

Negotiating Time and Space for Serious Leisure: Quilting in the Modern U.S. Home

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Drawing on unstructured interviews with 70 American women quilters, I examine both the leisure constraints they experience and the acts of resistance they engage in while practicing serious leisure quilting. Even though quilting is a feminized and gendered activity, there are still time and space constraints in the traditional heterosexual family which impact quilting. Women resist such constraints and stereotypical notions of gender relations as they pursue serious leisure quilting. They quilt first for themselves, and second to administer to family and kin needs in gendered ways (e.g., gifts that cement emotional ties to family and friends). As a serious leisure activity, quilting highlights how women accept, reproduce, and negotiate traditional notions of gender in families.

KEYWORDS: *Serious leisure, constraint and resistance, women's leisure, family, quilting.*

Introduction

This is mine. Quilting is my reward. Once the toilets are clean and the dishes are done it is quilting time. And like tonight, I'll sit and watch the baseball game all night and quilt. (Sandy, early 40s)¹

Quilting is thought by many to be a harmless, traditional, even quaint or silly feminized² activity, although 15% of U.S. households participate in quilting (Quilting in America Survey, 2003). Most contemporary American women who quilt bring in little if any money to the family economy, and to the outside eye there are not obvious or clear professional and legitimizing outlets for this activity as other leisure pursuits have (e.g., professional golf). Because of these and other factors, quilting has been conceived of as a traditional pursuit, one that is unimportant and therefore non-threatening to regular, traditional family life. As of late, quilting has transformed from a necessary home activity to a non-essential activity, one that resembles leisure

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¹All names are pseudonyms.

²A recent national level survey documents that 99% of quilters are women (Quilting in America Survey, 2003).

more so than work. Thus, for American women in traditional heterosexual relationships with families, serious leisure quilting takes up their already limited time and space in the household.³ Sometimes both quilters and their families feel this valuable time and space should be devoted to family needs, not women's individual creative needs that are met through quilting activities. Women quilters challenge traditional family dynamics when they take leisure time for themselves, yet they simultaneously embody feminine characteristics by engaging in what we consider a feminine and traditional activity. However, women negotiate the tensions between family and quilting demands by finding the time and space in their lives to accomplish both. Drawing upon unstructured interviews with 70 women, I address how contemporary American serious leisure quilters negotiate the constraints of time and space for quilting amidst other gendered familial duties.

Women quilters resist time and space issues not by rejecting the constraints altogether, but by developing strategies to incorporate quilting into family interests. Dealing with the realities of the unpaid second shift of housework and childcare (Hochschild, 1989), women who engage in paid work blend their serious leisure interests with their second shift responsibilities—they quilt while waiting for children's doctor's appointments and sporting events, and they customize quilting projects to fit into their already hurried lives.⁴ Through this resistance process, quilters manage the guilt they sometimes feel while quilting because they believe that separate hobby interests "take away" from family responsibilities. For example, Denise is married and the mother of two children, and when cutting fabric for a quilt she moves to be near the family so that she can cut fabric and be with her family: "I have a little tiny space that has a cutting board and I will work in there, but I get lonesome for my family. So I will basically go where my family is." Here, Denise negotiates choosing to spend time quilting and spending time with her family. Clearly, she is making a choice to *both* quilt *and* spend time with her husband and children. However, Denise fills the role of caretaker before the role of quilter, as she places being with the family over quilting—she does not move her family to her quilting area. Additionally, Denise's storage system for when she is working on a specific project is shaped by her husband's neat organizational style:

My husband is a very precise person, he likes things tidy and I do not, so I keep all the fabric from one project in a box and then I'll carry the box with me and then put everything back in. That's helping, but not really.

³These traditional heterosexual women are embedded in both gender roles and family structures—for regardless of the presence of children in the home or not, both the family structure and gender roles are framed by the larger patriarchal structure. That is, quilters, like other American women, "do gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) regularly in everyday life, and can be considered living traditional lives.

⁴Although it is difficult to determine exactly how much leisure time American women have at present, or what proportion of participants' said leisure time is centered on quilting, the fact that these women squeeze quilting in to already existing family activities suggests that they probably do not have much leisure time with which to begin.

Note how Denise first described her husband's organizational preferences, then her own, and next she includes how she has changed her ways to fit her husband's ways. In both of these passages from Denise's interview it is clear that Denise is modifying her quilting based upon her family and her family's needs and preferences.

Quilting can be understood as a serious leisure activity that women turn to primarily for escape, relaxation and creativity. As noted by Stebbins (1979), serious leisure is: "a systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that they launch themselves on a career, centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (p. 3). Women who engage in serious leisure quilting as participants in this study do, typically learn to quilt as adults, pay others for quilting instruction, and make quilts as individuals rather than in groups (e.g., quilting bees). Quilting, like other serious leisure activities, is aptly considered superfluous to the household economy.⁵ Most contemporary American quilters learn and practice quilting in serious leisure ways—they pursue it voluntarily and intensely for individual pleasure. Women also quilt because it helps them relax from paid work, unpaid household work, and other familial carework duties. For further clarification, Stebbins (1996) outlines six characteristics of a serious leisure participant:

- 1) Serious leisure is leisure in which its practitioners encounter the occasional need to persevere, although this need is significantly less acute than in some occupations and significantly more acute than its opposite, casual leisure; 2) Moreover, a career awaits the serious leisure enthusiast. It consists of a history of turning points, levels of achievement and involvement, and a set of background contingencies; 3) Third, personal effort is common in such leisure, as based on extensive skill, knowledge or experience and oftentimes a combination of these; 4) Those who engage in serious leisure derive various durable benefits from it, including self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of group accomplishment, and enhancement of self-image; 5) Further, they find in connection with each serious leisure activity a unique social world composed of special norms, beliefs, values, morals, events, principles, and traditions; 6) These five distinguishing qualities are the soil in which the sixth takes root: practitioners come to identify strongly with their avocation. (p. 46)

Women's quilting experiences in this study comply with each of the six characteristics that Stebbins (1996) proposes. First, quilters express the need to find time and space for quilting and they take steps to negotiate with their families to quilt. Quilters, then, persevere for their activity as is suggested in the first characteristic (Doyle, 1998; Stalp, 2001). Second, quilters establish non-economic personal level goals within quilting. They first identify themselves as quilters and develop personal creative goals, and they also use quilting as a way to cement ties with family and friends by gifting finished quilts

⁵Certainly, women and men do engage in quilting activities solely and partially for capital. The majority of women in this study, however, engage in quilting as a form of *non-economic* culture production.

(Stalp, 2004). Third, quilters develop advanced skills in quilting, including experience with sewing, fabric, and color. Many consider quilting as a way to paint with fabric and quilters spend time to learn new quilting skills (Stalp, 2001). Fourth, women derive personal, social and familial benefits from quilting (Stalp, 2001), including all that Stebbins (1996) mentions: "self-actualization, self-enrichment, feelings of group accomplishment, and enhancement of self-image" (p. 46). Fifth, when women self-identify as quilters, they also take on the externally generated meanings of being a quilter within the quilting social world (Stalp, 2004). In other words, quilters take on the "norms, beliefs, values, morals, events, principles, and traditions" of the quilting social world (p. 46). Finally, the women in this study frame quilting as a "passion" or "avocation" (Stalp, 2004) which is in line with Stebbins' (1996) sixth and final characteristic of a serious leisure participant: "practitioners come to identify strongly with their avocation" (p. 46).

American women's serious leisure quilting experiences demonstrate women's resistance to pre-existing familial constraints, such as adequate time and space in the home for leisure. Women choose to quilt, and although quilting is thought to be more of a traditional activity than not, at present quilting does not "fit" into the family structure, as quilts are no longer necessary household goods. Despite its traditional feminine history, quilting is more like any other modern leisure activity that takes time, attention, money, and space away from the family routine and toward one's individual routine. In this way, quilting, although once a traditional activity that supported the family economy, quilting as it is practiced in serious leisure ways can be considered a non-traditional activity as another hobby would, for serious leisure quilting does not contribute to the family economy. This particular leisure activity occurs within the home and affects family members in ways different than when an individual pursues leisure outside the home (e.g., golf and football widows). For example, Collis (1999) noted in her study of a small Australian mining community that married men working four 12-hour shifts like to hang out in pubs and drink alcohol during their off nights. This too, is a traditional and gendered activity, and it removes the individual from the family and familial activities. Disrupting the family status quo is a considerable factor as leisure is studied both within and outside of the family structure, whether traditional or non-traditional families are being studied (Shaw, 1997).

In this manuscript, I examine both the leisure constraints posed by being part of a traditional American heterosexual family, and the acts of resistance American women engage in while practicing serious leisure quilting. Even though quilting is a feminized and gendered activity, there are still the constraints in the traditional family of adequate time and space for it.

Women resist such constraints, and they also resist stereotypical notions of gender relations—as these women pursue serious leisure quilting, they do it first for themselves, and second to administer to family and kin needs in gendered ways (e.g., providing gifts that cement emotional ties to family and friends). To acknowledge the constraints and the resistance present in

women's leisure, I draw on Shaw's (1994) integrative approach to studying women's leisure, one that:

sees women's leisure as offering possibilities for resistance. The argument for resistance arises out of the definition of leisure as a situation of choice, control, and self determination. When leisure is seen in this way, women's participation in activities, especially non-traditional activities, can be seen to challenge restrictive social roles. (p. 9)

Here Shaw (1994) focuses on non-traditional activities, which quilting in its present form can certainly be considered. Although once considered a traditional pursuit, in its present form quilting is no longer a necessary activity for women in the home. Thus, it can now be construed as non-traditional, and as taking away from traditional needs for the home. And, although quilting is stereotypically feminized (meaning that mostly women pursue it as compared to men), when chosen and pursued in a serious leisure fashion, quilting affords women benefits that other leisure pursuits proffer.

The research presented in this manuscript demonstrates how American women both experience leisure constraints and resist those constraints as they find the time and space to quilt in serious leisure ways within and outside other gendered familial duties. First, I bring the reader up to date on current serious leisure quilting practices in the United States, noting how quilts have moved from necessary to non-necessary household goods. I next describe the methods and data of the study. In the findings section, I explore the constraints of time and space in American women quilters' lives, and how women resist these constraints as they integrate their quilting into already established family activities. I devote considerable attention to the issue of leisure space in women's lives, noting that when women do obtain space for leisure in the home such as a permanent space for quilting, it typically happens after other family members' space needs are met, regardless of class background. As women in this study *both* quilt *and* spend time with their families, they reveal the important gendered sites of negotiation for women and leisure in contemporary families; that is, the constraints and resistance present in American quilters' lives. In line with Shaw's (1994, 1997) integrative framework, I examine the constraints and resistance within American serious leisure quilting, practiced in a traditional heterosexual family setting.

Serious Leisure Quilting

American women have produced quilts for hundreds of years, combining the production of a functional object with creative expression. In the last 30 years, a growing number of middle-aged American women have found quilting to be a relaxing activity, one often practiced alone or in the company of others, and one that connects women to family and friends. Although quilting appears in many ways to be "invisible work" (Daniels, 1987) to most viewers of quilts, there is a complex process of meaning-making that happens long before a quilt becomes a finished product. In addition to meaning-making, quilting serves as a serious leisure pursuit, and a non-economic cre-

ative outlet for individual women. Women turn to quilting for relaxation and creativity, and, as they pursue it alone, they resist (and in some ways, sustain) pre-existing leisure constraints posed by the family institution. As a serious leisure activity, quilting highlights how women accept, resist, and negotiate traditional notions of gender in families.

Quilting is currently enjoying a revival in interest, due in part to the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial. To commemorate the 1776 activities of their forebears, women constructed quilts to honor them and the household work they did in support of the American Revolution. Additionally, the marriage of industry and technology in the quilting products arena has continued the 1976 quilt revival into present day. For the first time in history, fabric companies devote a small portion of their production to making quilt fabric (Stalp, 2001). At no other time in history have quilters enjoyed the variety of quilt fabric available, helpful tools designed specifically for quilting which introduce time-saving techniques, and sewing machines with extraordinary technological advancements available for individual at-home use (Brackman, 1997). With more women involved in the paid work force since the 1970s, the expendable income of working women has a logical, gendered outlet in the quilting industry. A national household survey reports that quilting has increased 50% from 1997 to 2003. It is also become a 2.27 billion dollar industry, with more than 21 million women (15% of U.S. households) participating in quilting (Quilting in America Survey, 2003). In addition, museum-goers and art connoisseurs have focused their attention on both historical and contemporary quilts, as museums and the general art world are beginning to consider quilts as forms of both craft and art (Becker, 1982; Peterson, 2003).

In its most basic, traditional, and familiar form, a quilt is a three-layered fabric sandwich. It has a top, a batting, and a back. The quilt top is what people are most familiar with, for it displays the design (symbolic and actual). A quilt top can be an example of patchwork (pieces of fabric sewn together in a pattern), appliqué (pieces of fabric sewn atop larger pieces of fabric), or wholecloth (a single, large piece of fabric). The middle layer, called batting, falls in the middle of the top and the back pieces of the quilt. Batting varies in thickness and offers warmth and texture, while the usually nondescript back encases the filling and provides support to the fabric unit. These three layers—top, batting, and back—piled atop each other, make up the landscape upon which the actual quilting takes place. Stitches placed carefully in consideration of the quilt top penetrate through each layer of the fabric sandwich and add an additional layer of design to the quilt, functionally keeping the three layers secure. Finally, a strip of fabric, the binding, is sewn around all edges, containing the filling edges and the unfinished edges of the top and back.

Quilting follows the tenets of other serious leisure activity: it is a meaningful, creative process that people turn to for relaxation, sometimes pursuing it intensely, but not to produce household monies. As a form of serious leisure, then, quilting borrows from the artistic processes found in folk art

and high art traditions. Serious leisure quilting combines the unpaid leisure processes of folk art quilting and the paid work processes recognized in high art quilting. Both folk art and high art quilts are discussed in the public realm in terms of their artistic contributions, as well as how much they are economically valued. The public also considers serious leisure quilts to be artistic works, but from the perspective of the serious leisure quilter, private realm discussions usually center on the artistic and sentimental value of quilts, rather than economic value.

Women's quilting spaces are utilitarian; that is, like men's workshops and hobby spaces (Gelber, 1999; Spain, 1992), quilting spaces are set up to efficiently store tools and raw materials. If the quilting space is large enough, equipment can be set up in a way that it can continuously be used, with long tables housing sewing machines, separate cutting tables and ironing boards, in addition to a fabric collection, or stash (Stalp, 2001, in press). Additionally, some quilters use pegboard panels to line the walls of their rooms, hanging quilting tools such as rotary cutters, rulers, quilting hoops, and pattern templates for quilt blocks and quilting designs on hooks. As familiar as a man's workshop is to the general public, quilting-related tools hung on walls are quite familiar to quilters, but not necessarily to non-quilters. Outsiders can locate images of quilting spaces as quilters do, looking in national print and television advertisements marketed to quilters in print venues such as *Quilter's Newsletter Magazine*, television shows like *Sewing with Nancy* on PBS and *Simply Quilts* on HGTV. Sewing and quilting equipment manufacturers sell upper middle class women on the benefits of having one's own quilting space and, perhaps more importantly for advertisers on these programs, one's own quilting equipment. In order for women to have such quilting spaces, though, most quilters must negotiate this with their families. In the next section I discuss generally the time and space constraints that women face to engage in leisure activities such as quilting.

Time and Space Constraints

Traditional family life poses constraints for women pursuing an independent leisure activity such as quilting, and the ways in which paid work and leisure have developed over time contribute to these constraints. Women have steadily entered the paid workforce since the 1970s, and family life has not accommodated such changes well (Arrighi & Maume, 2000; Crosby, 1987; Greenstein, 1996), leaving women the double burden of doing paid work and unpaid housework (Hochschild, 1989; Kluwer, Heesink, & Van de Vliert, 1997; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2000). In addition, women have fluid boundaries between paid work and family activities and the boundaries between public and private duties often blur or spillover (Bailey, 2000; Baker, 1996, 1997, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), resulting in women having less control over their lives (Shaw, 1998), including time for leisure pursuits (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1987; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Sirianni & Negrey,

2000). Women's second shifts have implications for the pursuit of leisure in general and at home leisure in particular.

For example, Stebbins (1996) noted the particular, gendered challenges women barbershop singers face in order to practice their serious leisure:

Some women go to great lengths to ensure that basic family needs are met before they depart for a barbershop function . . . they prepare in advance all the meals they will miss while away for a weekend convention or chapter retreat. (p. 78)

Further, Stebbins (1996) noted that wives were more involved in their husbands' barbershop activities than vice versa: "One of the divorcees said that her ex-husband's rejection of her hobby was partly to blame for the dissolution of their marriage" (p. 78). Regardless of type of serious leisure pursuits, women and men who pursue serious leisure often perceive that the time and space they devote to leisure can "take away" from their family's general needs, rather than help to meet them. For example, dog sports competitors (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002), marathon runners (Baldwin, Ellis, & Baldwin, 1999; Goff, Fick, & Oppliger, 1997) and barbershop singers (Stebbins, 1996) have all made similar comments.

Having a specific space set apart for creative needs has been important historically for men who pursue hobbies. The man's workshop emerged in the early 1900s in the U.S., and was a place where men could "pursue messy craft hobbies without bothering their wives" (Gelber, 1999, p. 207). Women may have been allocated the kitchen in the home, but this did not and still does not provide the type of leisure experience that men were seeking in a workshop at that time (Doyle, 1998). Rozsika Parker (1984), in her study of British embroidery, commented on the gendered view of women's leisure and artistic activities: "But whereas the personality of a painter is expected to be eccentric and egocentric, for women embroiderers the notion of personality is still constrained by the feminine ideal" (p. 203, 204). In contemporary middle-class homes, if there is leisure space, men are more likely than women to have separate spaces for personal pursuits in the home such as a study, an office, or a workshop to pursue home-based leisure (Gelber, 1999; Spain, 1992).

Not all leisure takes place outside the home, though, which can further complicate issues of time and space, as hobby activities and materials cannot be easily disguised. For example, women who read romance novels (Brackett, 2000; Radway, 1991) and watch soap operas (Harrington & Bielby, 1995) at home for serious leisure purposes feel guilty and rationalize their reading and watching both to themselves and to their families. As Radway (1991) noted when discussing romance novel readers' perceptions of their leisure pursuits: "They are aware that this activity demands the attention that would otherwise be devoted to children, house, or husband, but they defend themselves with the assertion that they have a right to escape just as others do" (p. 103). Issues of time and space also surface for romance novel readers.

Time and space become sites of family resource negotiation when women pay attention to themselves and engage in serious leisure activities independent of the family, as well as those that occur in the home.

Gendered Family Role Constraints

Women in traditional heterosexual families “do gender” everyday (West & Zimmerman, 1987), and are closely linked to caretaker roles and household duties. In families, women often experience leisure differently and in less positive ways than their spouses or children (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1995; Freysinger & Flannery, 1992; Larson, Gillman, & Richards, 1997; Marks, Huston, Johnson, & MacDermid, 2001; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Thompson, 1999). Even while watching television together, men are more likely to be in command of the remote control than women (Walker, 1996). Young, heterosexual unmarried women find they need to alter leisure choices to positively accommodate relationships with romantic partners (Herridge, Shaw, & Mannell, 2003), and women’s independent leisure pursuits are often considered threatening to a traditional heterosexual marriage (Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990).

Families provide more leisure for men than they do for women (Henderson, Hodges, & Kivel, 2002). Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, and Freysinger (1999), stated that leisure for women (that could help relieve stress) gets squeezed out of women’s daily lives and is not often legitimated:

Historically, almost all women have had to make leisure secondary in importance to the needs of the family. Family was an important component, both positive and negative, for women’s leisure and continues today to exert great influence on women’s lives, regardless of social class, race, or other life conditions. (pp. 39-40)

When women do engage in leisure just for themselves, they typically find themselves negotiating their leisure activities with other responsibilities, such as housework, childcare, carpool, and running errands for the family.

Women have less personal time and receive less private space, fewer resources, and less tolerance and respect than their male partners for pursuing the activities they enjoy and find fulfilling, especially leisure activities. Mattingly and Bianchi (2003) pointed out that “American men have more free time than women do, nearly half an hour more per day, on average” (p. 1014). In addition, they suggested that “marriage has virtually no effect upon the free time of men but dramatically curtails that available to women” (p. 1017). Women maintain the emotional ties of families, such as sending greeting cards (Di Leonardo, 1987), or preparing special meals (DeVault, 1991) to commemorate family events such as birthdays and anniversaries which is time-intensive and challenging, especially when developing new relationships. During family leisure activities such as holiday meals held in the home, women often work while other family members rest, producing more leisure time for others in the family than they do for themselves (Deem, 1996, 1982; Wearing, 1998).

Serious leisure that occurs in general family space such as the living room or kitchen in contemporary society can disrupt family life. People who are in the paid workforce engage in leisure often in non-workplace settings when they are off the clock. Yet, when working the second shift of unpaid work at home, women find it difficult to engage in leisure. As women continue to be primarily responsible for home duties, they have little time to devote to leisure, for how can women engage in leisure in their own workplace if leisure is defined as "a needed opportunity to recuperate from time spent at work?" (Henderson, et. al., 1996, p. 43). Leisure continues to exist outside the realm of women's everyday lives, especially for the majority of women who engage in unpaid household work regularly. Especially for women who engage in leisure pursuits at home such as quilting, finding leisure time and space can prove particularly difficult.

Methods

Guided by the tenets of grounded theory and a feminist perspective (Reinharz, 1992), my purpose in this study was to investigate the quilting process from the point of view of women who choose to quilt for pleasure, rather than as an income-generating activity. I chose grounded theory because quilting as a process was an exploratory concept, particularly in the social sciences. Scholars have examined quilts as cultural and artistic objects, but the process of making quilts and the gendered cultural production that occurs during this process has had very little academic attention. My background as a long-time quilter helped me make connections and conduct interviews with quilters. I used my insider status as a quilter to better establish rapport with women, and to reduce barriers between researcher and participant (Baca Zinn, 1979; Hertz, 1997). Because of my insider status, I was also already familiar with quilting settings and techniques, and I felt comfortable talking with quilters.

I conducted four years of participant observation of three quilting activities (small groups, guild meetings and quilt shows) to see first hand what kinds of information were exchanged among women. Women met in small groups weekly (e.g., 2 to 10 people), at quilt guild meetings monthly (e.g., 50 to 400 people), and at regional and national quilt shows annually (e.g., 1000 to 10,000 people). I met quilters informally in all of these sites, engaged in quilting activities, and often witnessed spontaneous comments, some of which were quilt related and some which were not. In all field sites, I conducted informal interviews with quilters, and in all field sites, I was public about my role as a researcher. Before beginning conversations with quilters in the field, I was certain to identify myself as a researcher, and as a quilter, which most women were more concerned about than my researcher status. This research is part of a larger study focused on the everyday experiences and perspectives of self-identified quilters in the U.S. who quilt for leisure purposes (Stalp, 2001).

In addition, I employed unstructured intensive interview techniques over a two year period, in the Southern, Midwestern, Western, and North-

eastern regions of the U.S. I targeted publicly visible quilt organizations such as quilt guilds and small religiously-affiliated quilt groups to recruit participants. I interviewed self-identified quilters, those who had developed or were in the process of developing a quilting identity—those who admired quilting but did not practice it regularly would not necessarily have the same constraints to leisure as those who practiced quilting in serious leisure ways. Due to lack of proximity of quilt shops where I was living, I was not able to recruit participants reliably from local quilt shops, but plan to do so for a future project. When I did travel to quilt shops in other areas, I conducted fieldwork and spoke informally to quilters who were shopping there, always identifying myself as a researcher and as a quilter.⁶ In total, I talked officially to 70 women quilters, and unofficially to hundreds of women quilters.

I began the interview process at the quilt guild level, as this was the largest organization in the area. I contacted the local quilt guild which numbered 150 members, and was granted permission to join the group as a researcher and as a quilter. The quilt guild met monthly and not all members knew each other well, or at all, though all shared the interest of quilting, self-identified as quilters, and practiced quilting regularly. Monthly guild meetings were business meetings that lasted two hours, and met in privately and publicly owned buildings that donated rooms for use by non-profit organizations. Similar to other non-profit organizations, the quilt guild meeting adhered to Robert's Rules of Order, and had elected officers with one year terms, who served as members of the Guild Board of Directors. Comparable to other large quilt guilds which can number 500 to 1000 members, this guild collected annual membership fees which funded national-level instructors and a quilt show every two years. After two years of participant observation of the group's monthly meetings (and honing up on my quilting skills), I approached a few individuals involved at different levels in the guild and interviewed them. I intentionally selected members at different levels of involvement to avoid only understanding the organization in a biased manner, from solely the leadership or the membership perspective. The first round of participants then recommended me to additional guild members to interview, which led me to meet more quilters from the local guild. The guild had both organizational and interest divisions within it, and from the diverse interests and roles of my initial contacts, I was able to understand this particular guild from many perspectives, which also informed me about differing perspectives concerning contemporary quilting practices.

In addition to referring me to other guild members, participants also gave me the names of friends and family who quilted locally but did not belong to the guild, as well as quilting contacts in other parts of the United

⁶My status as a researcher was not as important as my quilting status to study participants. Quilters often interviewed me informally about my quilting experience or requested to see finished quilts or quilts in progress before agreeing to participate in the study. Similar to other qualitative researchers' experiences, my insider status as a quilter contributed somewhat to the recruitment process (Baca Zinn, 1979; Beoku-Betts, 1994).

States. Through this process I was able to interview women who quilt on their own, in small unorganized groups, in religiously-affiliated groups, as well as members of additional quilt guilds in different parts of the country. Participants put me in contact with three quilt groups who differed in geography and size from the original quilt guild. The three groups I successfully met with were affiliated with different faiths, and had varying purposes and procedures for their quilting, though all groups partook in some form of fundraising via their quilting efforts. These three groups were far less formal than the quilt guild, as they did not collect fees or have a quilt show, and they worked on quilts together in church facilities. A similar purposive snowball sampling process occurred within the three groups—I came into contact with a member of each group, who then referred me to others with whom I could talk. As I anticipated, not all group members wanted to talk with me, and most of those who were willing to participate wanted to be interviewed together while they quilted during their regularly scheduled weekday afternoon devoted to quilting. These interviews occurred in church facilities, while they were working collectively on the same quilt. I intended to interview each woman separately, but as interviews began to overlap, I moved around the quilt frame and talked to each woman as she sat quilting with the group. These interviews benefited from the memories of all the quilters present, and as many women were related or good friends, they assisted one another in telling their quilt stories. I took intense fieldnotes after meeting with each of the groups, and had the opportunity to follow up with a few members for whom I needed clarification.

In accordance with grounded theory, and mindful of the larger project on which this research centers (See Stalp, 2001), I began to reach theoretical saturation: “the sociologist trying to discover theory cannot state at the outset of his research how many groups he [sic] will sample during the entire study; he [sic] can only count up the groups at the end” (p. 61) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My efforts resulted in a purposive snowball sample of 70 women: 68 white women, one African American woman, and one Latina. Twenty-five women belonged to the same quilt guild in the same region (with 150 members), 24 women quilted individually or in small friendship groups in all four regions, and 21 women were members of three different church groups in the same region. Participants lived primarily in the southern and midwest regions of the U.S., with smaller groups of participants living in the western and northeastern regions. I did not set out to investigate any specific regional or cultural quilting experience (e.g., southern, Amish) with this research, but to illustrate generally the contemporary serious leisure quilting practices in the United States, from the perspectives of the women who practice quilting. Women’s ages ranged from 20 to 90 plus, with the majority of women in their late 40s, 50s, and 60s. Twenty-four women (34%) were retired from paid work, leaving 46 women (66%) juggling work (paid and unpaid) with family obligations. Sixty-five women in this study (94%) had participated in some form of paid work outside the home. These women worked in a variety of areas in the paid workforce, and many volunteer in their communities.

Spouses were also a reality in many of these women's lives, as 65 women (94%) had marital experience (3 divorced, 10 widowed), and five women (6%) were never married. Fifty-five of these women (78%) had children in addition to spouses, and as the majority of women were at mid-life, the majority of their children had either already left home or were in the planning stages of leaving home. Women's social class varied somewhat in this study as well, although most lived comfortably at the middle, upper middle, and upper classes.

I tape recorded all but two of the 70 interviews in person—the remaining two audiotaped individual interviews occurred over the telephone. That is, I traveled to seven different states in the U.S. to conduct interviews. Individual interviews ranged from 1 to 8 hours, and church group interviews ranged 2 to 4 hours, with the average length of all interviews 3 hours. I compiled a list of open-ended questions that I used to guide me through the interview if necessary. Guided by feminist methodology (Reinharz, 1992), I chose to use an unstructured interview technique both to share voice, ownership, and order of conversation with participants. Through this method, then, I was able to use the list of questions as a checklist rather than a formal interview guide, for participants would end up covering the issues I wanted to discuss in the order that it made sense to them, episodically rather than historically, for example. I began each interview with the question, "How did you get involved with quilting?" and asked follow-up questions based on women's answers, keeping track of which issues were being covered on the interview guide. When the women had thoroughly covered the list of questions in discussing their quilting activities, I asked (while keeping the tape recorder running): "Is there anything I haven't asked you yet that you feel is important about your quilting?" Although I was not following closely an interview schedule and encouraged women to discuss what they wanted to, it was at this point in the interview process that many of the women began talking more comfortably as they felt explicitly in control of the interview. In general, participants appeared comfortable talking with me, were flattered that I wanted to interview them, and discussed in considerable depth their personal experiences and how they felt about quilting activities in their lives. With my extensive sewing and quilting background, as well as the use of feminist interview techniques, interviews resembled casual conversations between quilters.

Interviews with women from different regions of the country helped to clarify patterns of meaning making beyond any one group of quilters. For example, I first thought that women involved in the same organization might be socialized to respond to questions in similar ways. However, after interviewing women in seven states, I saw that women who quilt share deep personally meaningful links to this activity. The specifics about how, when, where, and how much time/money one spends on the activity vary by individual, but the meaning making processes involved in the activity of quilting recur in all interviews.

I took extensive fieldnotes within 24 hours of each interview and fieldwork experience (Laureau, 1989), and transcribed verbatim the majority of interviews myself. For those interviews hired out for transcription, I listened to the interview tapes while reading carefully through each transcript to ensure accurate transcription and comparable familiarity with each interview and transcript. After preparing transcripts, which ranged from 20 to 50 single spaced pages, I began the process of conducting member checks with participants (Janesick, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I mailed transcripts to participants so they could examine them for corrections or additions. The majority of women were satisfied completely with the transcripts. Some made minor changes such as spelling or dates, which did not substantially change the content of the interviews. Major changes included name changes within the text for privacy concerns, which again, did not alter interview content. During analysis and writing stages, I shared chapters-in-progress with participants and gave informal presentations on preliminary findings, encouraging participants to "talk back" to me (Oakley, 1981). In line with feminist research traditions and sharing of knowledge, I provided participants copies of interview tapes, the corrected transcript, and a copy of the finished work, upon request (Hertz, 1997; Reinharz, 1992).

The collection and analysis of data was consistent with the constant comparative method, simultaneously collecting and coding data, with emerging understandings and theoretical questions guiding further data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I proceeded with analysis by going back and forth between data collection, analysis and writing, and found the process to be beneficial in my understanding of the meaning of quilting to women. This analysis approach is consistent with the non-linear nature of qualitative philosophy. As Janesick (2000) stated, "The qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data" (p. 389). Even in the earliest stages of data collection I began to see that although these women lived in different parts of the country and that no two quilters were alike, they all discussed the struggles they faced in pursuing quilting, their chosen serious leisure activity. Time and space constraints regularly came up in relation to the family institution, which I tallied up dutifully. With this awareness, I tried to involve other family members in interviews, with no success. The lack of participation by family members turned into another finding—that if quilters' family members were not interested in giving me the impression that they were supportive, it certainly could be the case that quilters were not far off in speculating the lack of support they felt from family. In this research, how quilters negotiated, or resisted time and space constraints took on an integrative tone—believing that both family and quilting were important to them, quilters modified their quilting projects to fold into family events. I then connected these emergent themes to the research literature on constraint and resistance opportunities within women and leisure. I turn next to the findings, beginning with time constraints.

Findings

Time Constraints

Quilting requires time. It is a labor intensive process, and it is sometimes difficult for others to see or measure progress from a single session of quilting. Michelle, who is in her 50s, married with children, noted the time she spends with each quilt:

I feel like every quilt that I have made, part of my heart and soul went into it. I guess you work on them for so long. It will probably be two years from start to finish that this one is done. It is a part of me.

Other gendered home tasks, such as cooking a meal, doing dishes, or washing clothes can be done rather quickly in comparison to the highly skilled and labor intensive process of constructing a quilt from start to finish. General housework efforts are more easily detected and recognized by family members who benefit from eating a home-cooked meal off of clean dishes, or wearing clean clothes (although perhaps not articulated often enough). Family members do not necessarily benefit immediately, directly, or even personally from women's quilting efforts.

This perception can be frustrating to family members, and they may begin to view the time spent on quilting as "wasted" time. The quilters reported that their families did not understand the time they spent on quilting, and that they wanted the quilter to be doing something that related more directly to the needs of the family, rather than for herself. For example, Tina (early 40s) enjoys quilting above other home-related activities. She prefers to quilt over other leisure activities like watching television, which sometimes upsets her family and friends as they do enjoy watching television:

They don't like to see me spend so much time on it. It seems that they'd like to do more things with me, but then in reality the things that they really want you to do sometimes are just sitting in front of the TV and stuff like that. My boyfriend right now, he's really jealous of me doing quilting.

As in Tina's case, time for quilting has become an issue. Misunderstandings and sometimes resentment about time spent on an independently pursued hobby is not limited to quilters, but to any family member who pursues interests in a serious leisure fashion (Baldwin, Ellis, & Baldwin, 1999; Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002; Goff, Fick, & Opplger, 1997). Like many hobbyists, women quilters take on additional burdens when they make time in their lives to quilt, such as having to incorporate their quilting into other aspects of life, cutting corners to steal time away to quilt, and feeling guilty because they are devoting time to themselves when they and their families are both aware of other family-centered duties that also need their attention. This comment was expressed by Emma, a mother with three young children, also values her time spent quilting because quilts have more permanence and more extrinsic value than other parts of her life:

When I started quilting I was at home with the kids and lots of the stuff that you do is repetitive. Before you have the dishwasher empty, there are more dirty

dishes, same thing with the clothes. The house is always a mess, the grass always needs cutting. You never see that you're getting anywhere, or you correct the kids and they do the same thing five minutes later, it's like you're not getting anywhere, whereas if you make a quilt at the end you have something tangible. That's what really attracted me and the fact that you can make it exactly the way you want it, and there's really no right or wrong way to do it, and it's something that you can give to somebody else, which is really neat too. I get the pleasure while I make it and then at least hope the other people will enjoy it too.

Emma felt that her efforts at quilting are more obvious, last longer, and are more appreciated than other duties she tends to do daily for her family in the home.

The benefits that women gain from quilting are indirectly bestowed on family members, as they witness a calmer and more content mother or spouse. For example, Heather, who is divorced and in her middle 40s, with no children, explains how quilting improves her as a person, and that it provides her a level of calmness and peace:

My mother made a comment that she likes me better when I'm quilting, so, I think it's really good for me. It still seems like when I spend 3 or 4 hours and don't notice where the time has gone, that's kind of like what I am always looking for, that's the goal, that's where I'm trying to end up, is to have spent time and have that sort of calm contented satisfied feeling when I'm finished.

Heather's comments echo many quilters' testimony that quilting provides inner peace, creative outlets, and time for reflexive thinking, despite the large amounts of time quilting takes up in their lives.

Sarah (early 30s) met her husband after she started quilting. She noted that it might be difficult for a non-quilter to be in a relationship with someone who is becoming involved in quilting because of the new attention given to time, space, and money, as well as the flurry surrounding quilting activities for the self-identified quilter:

It's easier to meet someone who's a quilter than to meet somebody and then be married to them and then have them become a quilter because then you're like, "Oh my God what happened!" I guess in other people's relationships it really does take a whole lot of time and space. So I could see if you were settled into your routine and then all of a sudden, "I need more space for this," it could be hard for your partner to understand.

Women's focused attention to quilting activities is often attention steered away from family, and, according to quilters, the family notices when quilting becomes a regular activity in the house.

Space Constraints

In this study, women's quilting spaces exist on a continuum, and range from temporary public family space to a separate, private space such as a bedroom. For those who have private spaces, there are both temporary and permanent categories. Having a private quilting room does not mean that women go to the room only to quilt. Rather, women want to have a space

in their home that they can call their own, where they can leave a mess and close the door if company comes over. Additionally, a small number of women rented space outside the home to use only for quilting activities.

Allocation of Quilting Space for Serious Leisure Quilters. In this study, 48 women (68.5%) have no space in the home where they can quilt regularly. Most have small hidden spaces such as closets and cupboards in various parts of the home to store materials and equipment. When women without space find the time to quilt, they also have to find the space to quilt. They typically take materials from their storage spaces, set up in family spaces such as the kitchen table, or the dining room, and once the allotted time has passed, they take down their equipment and return it to its storage space. The time block they could devote solely to the creative process of quilting is cut short by set-up and take-down time, and is layered with the frustration of not having a space, even a small one, to call their own.

Thirteen women (18.5%) have semi-permanent quilting space in the home. These semi-permanent spaces occupy rooms that have additional purposes. These rooms serve as guest rooms, junk rooms, or bedrooms of children who are away at college but come home occasionally to occupy the room. Semi-permanent space permits some equipment to be set up and left out in the open, but as it is temporary, when the space is needed for other purposes (e.g., guests), the quilting equipment gets taken down and stored away, similar to women with no space.

Seven women (10%) have permanently allocated space within the home where they store quilting materials and have sewing machines set up all the time. These spaces are usually located away from common family space, in a spare bedroom, the basement, or the attic. Carrie, who is in her middle 40s, married with three children talked about obtaining a permanent quilting space: "I have a section of the basement now. We have the computer room, my sewing stuff and my sewing stuff supplies. I took up the dining room for about four years." Women use these spaces for fabric and equipment storage, as well as a place in which to engage in the quilting process, not having to take down and put away equipment when their quilting time is over.

An even smaller number of women rented space outside the home in which to store materials and spend time quilting. In this study, only two women (3%) had rented space outside their homes solely for their quilting needs, and both have economic goals linked to their quilting—they plan to teach quilting classes or display quilts for sale in the space which to them justifies the cost of outside space. Although vastly different from the majority of the participants, the women engaged in quilting for economic purposes are worth mentioning as their economic goals likely justify the cost of outside space.

Not Having Space. Quilters without specific quilting space lamented first that they had no permanent quilting space in light of women who do. Secondly, though, they talk about the practical advantages of having a permanent space. Without it, women spend time unpacking their materials, setting

up, working, and then taking the equipment down again, so that the family could again use the space. Patricia, who is in her 60s, married with four adult children who no longer live at home longed for a more convenient space in which to quilt. She lives in a two story farmhouse, and has her equipment spread throughout the house:

Well, I have a sewing room, it's kind of a room upstairs at the top of our steps. It's kind of a half hallway where I have my sewing machine. I've had my sewing machine downstairs, too, but I put it upstairs a couple of years ago. Most of it I do up there although upstairs is still not set up really well. That room isn't big enough for cutting out and then I have to bring everything down to the kitchen table to cut it out and then take it up to the sewing machine. Hand work and stuff I just sit by the chair and a lamp. I usually have a basket full of stuff sitting there. But I would say that all of my machine work is done upstairs.

The upstairs room, where Patricia set up her sewing machine, is not large enough for all her quilting tasks beyond sewing such as designing, cutting and ironing fabric. Patricia uses other common family space to hand quilt and has even used the kitchen table to sew on. The kitchen is large enough, but because it is the kitchen and used frequently for other purposes, Patricia has to take down her equipment for family needs:

My daughter and I set two machines up on the kitchen table. We both sewed at the same time and had the ironing board there and everything. But you know as far as having a really nice sewing space I don't have that. I see a lot of people that have a big room and they have their ironing board, they have everything right there.

Patricia realizes the potential of a quilt room and sees other quilters with specific, and adequate space in which to quilt. She wants a "really nice sewing space." Seen through the allocation of space in the home, women without permanent quilting space work to garner space around other home activities for quilting. Such setting up and taking down and setting back up again takes valuable time out of a quilter's already limited leisure time.

Negotiating space generally, and quilting space specifically, is a challenge many families face, especially newly married couples. When Sarah (early 30s) married, she moved into her husband's house, which does not have a permanent quilting space. Before she married, Sarah was living alone and she had permanent quilting space in her apartment. Sarah commented on the amount of space it takes her to quilt effectively:

R: The more space you have though, I think it is easier to work on stuff. Now especially I have to almost work on what I'm working with and then put it away, and drag out something else. I mean it's alright, I'm getting it done.

I: *So if your husband ever goes away for the weekend, what would happen?*

R: (Laughing) There would be fabric from one end of the house to the other. I think I would just use it as an opportunity to spread out more.

Having a specific space leaves quilters to experience their quilting process more freely. A temporary space such as Sarah's current space shapes how she now experiences leisure in comparison to how she used to be able to

“spread out more” while quilting. When Sarah’s husband is at home, then, she works with her materials in a more contained, and presumably less ideal space. Sarah feels more able to spread out her fabric and equipment as she needs them when her spouse is not at home. Sarah uses general family space to compensate for the lack of permanent space, and when family members re-enter the home, she spends time packing up and storing equipment away.

With two teenaged children still living at home, Ginny (middle 40s) finds it important to incorporate quilting projects into her everyday life. She has been quilting since her children were young and the family now sees her quilting activities as part of the regular routine. They all have quilts on their beds that she has made, but she does not yet have a permanent space for making quilts for her family. Ginny spends part of her quilting time setting up and taking down her quilting area. When she gets the opportunity to spend a sizable amount of time quilting (e.g., when the family is gone for the afternoon), Ginny takes over the kitchen as her quilting space, and the family definitely notices upon their return:

R: I know there are times when my husband comes in and says, “Oh my goodness she’s at it again.” There is fabric everywhere and everything is going. One time I put a note on the door that said, “When you enter, instead of saying what you want to say, say, ‘My, it looks like you had a fun day.’”

I: *I remember you incorporated your quilting to go with the rest of your life. You talked about making something you can hand quilt on when you were going to games. Did you do that this summer?*

R: Yeah, when we’re going to ball games. I am very much “let’s be doing something” and so if I can have something that I can be working on by hand or designing that’s fine with me.

Ginny’s note to her husband, directing him to comment positively on her choice of activity, indicated that she is often hassled for spending time quilting (and taking up so much space). Yet, when the family is around, Ginny designs her quilting projects to be portable, so that she can continue to quilt and continue to spend time with her family—to her this seems a “best of both worlds” approach as she keeps her hands busy with quilting and her eyes busy supportively watching her children play sports.

Cassie (early 30s) is newly married and her quilting space is considerably smaller than most spaces in this study, comprising just a corner in the living room around an easy chair, and yet this small space is powerfully meaningful to her:

This is my little quilting area, which I love. I feel like this little corner of the world is mine and I try to keep it organized. If I’m sitting here and can just pull it up and that’s it, then I can start going and do it for a half an hour, that’s a half hour more that I would get done.

Cassie’s quilting corner takes up little space in the living room, especially since she does all her sewing and quilting by hand, and does not need additional space to set up a sewing machine either temporarily or permanently. As she stores her materials in a cabinet in a different room than her quilting

corner, only the project she is currently hand piecing or hand quilting is out in the open. Occasionally Cassie works on projects that require more space than her corner allows. Cassie and her husband argue about how much space her quilting takes up in the house, although her husband currently occupies the extra bedroom as his home office and definitely takes up more square footage of the apartment than she does:

He does complain when quilting takes over [the apartment], or especially when I have a quilt out for six weeks. I'll say, "Well, unfortunately, this is common space." I definitely don't try to be bitchy about it, but I told him that when we buy a house I'm having my own sewing room and it's going to be mine and he can come in sometimes.

In sharing her frustration about the space issue with her husband, Cassie discussed how she plans to resolve the space issues with a quilting room of her own:

I have these visions of what I want and lots of light and baskets full of fabric and a chair that's so comfortable, with pretty walls with quilts on the walls and a tile floor. I have it all mapped out in my mind. Whenever we look at a house and we see a standard formal house and there's a side room that some people make into a breakfast room I say, "That's going to be my quilting room, that's going to be it. You've had your own room for a long time." I want a space that's mine.

In her mind, Cassie has moved beyond just talking about the room. She has planned out what it will look like, and she actively shares that vision with her husband (who has always had a home office since they married) as they make plans to buy a house.

Rhymes with Guilt: Finding the Time to Quilt

Time is an important issue for quilters. The women in this study challenged time constraints and embraced contemporary family dynamics as they simultaneously quilted within family time. Rather than women resenting their families for the energy and time they put into managing family and work responsibilities, they instead use their quilting activities as a strategy to achieve both family and leisure. That is, they *both* embrace their families and friends *and* they continue to quilt, both complying with and resisting traditional gendered family roles.

While spending time quilting, some women feel that they are using time selfishly that could be devoted to the family. Realizing this, Meg (mid-60s) who is currently retired from paid work and spends time traveling to visit her children and grand-children, taught quilting classes, and designed projects that had quilters' busy family-centered lifestyles in mind:

I taught lap quilting where you quilted one block at a time and then put the quilt together with the blocks already quilted. This appeals so much, because women could take it with them, while they were waiting for kids, while they were car pooling. Those that work could do it at their lunch hour, they could do it watching television at night. It kept them within the family instead of

taking them out of the family. Because I think women don't necessarily like to be pulled out of their families to do their hobby. But this you can take with you. The nice thing is that you can carry it with you and you don't feel quite as guilty about doing something for yourself. Because you know women are full of guilt. That's how we're raised.

Meg's comments indicate that she is conflicted in balancing her quilting activities within her family—she wants to *both* practice quilting *and* spend time with her family. First, Meg is conscious of the struggles women face to get quilting done in everyday life, and she designs quilt projects that will work for women with families, challenging family roles but also supporting them. Next, she defends her decisions, affirming traditional family roles: “Because I think women don't necessarily like to be pulled out of their families to do their hobby” and normalizes women's guilt: “Because you know women are full of guilt. That's how we're raised.” In this richly overlapping passage, Meg acknowledged the difficulties women experience with personal leisure, she developed a solution to combine family and leisure, and then defends her guilt while she encourages women to continue to quilt amongst other family responsibilities.

Tina (early 40s), who earlier claimed that her boyfriend is “really jealous” of her quilting described a typical situation in which she compromises what type of quilting project she will work on when her boyfriend wants to go on a driving trip over the weekend:

I've never had a fight about it or anything and if he decides [that we're going] someplace, it takes away from the sewing machine time that I would like to have done that weekend, but then I'll go ahead and carry something else with me to just try to compromise that way. I don't always get exactly what I want, but I'll get something done.

Note that Tina continues to get some type of quilting done. She does not compromise her quilting entirely. Instead, Tina alters which project will get her attention that weekend, as does Beth (middle 50s) who has three children that no longer live at home: “I like hand work because I can do it in the car.” Other quilters have similar project choices to make when including family activities and limited amounts of time.

Emma, who is in her middle thirties, married with three children, finds that although she enjoys quilting greatly, she finds it difficult to squeeze it into other family activities. Struggling to find balance between her identities as both a good mother and a good quilter, she talked about how she spends a typical Sunday:

Between church and Sunday school I have a little time to kill, and when the kids go on the playground I would quilt then, and then after Sunday school we would meet their friends and we would play on the playground so I would sit and quilt, and that's kind of how it is.

In addition to bringing her quilting along, Emma has also altered her quilting projects to be smaller and less complicated: “I know I don't have much

time, and I can't stay with something too intricate because I get interrupted so often. I've got to do something that's simple but I don't want it to *look* too simple." In this way, Emma's quilting is more portable, and it is still satisfying to her. It is important to Emma that she spends time with her family, but also that she is seen by other women as a skilled quilter.

Meg shared her strategy for negotiating quilting into her family activities: "I try to save the handwork for evenings, so I can watch television and spend time with my family in a more general sense. My husband doesn't like it when I go into the other room to work when he's watching television at night." Making time for both family time and self time (quilting time) is important to these quilters. As some women have recognized their work as a perceived threat to a collective family time, they make marked effort to arrange their quilting schedule so that they can spend time with family members when the family is home.

Negotiating a Room of One's Own

Having a room of one's own in which to quilt is related to age, marital status, children, and affluence in this study. Young newly married women, women living with roommates or women with small children at home were more likely to have temporary quilting areas rather than quilt rooms in their living spaces. Young single women, married or unmarried women at mid-life, retired married women, and widowed women were more likely to have permanent space for quilting. This breakdown of space allocation indicates that when women are living with others, their personal and/or creative needs often receive lower priority, and is consistent with current family and leisure research (Chafetz and Kotarba, 1995; Freysinger & Flannery, 1992; Green, et. al., 1990; Herridge, et. al., 2003; Larson, et. al., 1997; Marks, et. al., 2001; Mattingly & Bianchi, 2003; Thompson, 1999; Walker, 1996). Yet, the age and space breakdown do not ensure women quilting spaces, for the majority of women in this study have no space in the home where they can quilt regularly.

Those with guest rooms and home offices were able to convert bedrooms into semi-permanent or permanent quilting spaces once their children left home. Women in the situation of looking for a new house or building a house made certain to select or build one that included a sewing room, or at least a guest bedroom that could double as a quilt room when guests are not visiting: ". . . they bought this house which is a split level, and the bottom floor is one large room and the garage. The large room is hers to work in, and she said that they bought this house with the intention that this room would be hers" (Stalp, 2001).

However, not even class differences can resolve the issue of women's space in the home completely. Even the most affluent women in this study obtained their quilt rooms *after* their children had left home, or *after* they had moved into a larger house. For example, Karla (early 60s) is currently

retired from paid work and shares how she secured her quilt room. After their children left home, Karla and her husband bought their retirement home and she planned on it having a quilt room:

I have a [quilt] room. When we bought this house my husband had said, "We only need two bedrooms." I said, "No, we don't, we need three." He asked, "Why?" "Well, I need a room, and we need a guest room." He finally agreed, but he did not know my ulterior motive was to have a sewing room, a craft room.

Similarly, Linda's (middle 60s) quilt room was a space that they planned for when she and her husband built their new house, after her children had all left home:

We built the home that we are living in now and I decided that I wanted to have a room that I could have for my sewing. I could spread out my work materials and I could just shut the door. So I have a beautiful table, and a walk-in closet that has shelving for my material.

The priority of space devoted to women in the home is revealed in how participants discuss having a space, or not having a space. The haves and have-nots, therefore, are not just discussing the quilting space or lack thereof, but the priority these women's leisure experiences are given in the family household. A quilting room to some extent is an accomplishment of having one's personal creative needs recognized.

Women describe their quilting spaces in great detail, and demonstrate the important role that quilting plays in their lives. In describing her newly obtained quilting space, Loretta (late 40s) noted that it was once her daughter's bedroom:

Well, when one of my kids moved out I took her bedroom over, and it's probably twelve feet by twelve feet, and it is so crammed full. I have a table with a sewing machine and the closet is now shelves with fabric stash, shelves all around the walls with batting. I just love the solitude. And it's kind of like an oasis away from everything. I can sit for four or five hours without moving and quilt and the time just flies by, it's a catharsis. Just soothing to your soul, it really is.

Loretta commented on how she felt when she was able to allocate space in the home for her quilting: "I can think of the accomplishment I felt within myself when I finally got a sewing room. And it's just mine, because when you're raising a family, you are doing [things] for everybody else and making quilts gives you an accomplishment." After meeting the needs of other family members, Loretta is finally granted a quilting space of her own as she nears retirement from paid work.

Some quilters referred to their quilting areas as their quilt studio, their place to keep their quilting materials whether or not they actually did work in that space. Having the space was important to these women, because it was *their* space. For example, Beth (mid-50s) appreciated having a quilting space that is all hers:

It's kind of nice having this room. I don't have to quilt on my kitchen table, so I'm real lucky to have this space. My husband has his computer space, so why

shouldn't I have my sewing room? There is nobody else at home and nobody else accountable so I can do stuff like that which is kind of good, I do what I want to do.

Beth's comments prove particularly interesting as she highlights both space issues with her husband and priority issues in terms of her entire family. In claiming that "nobody else is at home and nobody else accountable" Beth reveals that with her children gone, she can finally have some time to herself, to use it the way she chooses. Additionally, Beth compares her space to her husband's computer space, noting that her husband's space came before hers. She also expressed that "it's kind of nice having this room" for she no longer has to use family space such as the kitchen table for quilting—she now "gets" a room of her own so that she can do what she wants to do. Beth's statement of "I do what I want to do" only happens, though, after other family members are taken care of—her husband's office, and after her children have left home.

Leisure opportunities for women quilters are hampered by space in the home (or lack thereof) for quilting. An overwhelming 68.5% of women in this study had no permanent space for personal leisure pursuits, and only 10% had permanent spaces, or quilt rooms to call their own.⁷ It is imperative to note that regardless of class background, women quilters secured permanent leisure space *only* after all family members' needs were met—after their children left home, or when their spouses established a home office. Additionally, the presence of personal leisure space does not resolve leisure issues within the household, for women with permanent spaces continue to plan their quilting activities so that they can spend evenings and weekends with family. Some women indicated that time constraints to leisure would not disappear if space constraints were diminished. For example, Cassie suggested that once she secures her permanent quilt space, her husband will continue calling her fabric collection "a space-hogging stockpile" rather than necessary quilting materials, as she views them (Stalp, 2001). Clearly, the larger issues of legitimating time and space for women's quilting, as well as those surrounding women's leisure generally remain.

Discussion and Conclusion

Hobbies are a good thing it seems. Yet, one apparently contradictory side of serious leisure, given the culturally dominant belief that all leisure is casual activity, is the paradox that those who engage in it encounter costs and rewards, both of which can be sharply felt. (Stebbins, 1996, p. 61)

Women find it difficult to locate time and space for leisure activities, especially those that occur in the home, as quilting does. Women alter how they practice serious leisure quilting to accommodate family interaction—they break down larger projects into smaller, travel-friendly ones which ac-

⁷In comparison, the Quilting in America Survey (2003) reports that 81% of dedicated quilters have their own quilt rooms. I posit, then, that the dedicated quilters do not accurately represent the experiences of the serious leisure quilters in this study.

company women as they run daily errands. Women also save handwork for evenings so they can watch television with the family as they also work on their quilting projects. Faced with time and space challenges to their chosen leisure activity, women do not abandon quilting. Instead, they alter it so that they can interact with their families while they enjoy the personal stress-relieving benefits of quilting. By carving out both time and space to quilt within existing familial structures, then, women resist familial constraints and yet simultaneously comply with the gendered structure of the traditional family.

Serious leisure quilters put great amounts of time and effort into quilting, and once they begin to self-identify as quilters, they integrate quilting into other components of their lives (Stalp, 2001). For example, Angela stated, "Quilting is my life, that's my friends. Almost all my friends are quilters. I have developed a large part of my life around quilting." Here Angela not only described the role that quilting plays in her life, she also emphasized how quilting benefits her through social support among friends and artistic inspiration. Because quilting is a serious leisure activity, women will go to great lengths to ensure they have adequate time and space in the home to practice it. I speculate that women who may quilt but who do not self-identify as quilters will not need to resist the constraints of time and space as regularly as serious leisure quilters will.

Although not immediately obvious to the outside eye, family negotiations over women's serious leisure quilting carry hidden gendered components. American women in traditional heterosexual families are often expected to support and care for others at the expense of leisure pursuits. Within-home and non-economic aspects of women's serious leisure reveal the importance of women-centered cultural activities, those that women engage in for personal reasons. This analysis of serious leisure quilting sheds light on the power dynamics in contemporary families, where women's activities that cannot be defined as either market work or direct family care-work are not validated. Parker (1984) elaborated upon the gendered components of women's serious leisure constraints and resistance in her study of British embroidery:

The role of embroidery in the construction of femininity has undoubtedly constricted the development of the art. What women depicted in thread became determined by notions of femininity, and the resulting femininity of embroidery defined and constructed its practitioners in its own image. However, the vicious circle has never been complete. Limited to practicing art with needle and thread, women have nevertheless sewn a subversive stitch—managed to make meanings of their own in their very medium intended to inculcate self-effacement. (p. 215)

Similar to British embroiderers, American quilters challenge the traditional feminine stereotypes affiliated with quilting, for when practiced in serious leisure ways, the individual quilter benefits directly from the experience, and family and friends may benefit indirectly. Men's leisure pursuits in families

are more supported than women's leisure, as noted by Collis (1999) in her study of men frequenting taverns during off-work hours, and by Stebbins (1996) who demonstrates how barbershop singers' wives will accompany them to conventions and become involved in other supportive roles. Likewise, researchers note how women experience hostility in the home towards reading romance novels (Brackett, 2000; Radway, 1991), watching televised soap operas (Harrington & Bielby, 1995), and demands from husbands to quit barbershop singing activities (Stebbins, 1996).

American women are faced with constraints to their serious leisure quilting in the form of time and space, and they also resist such constraints as has been addressed in the literature. However, this research demonstrates that the negotiations women make to continue to quilt *and* to continue to spend time and share space with their families goes beyond the concepts of constraint and resistance. The accommodation women make to accomplish both is knowingly chosen. They do not replace leisure for family time, but instead make room for both. Women in this study do not fully resist the posed constraints from family activities, but instead integrate quilting into carpooling, or watching television with family in the evenings. Quilters therefore accomplish both finding the space and time to quilt, and continuing to spend time and share space with their families. They have found ways to make this work, without compromising entirely either their quilting or their role as mother/spouse.

Future research on quilting as serious leisure can be continued to include same sex relationships, building on the work of Shaw and Dawson (2000), examining the support systems present among quilters and knitters, and the development of the artistic self that accompanies becoming a quilter (Stalp, 2004). Previous research demonstrates that those devoted to running marathons (Baldwin, et. al, 1999; Goff, et. al., 1997), and dog sports competitions (Gillespie, et. al., 2002) have accomplished personal goals, traveled extensively, and received awards from competitions, but support, admiration and respect from family members are not always tangible. Serious leisure quilters argue that their quilting efforts save the family time and money, for as quilters construct homemade gifts, family members benefit from receiving them, or they benefit from gifting them to friends. In this way, then, family members have something to curl up with, or to point to that speaks of the quilter's accomplishments. Making claims to the finished cultural product is how family and friends benefit from the activity—they can see tangible proof of the serious leisure efforts. Because it relates to the production of a cultural object, is resistance more likely to occur in quilting rather than in other serious leisure activities? This is surely an important component of future research.

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