obtained by means of the interviews, this is not the case. Programs to which they were accustomed in their radio-listening days are no longer available on radio. Some
of these program types are available on television and the audio part of the program provides enough cues for understanding and comprehension. This holds true for the daytime serials and the "games" programs on television. Visually handicapped persons seem to prefer television to radio for news. There is the prestige of the television newscaster or team of newscasters, the ease of tuning in the well-known television channels and the familiarity with the television program schedule. All of these seem to make television news preferable. Several persons who lived in this community prior to their residence in senior city indicated that they listened to news presented by favorite local radio newscasters.

There is quite a range of individual use of television in relation to physical impairment. Some will rationalize that while reading is detrimental to vision, television viewing is not. Some will place their television viewing on a schedule so that the eyes can be rested to preclude damage to vision. One person uses television therapeutically. She repeats the names heard on programs as a remedial approach to the verbal loss sustained by a stroke. One women, with memory impairment, has had to give up television serial programs since she forgets what transpired in the previous episode. For the cases of senile dementia, in the care section, television plays the role of "baby-sitter."
Routinism

There is frequent reference to the concept of rigidity in the behavioral patterns of aged persons. This focuses largely upon the cognitive processes, implying a decrease in ideational output and dependence upon known and accepted patterns of thought. During the course of this study, there were many indications of a rigidity with respect to the form of behavior and the routine of daily living. This phenomenon is designated routinism, a characteristic of the aged person, to be related to the use of television.

From a dynamic standpoint, routinism may be construed as a protective device. As such, it is not limited to the aged person. It can be observed in the child who finds safety and security in the routine provided for him. Its pathological manifestation may be observed in the obsessive-compulsive neurotic whose compulsive following of a routine provide him with controls for handling the threatening elements which may arise within his environment. Routinism provides the element of predictability for the individual and, conversely, reduces the unknown factors which may arise.

The aged person, whose social role and position in life are highly ambiguous, may well resort to routine behavior forms and thus hope to establish constant elements within his environment. The subjects of this study frequently displayed a strong devotion to routine. Their lives are already geared to the institutional pattern of times for meals, mail distribution, programs, etc. They seem to respond
favorably to this and, once a pattern has been set, they are very reluctant to have it changed.

Television viewing fits into the highly patterned existence of the aged person. For many, their day's routine is paced by the schedule of television programs. When reference was made to television viewing during the course of the interviews, it was not uncommon for respondents to spontaneously describe a segment of the day, as afternoon or evening, in terms of the sequence of television programs which they viewed. For some, this sequence of television programs, including the necessary switching from one channel to another, seems to become more meaningful than to deal with one's activities in terms of time segments. Mealtime might be designated by the programs viewed before and following it. The person may not know at what hour a given television program is presented, but may know what programs precede and follow it. There are extremes to be found in cases where television viewing has become the criterion of routine. One woman expressed resentment about the intrusion of other activities. She said, "I break my neck to get back from supper so that I can watch Matt Dillon. I wish meals wouldn't interfere with my television programs."

Television's contribution to routinism is not limited to the heavy television viewer. For those who watch relatively few programs on a selective basis, watching these programs becomes an important part of the day's ritual. The interviewees demonstrated excellent recall for the channel on which favorite programs are presented. Generally, this recall is for channel number and not for the station's call letters.
Interviewees expressed resentment about television programs being moved from one time spot to another. While it would appear that they have plenty of uncommitted time, they seem to dislike the interruptions of the pattern they have established for their lives. They generally expressed skepticism about the new programs which were being promoted for fall presentation on television. Some said they might watch some of these new programs, but they expressed doubt that they would enjoy them. There is real concern expressed when a favorite program is eliminated. Even a slight change within an existing program received unfavorable comments and reactions.

Value System

The final relationship to be considered is the use of television and the value system of the aged person. It is recognized that it would be folly to attempt to generalize to a common set of values for aged persons. However, there are common elements to be found within their individual value systems.

Aged persons reflect cultural influences which are quite different from those prevailing today. Their reliance upon a repertoire of attitudes is based upon the experience that these attitudes have served their needs and their interests. While clinging to a set of attitudes, many of these people have been by-passed by the unique cultural influences at work in successive generations. They become, in effect, displaced persons within the culture and resort to reminiscence and a reaction of despair about the current situation. Their positive attitudes about the established institutions of society, the sanctity
of marriage and family, industriousness, thrift, and integrity seem to be threatened.

There is somewhat of a conflict provided by the extensive use of television by the aged person. There is the attractiveness and utility of television and, at the same time, there is a strong negative reaction toward the set of values depicted by many of the television programs. A rationalization appears to resolve the conflict. They feel that they are immune to the degrading influences which television provides, but other people, especially children, should not watch many of the television programs because of their detrimental effect. The effort to obtain the interviewee's reaction to the effect of television upon children, produced quite a number of negative responses. Typical of the negative responses, was this reference to children and television viewing, "They have no music. There is too much sex and crime presented. They have a terrible effect. The moral standards are so low."

Some of the interviewees who deprecated shooting and violence presented in television programs said they watched television westerns because of the "historical material" presented or because "you see such beautiful scenery." There was little interest shown in documentaries or in-depth programs. This may be due, in part, to their irregular schedule of presentation. There also seems to be some skepticism about the interpretation given to current events or social problems on such programs and a feeling that these interpretations fall outside the framework of their value system.
The aged persons frequently expressed a preference for musical programs. Many of them quickly added the qualification that they do not like modern music which they maintain is not music, but noise. Their positive expression usually was restricted to a preference for "good music." Quite naturally, good music is variously interpreted. Generally, good music seemed to be equated with the familiar. Their preference for musical programs seems to be based on the expectation that this type program will include something familiar to the aged person and thus provide nostalgic value. One woman expressed her preference by saying, "I wish we could have programs like the old Kay Kyser and Guy Lombardo shows." A man expressed his preference for the Lawrence Welk program by saying, "Once in a while, he plays an old tune."

When listing their favorite television personalities, the interviewees seemed to select persons who, they think, reflect their own value systems. Some of the attributions which reflect this are the following: "He's a gentleman"; "He came up the hard way"; "He's like one of the family"; "I've heard him for years." Some of the dislikes also reflected the aged person's use of his value system as a criterion of judgment. A typical negative reaction to a television personality was, "because he brought the Beatles over here." Some of the sharpest words of criticism were directed against the program, The Monkees, and also to other shows "appealing to the teen-agers." Here the criticism was directed against the mode of dress, the long hair and the general conduct displayed.

Perhaps the clearest indicator of the role of the aged person's value system in his preference for television programs and personalities
is in connection with the Lawrence Welk program. Typical of the many responses about this program and personality are the following: "He is a fine man"; "It is a clean show"; "He allows no drinkers on his program"; "He is conservative"; "I knew of him long before TV." This program has strong appeal for the aged person and, it is believed, that this is due in large measure to the rapport established within the context of the aged person's value system.

The primary emphasis in this chapter has been upon the aged person and the unique importance of television for him. Certain characteristics of the aged person were singled out and their relationship to his use of television was considered. Within this effort there is, perforce, a trend toward generalization, a tendency to depict aged persons as a class. The reservation was registered at the outset that this does violence to the individuality and variability to be found among aged persons. In the following chapter, attention will be given to some of the variability to be found in the use of television by aged persons.
CHAPTER VI

VARIABILITY IN THE USE OF TELEVISION

BY AGED PERSONS

In the early stages of this study, the impression was established that there is great variability in the dependence upon and use of television by aged persons. This impression was based upon the more fundamental persuasion that there is great variability in the personality makeup, in the attitudes, in the needs and interests of aged persons. These initial impressions were given strong reinforcement throughout the course of the study.

Variability of Aged Persons

This emphasis upon variability may seem trite. It would certainly be thus construed if the application were to a younger age group. Perhaps the emphasis is somewhat of a reaction to a popular stereotype which relegates aged persons, en masse, to a regressive, infantile existence. There seems to be the assumption that if the aged person is provided with means of fulfilling the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing and, if he has some escapist or fantasy outlet, such as television, he ought to be content. Of course, even the assumption that escape might be sought or necessary would suggest a complex, rather than a simplex, pattern of motivation.
It is recognized that the reference to stereotypy may, to some extent, represent the erection of a straw man for purposes of argument. However, something close to the overdrawn stereotype does seem to manifest itself in popular conceptions of the aged person. James Birren refers to the possible source of such an oversimplification of an attitude toward aged persons, by saying:

Young people frequently have stereotyped views of the aged, and aging persons themselves often accept such stereotypes. Stereotypic opinions arise from the 1 or 2 per cent of all aged persons who may be institutionalized for mental illness. From this small group, the erroneous generalization may be made that most persons over the age of seventy have "senile" qualities about them.1

Elaine Cumming and William E. Henry, in their contribution to the extensive University of Chicago studies of personality and adjustment in the aging process, provide a criticism of what they term the implicit theory of aging. They assert that this theory superimposes a judgment of successful aging based upon ideal adjustment in an earlier period of life. With the popular advocacy of aged persons to keep active, to constantly expand both psychologically and socially, they say: "There appears to be a latent assumption that successful aging consists in being as much like a middle-aged person as possible."2

In another statement, these authors cite the implicit theory of aging as being primarily negative in approach:

The implication is that aging is moving away from something--the "prime of life," or "usefulness"--but there is

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1Birren, The Psychology of Aging, p. 246.

2Cumming and Henry, Growing Old, p. 18.
little suggestion that it means moving toward something qualitatively different and perhaps, in its own way, equally attractive.\textsuperscript{3}

It is also pointed out that the literature about maturation of the child does not indicate adolescence as preferable to early childhood or less desirable. A transition is described. Establishing this point, the authors add: "And yet surely the loss of childhood is in some ways more poignant than the loss of middle age."\textsuperscript{4}

It is essential, of course, that there be recognition of significant, progressive changes which accompany the aging process. (Such recognition has been given earlier in this report.) There may be changes in personality makeup, in the physical and mental capabilities, in the energy resources, and, in fact, in the whole physical, psychological and social adjustment patterns of the aging person. These changes are to be considered as occurring gradually, with many being adumbrated, in whole or in part, by the individual's earlier patterns of adjustment.

According to the perspective of an earlier period in life, some of these changes represent losses, and are considered as such by aged persons. These people are especially sensitive to changes imposing restrictions upon physical and mental activity. However, in spite of these losses, there remain for many aged persons the potentials and resources which have tremendous significance for highly varied behavior. The viewpoint that physical degeneration is almost automatically accompanied with a comparable amount of behavioral deterioration is not

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 22.  \textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 23.
supported by clinical evidence. In a discussion of senile cerebral
degeneration, Cameron summarizes as follows:

   Thus one finds relatively little cell loss in the
cerebrum of many persons who have suffered a severe senile
decline before dying; while many whose cerebrum shows
extensive cell destruction have suffered little or no
senile decline.\(^5\)

Proper recognition must be given to the biological factors in the aging
process. However, comparable recognition must also be given to psycho­
logical and sociological factors.\(^6\)

   There is tremendous range in the adaptive capacity of aged
persons. This adaptive capacity can be conceived of as distributed
along a continuum. The one polar extreme of this continuum is repre­
sented by the individual who lacks the personality resources and social
support to be able to cope with the threat of changes which confront
him. The other polar extreme is represented by the person who has
adequate personality resources and social support to make possible a
wholesome adjustment. The distribution of aged persons along this con­
tinuum is not to be construed as bipolar but approximating a normal
distribution curve.

   Variability in Television Use

   This emphasis upon variability in personality factors and
adaptive capacity is considered basic to the assertion that there is
great variability in the use of television by aged persons. If there


is variability in personality, needs, interests and attitudes of aged persons, it would follow that the selection of and involvement in a given activity, such as television viewing, would be in the service of a unique person and great differences would be expected.

The emphasis upon variability in the use of television may be contrasted with a viewpoint which seems to oversimplify the motivational and behavioral patterns of aged persons. In the Berkeley studies of personality in relation to aging and retirement, use was made of a classification of leisure activities according to type of interest. There are six types listed, with the sixth one presented in the following manner: "escapist (television, movies)." It must be added that the Berkeley investigators did not code the time spent or degree of involvement in different activities since no significant differences were discovered in the total number or variety of activities. Their interview schedule includes only two questions which would seem applicable. The one inquires about what the interviewee likes to do most in his spare time and the other one refers to the kind of entertainment liked most.

While there is emphasis placed upon variability in personality and patterns of adjustment in the Berkeley studies, there is the implication that television use is to be considered as a satisfier of a specific need or interest found generally among aged persons. The belief might be expressed that if these investigators had probed more

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7 Suzanne Reichard, Florine Livson, and Paul Petersen, Aging and Personality, pp. 30-31.
8 Ibid., p. 78. 9 Ibid., p. 229.
thoroughly into television usage and had been concerned with the amount of time spent or degree of involvement in specific activities there may have been a revision of the classification used for activities.

The study of senior city residents suggests that there is quite a variety, or range, of uses of television by aged persons. With proper respect for the emphasis which has been placed upon individual differences, the uses indicated should be fifty in number, coinciding with the number of persons interviewed. This, in reality, was the reaction of the interviewer. The evaluation and interpretation of the interview material do, however, allow for the organization of some of the variables into clusters or patterns of television use.

**Patterns of Television Use**

Some of these patterns arise along a range which can be described as extending from indiscriminate to discriminate use of television by aged persons. Some of the more prominent patterns within this range will be presented.

**Indiscriminate**

Indiscriminate use of television is represented as one extreme of this range. The clearest example of this extreme was observed in a lounge of one of the care sections of the senior city facility. Four women, all suffering from cerebral degeneration, were seated in front of a television set. A nurse, referring to them as her "babies," was trying to induce one of the women to come with her so that she could give her a bath. The woman protested, and the nurse yielded. Two hours
later, the same four women, occupying the same positions in the room, were still watching television. The nurse said that they will sit there most of their waking hours and watch any programs presented, with no effort made to tune in a different channel. No conversation is carried on between them while they watch.

The observation which has been presented is intended to be illustrative of the extreme of an indiscriminate use of television and not as typical of the sample of interviewees. Within the sample, however, there were cases where the use of television tended toward the indiscriminate extreme.

An eighty-one year old widow, with grade school education and exhibiting average mental capacity, referring to her way of life, said: "I just watch TV all of the time." She estimated her average daily viewing at ten hours. She does not go to any of the programs provided for the residents. She cites her hearing problem as the reason for avoiding the company of other persons. She does not watch television in the company of other persons because, as she put it, "They'd gab and would spoil the program for me." Besides the hearing deficiency, she also has a severe visual impairment. Meal times are resented because of the interference they provide for television programs. She can't watch the late night shows because "I have to be able to get up for breakfast." When she can't sleep at night, she listens to the radio. She said: "I just keep dialing until I hear a person talking and then I listen to that."

This woman said she never mingled with her neighbors in the several communities where she had lived. She has no children.
Following her husband's death, there was a five-month period of living with her sister, but that proved unsatisfactory. One of the major problems was that the two could not agree on which television programs to watch. Referring to her past life, she pointed to one bright spot. This was a period of eight years when she and her husband were very active in the work of a church. When they moved, they never established any successful social relations.

The pattern of excessive television viewing was started years ago. Her husband worked nights and slept during the day. She explained: "I watched TV at night and I also watched in the daytime since I couldn't work around the house or I would disturb his sleep."

The impression gained is that of a person who is socially withdrawn and who was never very successful in establishing close personal relationships. Her favorite television programs are the daytime serials and she explains her preference for them by saying: "you get some pretty good information from them." Her use of television seems to satisfy those personal and social needs which she has been unable to fulfill in reality. Her selection of specific programs may be considered a degree of discrimination, but her overall use of television would be labeled as tending toward the indiscriminate extreme.

The same tendency was also indicated in the case of a seventy-one year old woman. She had a high school education and was very alert mentally. She had experienced warm relationships with her family and friends. Now she feels that life has little to offer, surrounded by people who "are so old," and with restrictions of movement and activity
sustained following a stroke. Her average daily viewing is eight hours and she indicates that this is distractive, helping her to "pass the time."

An eighty-two year old man said: "I depend upon television constantly." He had a grade school education and shows some signs of memory impairment. He listed ten hours of television viewing as an average per day. While he displayed self-reliance and ambition to establish and maintain a thriving business at one time, he now seems to have relaxed into an altogether dependent attitude. While not essential, he has a private nurse in attendance most of the time. He expresses no special likes or dislikes toward television's offerings, except to say that he loves "the excitement of the western shows."

This man is very congenial and seemed delighted over the interviewer's visit. He will make no effort to seek social contacts with other residents. His dependency extends to the excessive television viewing, being quite readily satisfied with whatever is presented. Television is a time-filler, in fact, for him it is close to being time itself.

Discriminate

The other extreme which was observed among the interviewees was the discriminate use of television. In these cases, television viewing is done on a highly selective basis, being appropriately integrated into a varied pattern of activities intended to satisfy the unique needs of the individual.

An eighty-eight year old woman limits her television viewing to "religious" and "intellectual" type programs. A former teacher and
administrator in the public schools, with a graduate degree in education, she displays a keen mind and superior intelligence. There is almost complete absorption in things educational and intellectual. Her contention is: "You cannot have deep experiences, not being educated." She has outright contempt for most of the residents, saying, "We don't have high-type persons here." Her evaluation of an industrious, well-liked resident was: "But she isn't educated!" Her criticism extends to the senior city staff, even to one of its most popular members.

Since retirement, she has read extensively, has been very active in her church, and has opened her home for religious group meetings "to discuss the theory of prayer, etc." Her pastor's evaluation was: "A supremely devout person." A senior city staff member's evaluation of her was: "Sexually frustrated throughout life, she seeks to gain ego-satisfaction through the domination of others by trying to organize them into some kind of discussion group."

This woman limits her television viewing to one hour per day on the average, with news and "Face the Nation" or "Meet the Press" type programs preferred. She watches the UHF educational television station when there are special informative programs presented. She is extremely critical of commercial television. She would like more religious programs, with her unique preference expressed by the comment: "I yearn to have books like Bishop Pike's presented on television." She is occupied with extensive correspondence, with many letters directed to newspaper editors, to columnists and to her denomination's officers. The interview time was a concession to the pressing task of setting down in writing her thoughts and ideas about holy communion.
The impression gained was that this person lacks the capacity to establish meaningful social relationships and, being so preoccupied with activities in what she considers her world of intellectual superiority, television is drawn in only on a very selective basis, to the extent that it satisfies her unique needs and interests.

The use of television which tends toward discriminate was observed in a seventy-nine year old man. His formal education extended through the fourth grade. He had been a coal miner until a back injury sustained in a mine cave-in forced his retirement thirty years ago. He remained single, providing for his mother who died two years ago. He is very active, attending all of the programs, plays cards and shuffle board, has gone on all the field trips, visits friends who are in the care section, delights in being helpful and running errands for other residents. Speaking of his present life situation, he explained: "I enjoy life more now than I ever have." Being somewhat critical of some nieces and nephews he helped but who give him no attention now, he said: "Friends you can pick, but you can't pick relatives."

This man's television viewing is limited to news, sports and family type programs. He deplores shows depicting violence and wishes there would be no smoking and drinking shown on programs. Saturday evening viewing is geared to the social experience of "watching with a girl friend." He watches an average of two hours per day. The values he uses for judging are those of his mother. They probably also reflect some reaction formation since, at one time, he was a heavy smoker and drinker. This man has found, in late life, a greater freedom of social
movement and participation and television viewing assumes a subservient position in relation to other satisfying activities.

A seventy-eight year old man, a former school administrator and whose education includes attainment of a master's degree and study abroad, reflects the tendency of discriminate use of television. His average daily viewing is two hours. He watches the early morning educational programs, prefers news, news panel, documentary and sports programs. He watches an occasional variety show. His interest is "in obtaining education and entertainment from television."

This man is in the care section, requiring the use of a wheelchair. He was elected to the senior city council, served as mayor, and is the editor of the monthly paper. He participates in several community organizations. This person maintains a very active life, reflecting a belief which he expressed in this way: "To be passive is to be dead." He has clearly established intellectual and applied goals and television use, while important, is kept within the perspective of these goals. While his is a discriminate use of television, he indicated its importance by saying: "Television is a must for me."

Patterns of Television Use Defined

Using the cases cited, and also others taken from the interview records, these extreme tendencies of indiscriminate and discriminate use of television were subjected to further analysis with the hope of deriving, in qualified form, an operational definition. Some qualifications must be immediately recognized. The two extremes are not to be construed as clear types or patterns, since variability of both person
and television use is apparent within each grouping. A more complete
analysis would have called for more elaborate research methods, includ­
ing personality measures and subsequent statistical analysis to deter­
mine interrelationships between personality factors and possible
 groupings or clusters. The analysis referred to here is based upon the
evaluation and interpretation of the interview data.

The terms, indiscriminate and discriminate, may require some
qualification. The indiscriminate use of television must, in the
strictest sense, include discriminating behavior on the part of the
viewer. His perceptions of what options are available to him and his
choice to use television would involve discriminating acts. Turning
the set on, tuning in a specific channel, switching channels, or turn­
ing the set off would have to be construed as discriminating behavior.
The discriminate use of television may also involve an approximation
of indiscriminate use in a given situation. The third case cited in
support of discriminate use of television may illustrate the point.
While indicating that his television viewing was usually limited to
specific programs, he also said: "Some of the television programs are
perfectly silly. I may watch some of these when I have time to waste,
but feel that I get nothing out of the watching." The terms, as used
here, are placed within the broad context of the individual's atti­
tudinal system. One may assume that a series of discrete choices and
decisions will, over time, result in an attitudinal system tending
toward the extreme of indiscriminate or discriminate use of television.

The indiscriminate use of television may then be defined as
the more consistent selection of and attentiveness to television within
the whole range of activities which provides options for the aged person's use of uncommitted time. The choice to rely primarily upon television means that many activities which are available have been eliminated from the individual's behavior repertoire. The indiscriminate user has adopted a more passive role toward life. He feels that his waning energy resources and the bleakness of the prospects for his future have eliminated him from the world of reality testing and the struggle for personal achievement. The corollary of the aged person's passivity is an attitude of dependence. While he may be critical or negative about his life situation, his attitude is one of acceptance of television, a primary satisfier of his needs and interests.

The discriminate use of television may be defined, by way of contrast, as the selection of and attentiveness to television as but one of a varied pattern of activities within the whole range which provides options for the aged person's use of uncommitted time. The choice of television does not eliminate participation in other activities. In fact, the choice of television may be conditioned on its functional role in support of other activities which are directed toward a specific set of goals. For instance, there may be a readiness to use television as it augments reading, attending programs, participating in discussion groups, or listening to "talking books," in the pursuit of information or attainment of insights and understanding.

The discriminate user of television is more inclined to accept the "keep active" philosophy as a means of attaining satisfaction in old age. He has specific applied or intellectual goals which prompt his participation in many activities. Television must provide him with
satisfaction for his specific goals or else it is not used. The corollary of his "keep active" attitude is an attitude of independence. He is inclined to be quite critical as he appraises television's offerings as they may satisfy his interests or his needs.

It would be expected that with the greater emphasis upon television use, the indiscriminate user will spend more time at this activity. An estimate was made on the basis of assigning each of the persons interviewed a position on a nine-point scale, ranging from indiscriminate to discriminate use of television. The wider range was employed since, quite naturally, individual cases represent these tendencies in varying degrees. This assignment to position was done without reference to the total amount of time the individual spent watching television. Following the assignment to position, viewing time was computed. The twenty-three persons assigned within the four points representing the indiscriminate part of the scale had a mean, daily viewing time of 5.26 hours. The twenty-seven persons assigned within the four points representing the discriminate end of the scale had a mean, daily viewing time of 3.37 hours.

It would appear that television is more important to the indiscriminate user than to the discriminate user. The former's greater use of and dependence upon television would support this view. However, in most instances the discriminate user also ascribed great importance to television. A person who was one of the best representatives of the extreme tendency of discriminate use of television was the one who said: "Television is a must." It was he who said: "I feel like a prisoner since my television set is out for repair." While more
critical and, therefore, more selective, the aged person who makes discriminate use of television still places great importance upon the role of television within the whole range of his activities.

The presentation of the range of indiscriminate to discriminate use of television was in the support of the contention that there is great variability in the use of television by aged persons. Variability was also represented through the disclosures by interviewees of some highly unique and applied uses of television. While these instances do not lend themselves for groupings within specific categories, they illustrate the general impression gained about the variability of television use.

A chronic alcoholic watches television "to keep my mind off myself." A woman tried to remember and repeat aloud the names of all persons mentioned on a television program as a therapeutic approach to verbal loss sustained by a stroke. A man removed to the care section recently, misses his friends, and watches television especially at night "because it gets so lonely here." A woman, whose marital life was most unhappy, shuns other women residents because "all they can talk about is their wonderful husbands" and she remains in her room, watching television "to have something to do." Game programs are quite popular and, in one explanation, "they stimulate the mind." There was an explanation that all television viewing is beneficial since it "keeps one's mind active." Television serials are helpful for life since they are "so real."
Classifications Compared

The emphasis upon variability of television use by aged persons may be compared with a classification of television viewers by Ira O. Glick and Sidney J. Levy. Based upon a series of studies, they divide television's audiences into three groups representing different points of view. The three groups and their characteristics are summarized by the authors in this manner:

The first is referred to as "television embraced"; it signifies a particularly close identification with television, a rather undiscriminating and accepting attitude toward it, and, usually, great use of the medium. In contrast, "television protested" is an audience outlook that signifies the most selective use of the medium and often extremely critical attitudes toward it. "Television accommodated" is a position that rather casually accepts television, one that evidences a "coming to terms" with TV, its meanings, appeals, and shortcomings. 10

When assigning groups or classes of persons to these various categories, the authors list three main audiences which are associated with the television embraced outlook. The three are "The homebound young, the homebound old, and the working class." 11 Aged persons are not included in the other two categories.

The category of television embracers would seem most closely identified with what has been described in this study as the indiscriminate use of television. It is felt though that there would be a distribution of the aged persons interviewed in this study within all three of the categories of embracers, protesters, and accommodaters.

10 Ira O. Glicks and Sidney J. Levy, Living with Television, p. 44.

11 Ibid., p. 55.
It is understandable, however, that in the Glick and Levy study the assignment of aged persons was made to the category of television embracers. Their emphasis was to demonstrate variations in television's audiences and they used various groups which best illustrated a given category. The objective of this study was to understand the role of television in the lives of one of these groups, namely aged persons, and this resulted in the conclusion that there is great variability in their use of television.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of the role of television in the lives of aged persons focuses upon an increasingly large and socially significant segment of our society. Available research literature provides little information about the importance and use of television by aged persons. The hypothesis established at the outset for this study was that aged persons, confronted with restrictions imposed by the aging process and a limited social role, turn to television as one of the primary means of their use of uncommitted time.

The research for the study was designed to relate the dynamic pattern of the individual with his use of television and thus develop insights into the uniqueness and importance of television within the whole range of activity patterns available for the aged person in his total use of time. General sampling of the aged population was not an objective, and, therefore, generalizations must be restricted to the particular sample of subjects selected for this study.

The primary part of the research consisted of intensive interviews with thirty-two women and eighteen men who are residents of a senior city community. The model used was that of the focused interview. Prior to the interview, a situational analysis was undertaken. This included intensive interviews with staff personnel, preliminary
interviews with several residents, as well as frequent, casual contact with residents and staff in the lounges, recreational areas, and dining room. In order to obtain general information about the use of television by the residents a questionnaire survey was conducted.

Findings

All phases of the study provide support for the conclusion that television plays a unique and very important role in the lives of these aged persons. Support for the conclusion is adduced by the following findings:

1. The unique role of television may be detailed in the recognition of television's suitability and usefulness in relation to certain characteristics or behavioral patterns accentuated in aged persons.

2. The importance of television may be observed in the extensive use of and preference for it within the whole range of activities available for the aged person's use of uncommitted time.

3. The importance of television takes on a highly individualistic meaning, closely identified with unique personal needs, interests and attitudes, and thus resulting in variability in the use of television by aged persons.

Television's Unique Role

Dependency.—Many aged persons, confronted with behavioral deterioration resulting from physical degeneration, as well as with social and cultural displacement, see to it that television is readily available and select and use television as a primary means of satisfying their needs and interests. Social and economic forces thrust upon the
aged person the role of dependent. His dependency results in a ready acceptance of television and a reluctance to adopt a critical stance with respect to television programs or its commercial aspects although he recognizes that both are directed primarily to a younger age group.

Isolation.--The aged person's isolation, both physical and social, directs him to television viewing as a means of contact with the world and as a means of social identification with television personalities.

Physical condition.--The aged person's physical condition, marked by decline in energy resources, sensory acuity, motor capacity, and in mental capabilities, makes television viewing extremely suitable, resulting in a minimum expenditure of dwindling physical resources.

Routinism.--A tendency toward rigidity in behavioral patterns, here referred to as routinism, is frequently observed among aged persons. This tendency toward routinism is a protective device, resulting in a dependence upon accepted patterns of behavior, and thus reducing the unpredictable element in life. Television viewing becomes for many the focal point of this routinism, providing constants for the use of time and even for the delineation of time itself.

Value system.--The aged person's value system places him in an ambivalent position of endorsing his own extensive use of and dependence upon television while deploring television's depiction of life within the context of a value system quite contrary to his own cherished ideals. His solution is often found in a rationalization of his own immunity to
the negative influences and his advice that other people, especially young people, should not watch many of the television programs.

Television's Importance

The importance of television for aged persons was demonstrated at many points throughout the study. Residents generally regard the program of activities provided by staff personnel of the senior city as quite adequate and sufficiently varied. However, television's importance precludes the scheduling of any program at a time of a popular television show. The ultimate in importance seems to be reached on Saturday night when the Lawrence Welk program is presented. While recognizing television as primary competition to their own program of activities, staff members concede the value of television to these aged persons.

The extensive use of and preference for television over other activities are demonstrated in the time devoted to television viewing. The study indicated that the subjects watched television an average of 3.56 hours per day, Monday through Friday. It is important to note that this represents viewing by individuals and is not to be compared with data representing family use of television.

The most direct evidence of television's importance was provided by the residents during the course of the interviews. The strongest expression came in the negative reactions to the prospect of being without television. Typical of the reactions are the following: "I don't know how I'd live"; "It would be terrible"; and, "It is a must." This recognition of television's importance is not to be equated with
excessive use of television only. The recognition is also provided by the individual who makes a limited and more selective use of television.

Variability in Television Use

The general statements about television use by aged persons fail to reflect the great variability which exists in the selection and use of television among aged persons. This variability is construed as a corollary of the more fundamental assertion that there is great variability in personality, needs, attitudes, and interests of aged persons. The tendency to stereotypy, by generalizing to universal motivational, perceptual, and behavioral patterns for aged persons, may be the result of a superimposition of an ideal for optimum adjustment of another age period, such as middle age, and the failure to recognize the full range of adaptive capacity and individuality exhibited by aged persons.

The study of senior city residents suggests quite a range in the use of and dependence upon television. This range is reflected on a continuum of indiscriminate to discriminate use of television. The polar extremes are more readily identified but are not to be construed as wholly consistent types. The distribution of persons is to be found at all points along this projected continuum.

The terms, indiscriminate and discriminate, are used within the broad context of the individual's attitudinal system and are not applied to discrete acts, such as turning on a television set, tuning in a specific channel or switching channels. The terms reflect an attitude, or a prejudgment, based on a series of discrete perceptions and actions.
over a period of time, which will result in a tendency toward indiscriminate or discriminate use of television. Based upon the findings and impressions gained during the course of this study, definitions were developed for the tendencies which direct toward indiscriminate and discriminate use of television.

**Indiscriminate use.**—Indiscriminate use is defined as the more consistent selection of and attentiveness to television within the whole range of activities which provides options for the aged person's use of uncommitted time. The indiscriminate user has adopted a more passive role toward life. The corollary of his passivity is his attitude of dependence, resulting in his acceptance of television as a primary satisfier of his needs and interests.

**Discriminate use.**—Discriminate use of television is defined as the selection of and attentiveness to television as but one of a varied pattern of activities within the whole range which provides options for the aged person's use of uncommitted time. This does not necessarily discredit the importance of television, but places television use on a conditional basis as it serves a functional role along with other activities designed to satisfy a specific set of goals. The discriminate user is more inclined toward a "keep active" philosophy of life. The corollary of this philosophy is an attitude of independence, resulting in a critical appraisal and selective use of television.
Suggestions for Further Study

The research for this study was exploratory in design, intended to generate insights for the ultimate development of hypotheses, rather than the testing of a specific set of hypotheses. The nature of the approach suggests the desirability of further studies which would test and evaluate tentative results and findings and extend the scope of the research.

Validation Studies

Experimental research, with its promise of greater objectivity, is, undoubtedly, the ideal of the behavioral scientist, and its application to the problem of this study may be considered. The dependent variable, namely television use, is already established and any manipulation of it in a contrived fashion, in an effort to simulate actual selection and use of television by aged persons, would seem highly improbable. The independent variables of personality, needs, interests, and attitudes of the aged person are also well established and defy significant manipulation.

It would appear that greater promise is to be found in an \textit{ex post facto} research design.\textsuperscript{1} Herein recognition is given to the prior existence of the dependent and independent variables and the research is designed to identify and describe independent variables or clusters of such variables and to determine any relationships which may exist with the dependent variable.

\textsuperscript{1}Fred N. Kerlinger, \textit{Foundations of Behavioral Research}, pp. 290-292.
Applying the latter approach to the problem in hand, personality factors, attitudinal sets or interest patterns of aged persons would be determined by means of appropriate measurement instruments and related to variable patterns of dependence upon and use of television. In the interest of greater refinement, the latter patterns would be determined by appropriate scaling techniques. The challenge of this approach is inviting and its application would be desirable. In its application, the investigator would have to cope with problems connected with the selection, development and validation of measurement instruments for use with aged persons. In addition to the lack of instruments which have been validated for use with aged persons, difficulties may be encountered eliciting full attention and cooperation from aged persons.

The foregoing approach, involving measurement and statistical analysis, is presented as a possible means of testing and evaluating the results and findings of this study. The problems and difficulties cited in connection with its application are not intended as a negation of the approach, but rather point to the need for ingenuity and the need for specific design for this age group.

Feasibility of validating the findings of this study would seem to lie in a replication study or studies. The exploratory study is dependent upon subjective interpretation and thus liable to bias. While not a guarantee of eliminating bias, the replication study would have the tendency of leveling out or counteracting such bias. Such a study would employ a sample of subjects exhibiting the same demographic variables and made up of residents of a comparable senior city facility.
A Specific Question

Further research would be desirable to investigate a question or problem which appeared during the course of this study. It concerns itself with the degree to which the aged person's dependence upon television, in relation to other activities, is determined in his preretirement years. Sudden, dramatic changes, unless they are trauma induced, are not expected in the personality, interests and attitudes of the individual as he makes the transition to retirement and is confronted with a greater amount of uncommitted time. There could be the expectation that prior experience would be relied upon for the selection of and use of activity patterns for satisfying needs and interests. In fact, there may be even greater dependence upon them. Some of the cases of this study suggest this relationship. Within the use of television, there seems to be a carry-over of program preferences from an earlier period for the aged person.

In an inquiry such as this there would have to be recognition given to the total effect of retirement and, for the subjects of this study, the effect of the abandonment of a more independent existence for the security of a senior citizen community. These experiences can be quite traumatic in themselves and, as such, have an effect upon behavior and even modify existing patterns. The retirement experience would seem most applicable to males and both sexes would seem to be directly involved in the move from an independent to dependent mode of living.
Extending the Scope of the Study

Several possibilities of broadening the scope of the research suggest themselves. The atypical sample of this study is certainly not representative of the general class of aged persons, or even of aged persons within the same age category. Comparative studies, using other samples, seem to be indicated. With a number of publicly supported facilities for aged persons being established, it would be possible to use a sample reflecting quite different socioeconomic and educational levels. It would be worthwhile, too, if a comparison could be made with a sample of aged persons who are still maintaining their own homes and a more independent mode of living.

There is the general need for more information about the selection and use of television within the broad category of persons variously labeled as retirees, senior citizens, golden agers, etc. Most of the compilation of statistical data sets the lower end of this group at the age of sixty-five. Generally, television audience studies use a broad category of "50 years and over" and provide little by way of specific information for the age group which is being here discussed. The conviction is expressed that seeking this general information will satisfy interests and concerns in communications research and also in the field of social gerontology. If the research is concerned not only with the extent of television usage, but also with the meaning such use of television has for the aged person, the dual purpose suggested may be effectively served.
Implications of the Study

The importance of television and its extensive use by aged persons have been given considerable emphasis throughout this report. A counterpart is suggested and it assumes the form of a question. What considerations are being given or what concerns are being expressed in behalf of these aged persons within the television industry? Placing these two considerations in juxtaposition provides certain implications which seem pertinent. The implications are enumerated and discussed.

1. An anomalous situation prevails with the consistent and extensive use of television by aged persons while television programing is designed primarily for younger persons.—That there is little concern shown for the sixty-five years of age and older group is demonstrated by the television audience rating services usual practice of using the "50 years and over" category and thus lumping together a large, yet diverse, group. Usually no further breakdown is provided for the broad category while there are breakdowns according to demographic variables for the other age groups. This seems to be a direct reflection of the commercial advertiser's evaluation of the market potential. His greatest concern and interest center upon the "18 through 34" age group.

A practical point of judgment would be that a given program which appeals to a given number of persons in the "18 through 34" category is much more desirable because of its advertising potential than another program appealing to an audience of equal size in the "50 and over" category. According to this standard, it is quite obvious which programs have the greatest chance for retention in a broadcast schedule.
2. The aged person's use of television may be in spite of programs which are designed primarily for younger persons. Interviews were conducted with the program directors representing the three commercial television stations and the one educational television station in Columbus, Ohio. All four indicated that there are no programs being presented which are designed to appeal to persons over the age of sixty-five. There was the legitimate argument that within the broad spectrum of programs being provided there are many programs which have a very general appeal and therefore would attract aged persons also. This is true of newscasts, news panel shows, travel and adventure type shows, some dramatic programs, as the Perry Mason reruns, some musical shows, especially the Lawrence Welk program, and some shows featuring personalities conducting game-type or audience-participation programs.

3. It would appear that commercial television stations could include the aged persons as a concern as they attempt to fulfill their public service commitment. Using the Columbus, Ohio area as example, and employing a national 9.4 percent figure, as reflecting the number of persons sixty-five years of age and over in the population, there are an estimated 87,000 persons in this age category in this area. Some of the special educational programs, defined by television stations as public service, may not attract an audience of more than 5,000 persons. It would seem that aged persons represent a potential audience that large or larger for programs designed for them.
4. The educational television station has a potential for satisfying the interests and needs of aged persons. — The interview with the program director of the educational station revealed that the mail response reflected steady viewing and interest among aged persons. It also revealed a policy of including program types which may appeal to the "50 and over" category. A major problem confronting the educational television station is effective dissemination of information about its program services. There is the additional problem, at least in some communities, of requiring more effort to tune in the UHF stations. Information obtained in this study indicated very little viewing of programs provided by the educational television station among aged persons. Meanwhile, a number of the aged persons expressed an interest in these programs and, at the same time, indicated their lack of information about them and being unable to tune in the UHF station. The problem connected with tuning in the UHF station should be alleviated in time with television sets now being appropriately equipped for this purpose.

Closely allied to the potential of the educational television stations, and providing promise of further support of this potential, are several provisions of the Public Broadcasting Law of 1967. The law provides federal financial support through fiscal year 1970, as an extension of the Educational Television Facilities Act of 1962. This support is in the form of facilities and equipment grants to provide for continued growth and expansion of educational broadcasting facilities. The law also provides for the establishment of a Corporation for Public Broadcasting to make grants of both federal and private funds
for educational television and radio program development. The corpora-
tion is to receive federal monies as well as private support. Initial
steps for the inception of the corporation have been taken. There have
been pledges of money from private sources and initial appointments to
its board of directors have been made by the President of the United
States.²

The provisions of the Public Broadcasting Law of 1967 must, at
this time, be regarded as hopeful promises and will have to await
further implementation before providing assurances. Within the provi-
sions is the expectation of the development of educational and cultural
programs to provide services currently not being given to the people of
this country. The concern of this study has been the aged person.
There is the hope that in the increased effort to meet the needs of all
people in our society, the aged person be recognized as most worthy of
attention.

The hope just expressed might well be extended to an appeal
that there be greater concern expressed for the aged persons who rely
upon television as an important means of satisfying their needs and
interests. Such concern would have to be predicated upon an increase in
knowledge about and understanding of aged persons. Hopefully, this
increase would produce an empathic reaction among persons involved in
the responsible task of providing television services for all of the
people in our society.

²"LBJ Makes CPB Signing an Event," Broadcasting, Nov. 13, 1967,
pp. 33-34.
APPENDIX A

TELEVISION SURVEY

This survey of television viewing by the residents of Lutheran Senior City is part of a research project. Your cooperation in completing this form will be very helpful. I wish to thank you kindly for the time and effort required of you. The information provided by you will be held in confidence.

Will you check the programs you watch "fairly regularly." If the program watched "fairly regularly" is not listed, please fill in the name of the program. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Ted Schalinske

KINDLY COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Name ___________________; Age ___; Married ____ Single ____ Widow(er) ____
(Check appropriate one)

Education: Grade ___ H.S. ____ College ____ Graduate or professional school ___
(Check appropriate one)

Where did you live prior to coming to LSC? __________________________

What was your occupation prior to retirement? __________________________

What is your religious affiliation? __________________________

MY FAVORITE TV PROGRAMS
1 _______________________
2 _______________________
3 _______________________
4 _______________________

TV PROGRAMS I DO NOT CARE TO WATCH
1 _______________________
2 _______________________
3 _______________________
4 _______________________
MY FAVORITE TV PERSONALITIES

1__________________________
2__________________________
3__________________________
4__________________________

TV PERSONALITIES I DISLIKE

1__________________________
2__________________________
3__________________________
4__________________________

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, ON THE AVERAGE, I WATCH TELEVISION ___ HOURS PER DAY. SATURDAYS, ON THE AVERAGE, I WATCH TELEVISION ___ HOURS. SUNDAYS, ON THE AVERAGE, I WATCH TELEVISION ___ HOURS.

MONDAY-FRIDAY TV PROGRAMS

If you watch a program "fairly regularly," place a check mark to the left of the program listed. If the program watched "fairly regularly" is not listed, write the name of the program in the space provided.

MORNING 6 TO 12

___Bible Answers
___The Answer
___Christophers
___Sunrise Semester
___Sunrise Seminar
___Farm Program
___Luci
___The Life
___Today Show
___Dixon Show
___Dial for Dollars
___Spook Beckman
___Dick Van Dyke
___Pat Boone
___Hollywood Squares
___Dating Game

News programs (give name) ________________________________

Other programs (give name) ________________________________

AFTERNOON 12 TO 6

___50-50 Club
___Guid. Light
___Search
___Everybody Talks
___Donna Reed
___Girl Talk
___As World Turn
___Let's Deal
___Fugitive
___Password
___House Party
___Days Lives
___Doctors
___Yogi Bear
___Huck Hound
___Newlyweds
___Mates
___Tell Truth
___Edge Night
___Another World
___You Don't Say
___General Hospital
___Mike Douglas
___Secret Storm
___Match Game
___Very Special
___Twilight Zone

News programs (give name) ________________________________

Other programs (give name) ________________________________
EVENING 6 TO SIGN OFF

Traffic Court _ Felony Squad _ Lowell Thomas _ Stage '67
Gilligan's Is. _ Peter Gunn _ Virginia _ Wild West
Mr. Terrific _ Peyton Place _ I Spy _ Hogan's Heroes
Andy Griffith _ Big Valley _ Batman _ Capture
Family Affair _ Daktari _ Monroes _ Tarzan
To Tell Truth _ Petticoat Junc. _ Coliseum _ U.N.C.L.E.
Password _ Girl from UNCLE _ Three Sons _ Laredo
Adventure _ Occasional Wife _ America _ Green Hornet
Monkees _ Combat _ Daniel Boone _ Time Tunnel
Jeannie _ Invaders _ Star Trek _ Rango
Cap't Nice _ Fugitive _ Dragnet _ Diller Show
Road West _ Hillbillies _ Dean Martin _ Avenger
Iron Horse _ Green Acres _ F. Troop _ Tonight Show
Pursuit _ Gomer Pyle _ Bewitched _ Joey Bishop
Merv Griffin _ Danny Kaye _ That Girl

News programs (give name)__________________________________________
Other programs (give name)__________________________________________

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY TV PROGRAMS

If you watch a program "fairly regularly," place a check mark to the left of the program listed. If the program watched "fairly regularly" is not listed, write the name of the program in the space provided.

SATURDAY

MORNING 6 TO 12

Luci-GoRound _ Classroom _ Jetson
Capt. Kangaroo _ Davy _ Hoppity
Marine Boy _ Beaver _ Fun for All
Impossibles _ Super 6 _ Wills Family
Sp. Ghost _ Atom Ant _ Magilla
Superman _ Flintstones _ Porky
Lone Ranger _ Sp. Kid' tts _ King Kong
Underdog _ Squirrel _ Casper

Other programs (give name)__________________________________________
SATURDAY

AFTERNOON 12 TO 6

Sports programs (give name) _________________________________________

Other programs (give name) __________________________________________

EVENING 6 to sign off

_ Death Valley
_ Midwest Hayride
_ Dating Game
_ Newlyweds

O_ Gleason
O_ Secret Agent
O_ Get Smart
O_ Gunsmoke

O_ Mission Impossible
O_ Lawrence Welk
O_ Hollywood Palace

Other programs (give name) ___________________________________________

SUNDAY

MORNING 6 to 12

Religious programs (give name) _______________________________________

Other programs (give name) __________________________________________

AFTERNOON 12 to 6

_ Meet the Press
_ Aware
_ Columbus Town Meeting
_ College Bowl

_ Bishop Sheen
_ 21st. Century
_ Iss. and Ans.
_ Wild Cargo

Other programs (give name) ___________________________________________
SUNDAY

EVENING 6 to sign off

__Lassie__  __Walt Disney__
__About Time__  __Bell Telephone Hour__
__Hey Landlord__  __Bonanza__
__Ed Sullivan__  __Andy Williams__
__Smothers Brothers__  __Races__
__Candid Camera__  __Voyage to Bottom Sea__
__What's My Line__  __The FBI__

Other programs (give name) __________________________________________

DO YOU WATCH ANY PROGRAMS ON WOSU TV, CHANNEL 34? Yes ___ No ___.

IF YOU DO WATCH ANY PROGRAMS ON WOSU TV, LIST THE PROGRAMS YOU WATCH
"FAIRLY REGULARLY."
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WORK SHEET

Residence________________________________ Date __________________________

Occupation________________________________ Age____ Education___________

Interests___________________________________ S  M  W  

Social worker

Pastor

Physical__________________________________________

Mental____________________________________________

Like shows________________________________________ Personilities___________

________________________________________________________

Mon-Fri________________________ Sat________________________ Sunday________

LET'S BEGIN WITH YOU COMING HERE TO LSC

When

Why

Advantages of LSC for you

Disadvantages of LSC for you

LIFE LIKE HERE AT LSC FOR YOU

Programs, discussion groups, religious services, ceramics, shuffle board, field trips, downtown, community activities, community groups, reading, record player, radio, TV.
LOOKING BACK, WHAT PERIOD OF LIFE MOST PLEASANT?

FAVORITE TV SHOWS, PERSONALITIES

What special appeal do these have for you

DISLIKE TV SHOWS, PERSONALITIES

What do you dislike about these

TV VIEWING TIME

Watch alone, or with someone

ANY PHYSICAL PROBLEM VIEWING TV

WHY DO YOU WATCH TELEVISION

Information (what kind)

Entertainment

Someone to listen to

Distraction

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WATCH MUCH TV

Have you seen any of these programs

What effect will TV viewing have upon them

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Do you make any purchases because of TV advertising

ASSUMING YOU HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE WHAT KIND OF PROGRAMS WOULD BE PRESENTED ON TV, WHAT KIND OF PROGRAMS WOULD YOU SELECT?
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Public Documents**


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**Unpublished Material**

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**Periodical**