A Critique of Leisure Constraints: Comparative Analyses and Understandings

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This paper reports two separate analyses based on interviews in which people talked about the factors that shaped leisure within their everyday lives. In the first analysis, researchers used the leisure constraints model of Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991) and sought examples of structural, interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints. That analysis seemed to confirm the existence of leisure constraints and constraint negotiation in people's everyday lives; however, it also missed many of the dynamic factors that shaped and influenced these people's leisure choices. The researchers then returned to the data and used constant comparative analysis in order to capture the factors that best described the way these people made decisions about their leisure. A comparison of these two analyses is the basis for discussion and critique of leisure constraints as a framework for understanding factors that influence people's leisure choices and behavior.

KEYWORDS: *Leisure constraints, leisure constraint negotiation, leisure and social interaction*

Introduction

The past decade evidenced a significant shift in the nature of leisure research, moving away from site/activity surveys towards an examination of leisure as it is integrated into our everyday lives (cf. Csikszentmihalyi & Figurski, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Graef, 1980; Graef, Csikszentmihalyi, & Gianinno, 1983; Samdahl, 1988, 1992; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1993; Shaw, 1984, 1985). That latter research has been an effective testing ground for assessing the conceptual premises of contemporary leisure theory. For example, Shaw (1985) showed that enjoyment and freedom of choice were the most salient characteristics that distinguished leisure from non-leisure in normal daily experiences. Samdahl (1991) reported that situations people commonly labeled "leisure" corresponded with dimensions of self-expression and perceived freedom as defined by leisure theorists. By showing evidence that our theoretical constructs parallel people's common experiencing of leisure, this approach offers important validation of some basic premises of contemporary leisure research.

The study presented here attempted to follow that tradition by examining leisure constraints (cf. Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991) using data

from interviews in which people discussed their normal everyday routines. Initial analysis uncovered many examples that presumably support the notion of leisure constraints and constraint negotiation. However, that analysis also raised questions about the effectiveness of constraints as a framework for understanding the factors that shape people's everyday leisure choices. Those concerns led us into a second examination of the interviews using constant comparative analysis, and results of that second analysis are also reported here. The paper concludes by contrasting these two analyses and the understandings they produced, with some critical reflections on inherent assumptions and limitations of leisure constraints as a framework for understanding people's everyday leisure choices and behavior.

Constraints Theory

Research on leisure constraints has grown steadily over the past several years, representing a coherent body of literature that has evolved and changed with new and emerging understandings. Leisure constraints has become a distinctive sub-field of leisure studies (Jackson, 1991).

Leisure constraints were originally conceptualized as a mechanism for better understanding barriers to activity participation (Buchanan & Allen, 1985; Jackson & Searle, 1985; Searle & Jackson, 1985a, 1985b). Jackson (1988, p. 211) articulated this focus, suggesting that "constraints per se are best viewed as a subset of reasons for not engaging in a particular behavior." Indeed, most of the research on leisure constraints has used some aspect of activity participation as the dependent variable to be explained.

However, many discussions have extended well beyond that original purpose, proposing that leisure constraints can help us understand broader factors and influences that shape people's everyday leisure behaviors. Leisure constraints have been used to explain changing trends in leisure preferences over time (Jackson, 1990a; Jackson & Witt, 1994) and to understand variation in leisure choices and experiences for different segments of the population (Henderson, Stalnaker, & Tayor, 1988; Henderson, Bedini, Hecht, & Shuler, 1993; Jackson, 1990b; Jackson, 1993; Jackson & Henderson, 1995; McGuire, Dottavio, & O'Leary, 1986; Shaw, 1994). This "growing sophistication" of leisure constraints research is seen to provide "a set of increasingly complex models of how constraints enter into people's leisure decision-making behavior" (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993, p. 1) and promises to "enhance understanding of the situational context of people's lives and how variables...shape people's leisure" (Jackson & Henderson, 1995, p. 32). Collectively, this body of work is seen to offer a significant contribution to the broader understanding of leisure behavior (Goodale & Witt, 1989; Jackson, 1990b).

A classic model of leisure constraints was presented by Crawford, Jackson and Godbey (1991). This model identified three primary sources for leisure barriers: structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. According to the authors, structural barriers are factors which intervene between leisure pref-

erences or choices and actual participation. Examples given include financial resources, available time, and climate. Interpersonal barriers involve the interactions and relationships between individuals; the inability to locate a suitable partner for participation would be an interpersonal barrier. Intrapersonal barriers reflect psychological states and individual attributes such as stress, anxiety, depression, and socialization into (or away from) specific activities. According to Crawford et al., intrapersonal factors may result in interpersonal barriers if they affect the nature of relationships and interactions.

Recently there have been challenges to the assumption that leisure constraints necessarily restrict or inhibit leisure participation (Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw, Bonen, & McCabe, 1991). Those studies suggest that threats to participation are often successfully overcome; if that is so, perceived constraints may not prevent actual participation in an activity. The suggestion that people can confront and negotiate leisure constraints (cf. Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995) implies that constraints are not static and stationary; they actively shape and transform our leisure expression by interacting with preferences and patterns of behavior.

Much of the research on leisure constraints has been grounded in survey data specifically designed to assess the existence of constraints and their impact on actual behavior. Quite often this research entails questionnaires which examine why people do not engage in activities in which they otherwise expressed interest. A few studies have been grounded in qualitative data from everyday experience (see Bialeschki & Michener, 1994; Frederick & Shaw, 1995; Henderson, Bedini, Hecht, & Schuler, 1993) with interviews focusing on factors that constrain leisure choices. The study presented here was not undertaken with the leisure constraints model in mind; rather, issues and ideas from leisure constraints research became an *ex post facto* guide for interpreting people's discussions of their everyday life routines from interviews conducted for another purpose. Like other research on people's everyday leisure experiences, we wanted to see if leisure constraints are apparent in people's normal experiencing of leisure. This was an opportunistic approach to research, but as such it may represent a stronger test of the constraints model because it can demonstrate whether leisure constraints are discernible even when not imposed by the study design or instrument. That point is discussed in more detail in a later section of this paper.

Method

The data for this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with 88 adult volunteers. The original study was designed to collect information about the multiplicity of factors that shape adult daily leisure (cf. Samdahl, 1988, 1992; Shaw, 1985) and included experience sampling data and standard mail-back questionnaires in addition to interviews with each participant; the interview occurred before the other forms of data collection. Analyses reporting general patterns of leisure from this sample (drawing from both quantitative and qualitative data) are reported in Samdahl and Jekubovich

(1993). When this study was conceptualized, no *a priori* foundations drew from the literature on leisure constraints. Rather, it was only during analysis of the interviews that the authors realized the relevance of these data to the topic of leisure constraints.

All interviews were conducted in person. Each person was interviewed once, typically at the participant's home. An interview schedule outlined the significant topics that were to be raised with each participant. Five assistants were trained to conduct interviews, learning through practice interviews which were monitored in order to provide feedback that would produce consistent and effective interview technique. Of the 88 total interviews, 59 were conducted by the two female assistants who were most highly trained. Interviews ranged from 30 to 75 minutes and averaged about 45 minutes in length.

During the interviews, participants were asked to describe their daily routine from the time they got up in the morning to the time they went to bed at night. They were asked whether or not they typically made time for themselves during the day and the factors which made that possible or impossible. Participants spoke about what they would do if they were magically given a three-day weekend and reflected on why those experiences were not commonly available to them in their normal routine. Participants also discussed ways that their leisure had changed in the past few years and the factors that provoked those changes. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Participants were volunteers from the local community and outlying farmlands in a medium-sized town in the Pacific Northwest (USA). They were a convenience sample recruited through newspaper advertisements and by word-of-mouth. As is characteristic of this community, most participants (86 out of 88 people) were Caucasian. They ranged in age from 30 to 65 years old and included 57 women and 31 men (see Table 1). These people were extremely varied in terms of education and occupation including highly successful professionals, service and blue collar workers, and a few people living on welfare or unemployment. Except for including more women than men, this sample appeared to reflect the breadth and diversity of this community. In the data reported here, pseudonyms have been used and, in some instances, occupations have been changed to protect the identity of these individuals.

The original purpose for this study was to examine factors that influenced daily leisure experiences for adult men and women. Since the presence of very young children can significantly impact the daily routines of adults in that household, and the responsibility of caring for young children often falls disproportionately upon one parent or the other, the original study intentionally excluded people with pre-school children in the household. However, many participants did have children older than five years living in their home. There is no doubt that the absence of very young children altered the nature of these people's lives, and the discussions of leisure constraints might have been different if the sample included families

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Frequency	Percent
Age		
under 30 years	1	1.1
30-45 years	51	58.0
46-60 years	30	34.1
over 60 years	5	5.7
missing	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0
Gender		
male	31	35.2
female	57	64.8
Total	88	100.0
Employment Status		
not currently employed	15	17.0
employed part-time	23	26.1
employed full time	49	55.7
missing	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0
Living with spouse or partner		
no	24	27.3
yes	64	73.7
Total	88	100.0
Children (over age 5) living at home		
no	53	60.2
yes	35	39.8
Total	88	100.0

with very young children. However, this does not invalidate the findings reported here, particularly the nature of our critique about the utility of leisure constraints for understanding daily leisure routine. Readers are simply cautioned against extrapolating specific aspects of these findings to adults with young children in their household.

As noted above, an analysis of leisure constraints was not part of the original purpose of this study. But as we listened to the tapes, read the transcripts, and discussed the themes that emerged from these interviews, it became apparent that these data were relevant to the literature on leisure constraints. With that realization, we began to examine the data more rigorously. We read through the transcript of each interview looking for quotes and

examples that pertained to the leisure constraints models. Using the cut and paste features of word processing software, we extracted passages that addressed leisure constraints. These examples were examined and classified according to the leisure constraints model of Crawford et al. (1991). Analysis was not limited to responses to specific probes in the interview, but incorporated any discussion throughout the interviews where the topic of constraints was apparent.

The following section will present the examples we found, followed by further discussion and a re-examination of the data.

Part I: Analysis Based on Leisure Constraints Models

Our initial analysis led us into the data seeking examples of leisure constraints as defined by Crawford et al. (1991). Without much difficulty, we found references to situations that clearly illustrated structural constraints, interpersonal constraints, and intrapersonal constraints. Since the interview had not been designed to elicit a focused discussion of leisure constraints, it was validating to see these examples emerge in the stories that these people told.

Structural Constraints

Perhaps the easiest constraints to identify were those classified as structural constraints, or factors which intervened between interest and actual participation in a leisure activity. In the interviews from this study, we found common structural constraints relating to time, money and health.

Time. Constraints related to time often were associated with the hectic work schedules of these people. Not only were many participants employed full time, they also had commitments to family, friends and volunteer activities. This is evident in the following quotes:

> Gwen (early 40s, married, 3 children, family business): Every night of the week we have something different we have to do, and on weekends there's always things to be done. On Tuesday night from about 8:00 on I can do what I want and on Friday night from about 6:00 on I can do what I want. That's about it.

> Julie (5 children, secretary): Sometimes there are things I'd like to do—maybe go and visit my sister or go to a shopping mall and just walk and look around, but I don't feel that I have the time to do that because there are other things that have to be done.

> Ed (married, 4 grown children, self-employed): The question that I've thought about is, if I did develop a hobby or something, where would I find the time? But I don't want any real hobbies, just a little more time where I could do something. That's the pressure box that I'm working on getting out of.

Not only were there many demands on these people's time, there also was a concern about having *blocks* of time that were long enough to do favored leisure activities.

Chris (male, early 20's, married): I'd like to do more camping, more three to six day kind of trips. I'd like to go to the Steens Mountains but it takes a full day to get there so you have to have a block of time.

Matt (married with grown children, professional): I don't travel as much as I'd like—it's that time thing. I'll have to wait until I retire to hike the Appalachian Trail or tour the United States. You just can't leave an active practice for two and a half or three months—not if you want to have anything left when you get back!

Money. In addition to time constraints, money was frequently mentioned as an important factor shaping leisure activity. A few participants were not working and were living off savings or welfare; their money constraints were extreme. However, even people with presumably adequate income mentioned that the expense of certain activities kept them from participating in those things. We noted that discussions of money were most likely to arise as a result of a probe by the interviewer ("Why don't you do those things?") rather than as a concern raised independently by the participants.

John S. (married 18 years, 3 children): If I had more money I would probably do more activities, could afford to do more leisure things.

Marlene (20's, married, store clerk): If I had unlimited money and everything, I would use it to get away from the house and go somewhere out of town, either to the coast or skiing. Something that costs money that we don't usually have, and spend time that we don't usually have.

Leah (single with grown children and grandchildren, social worker): There's a lot of things I would enjoy doing if I had more money. I'd probably maybe join a dancing club. Things like that generally cost money—you either need to pay dues or fees or....

People were aware of the influence that money had on their leisure patterns, but they seemed to indicate that lack of money altered their leisure options rather than preventing leisure altogether. Many of the activities that were inaccessible because of money were hypothetical, and it was difficult to determine the actual impact that lack of money had on these people.

Health. Physical health constraints were easily identified in these interviews, primarily from older people who were aware of giving up activities that they used to enjoy. We classified these as a structural constraint because people spoke of health as if it were imposed upon them from the outside. As with other structural constraints, physical limitations kept people from doing some favored leisure activities.

Anne (middle aged, married, 4 children, secretary): If I could, I'd probably be more active in sports. Any kind of sports, like swimming, tennis, golf, things like that. I don't do them because physically I'm not that fit. My legs are bad and I get tired very fast and I just get worn out.

Gwen (early 40s, married, 3 children, family business): I used to be a jogger and I can't physically jog anymore. That's something I really loved doing—I'm sorry I can't still do that.

Jean (married, 3 children, writer): I'd still like to climb some major peaks, but I just don't think I'm physically able to do that anymore and it's real discour-

aging to me. I used to take hundred mile bike rides, but I just can't keep up with the younger people any more.

Leroy (late 50's, married, 1 grown child, laborer): I'd like to ride a motorcycle again, but I know that's not possible. Deteriorated hip. I miss that a lot.

Summary. As we reflected on these examples of structural constraints, it seemed as if they affected the *type* of activity that people did but they did not preclude people from engaging in leisure altogether. Some of the health constraints pointedly kept people from doing activities they used to enjoy, but many of the other structural constraints kept people from doing "dream wish" activities in which they might never have actually engaged. The constraints of money, in particular, appeared to be very conjectural.

Interpersonal Constraints

Examples of interpersonal constraints were equally apparent in these interviews, representing limitations in leisure activity that originated from their relationships with others. People spoke about the many ways that their social relationships (or lack thereof) impinged upon the things they did in their leisure. These examples were classified as family responsibilities, lack of a leisure partner, and having a mismatched leisure partner.

Family responsibilities. As stated previously and for purposes unrelated to this study, the sample included only people who did not have children under the age of five living in their households; this probably affected the nature of family responsibilities that these people spoke about. However, even participants with older children mentioned that the presence children severely impacted their schedules. Women, in particular, mentioned constraints associated with their family roles. Some of these examples related to the way that family demands impinge upon a parent's time:

Carin (married, 2 children): There's always something—somebody wants something from you. I get frustrated at that part of being a mom. There's never a time when I feel like I can really relax.

Rich (late 30's, married with 2 children, mechanic): The only time we get a break is when she does something without me and takes the kids with her. But then, I still feel a sense of responsibility where I try to at least let her know where I'm at so she can get in touch with me.

Cindy (married, 3 children, store clerk): Sometimes I would like to just take off with my friends and just go somewhere and not worry about the time or the responsibilities, but when you have a husband and kids they're always in the back of your mind.

The family also seemed constraining when it affected the leisure activity choices that a parent participated in. Some apparent "family" activities were not necessarily leisure for all members:

Evelyn (married, 5 children): Sometimes if we do something as a family I just feel real hassled. I think, god we're not supposed to have to be messing with all this stuff. Especially camping—I hate it! [laughter] I just feel like I'm at

home, but instead of being in a house I'm in a tent doing the same things—cleaning, cooking, the whole bit.

The impact of family was not always perceived as detrimental. Many participants spoke about their family as if it were simple fact of life, an influential force that shaped their routines but not necessarily a barrier that forcibly prevented them from engaging in coveted leisure options.

Absence of a leisure partner. While many people mentioned ways that they were constrained because their family made so many demands on them, others were aware of how their leisure choices were restricted by the lack of a leisure partner. Some people had a spouse or partner whose schedule prevented them from sharing much time together; other participants spoke about social isolation and the general absence of significant relationships in their lives. In either case, the lack of an available partner impinged upon their leisure choices.

> Dan (married, no children, unemployed): Usually what restricts me from doing things is my wife is working and I'd like to take her along too, so when she's working I'm confined to going places on the weekend.
>
> Stacy (early 30s, single, artist): I'd like to go camping but that takes more than money, that takes another person to come along with you. I don't really like to do that alone.
>
> Lorene (20s, single mother of 1 child): I like to go dancing. I don't get to do it very often. I just don't like the statement a woman makes walking into a bar by herself. The statement is not, "I need a dance partner."

The above examples emphasize the importance of having a leisure partner. When a partner was not available, many people felt restricted and unable to do things that they otherwise would have enjoyed.

Mismatched leisure partner. The most poignant cases of interpersonal constraint came from people who spoke about a mismatched leisure partner; this occurred most often when a participant had a spouse who did not share the same leisure interests. People without a partner spoke about the difficulty of doing things alone, but people with a mismatched partner conveyed a much deeper sense of anguish:

> Mary (married 25 years, no children): We don't know what we would like to do together—maybe we're avoiding trying to figure that out, just keeping busy. Probably a lot of it has to do with my husband's not interested in the things I like.
>
> Pauline (50s, second marriage, grown children): He worries about what's on TV and that's one thing that irritates me. If I want to do something he'll say, "Oh, I wanted to watch this show." Or he always knows the names and who's in it and everything, and I get mad at him when I want to go and he'd rather watch a movie.
>
> Glenn (20s, married, no children): It's real frustrating to know we have the evening to spend together and she wants to watch TV, because that's not something that I can share with her. She would get the same enjoyment watching

TV with or without me, but I don't love my activities, I wouldn't enjoy them by myself.

The pain associated with having a mismatched leisure partner highlights the significance of shared leisure. To some extent, the lack of shared leisure interests was portrayed as a measure of the strength of a relationship. Glenn, whose wife enjoyed watching TV, spoke at length about this issue, and concluded the interview with a comment that perhaps he needed to set an appointment with a marriage counselor.

Summary. It was apparent that social relationships were significant in shaping these people's leisure. Family relationships impinged on some people's freedom to do activities, but the lack of relationships prevented others from doing activities that they would enjoy. These interviews made it clear that healthy leisure and healthy social relationships were closely intertwined.

Intrapersonal Constraints

While we expected to find examples of situations we could classify as structural or interpersonal constraints, we were surprised that people also spoke openly and without prompting about factors that could be considered intrapersonal constraints. Several people spoke about how their personalities and low self esteem affected their leisure choices. This topic arose in several interviews, and those people generally revealed deeper problems and insecurities that led to an encompassing dissatisfaction with their lives.

Gary (married, no children): If I was really gregarious and made friends easily, even traveling alone might be fun. But I wouldn't, you know. I would end up going there alone and being alone the whole time.

Eileen (single): I don't like the idea of an empty leisure. Sometimes I think I just fill myself up with so many things to do and be—I'm not very happy with my life right now. I'm going nowhere fast! What am I going to do for the next 30 years?!

Wendy (divorced mother): I don't do a lot of leisure things that I'd like to do. I think I'd like to be really outgoing, and I'm not....I have a friend who invites me out to dinner. She leads me around, she knows what to do and stuff. Otherwise I don't think I would really have the desire to do it, or the know how.

Everet (recently divorced, alcoholic): If my motivation were normal, there'd be a lot of things I'd like to do in my leisure. I don't really like the personality I've developed or been given. If I could change anything, I would change my personality, become one of those energetic people and have close friends.

Summary. We certainly had not expected to find such rich examples of intrapersonal constraints, or to have people themselves identify these as a factor that shaped their leisure. The people who wished for different personalities made it apparent throughout their interviews that they were struggling with many aspects of their lives; leisure was only one facet that mirrored their overall dissatisfaction. To focus on how these issues constrained leisure

seemed almost to belittle the overall impact of the problems with which these people were dealing.

Discussion

As evident in the above quotations, we were able to find examples of each type of leisure constraint in the daily routines of these people's lives. In that analysis, we imposed the framework of the leisure constraints model by Crawford et al. (1991) and looked for confirmatory evidence in the data. Structural constraints were easily identified, but they appeared to alter the shape or nature of leisure activity rather than preventing leisure from occurring. In particular, money constraints, while easily discussed, seemed almost arbitrary and hypothetical as a barrier to wish-list types of activities. Time constraints, especially the lack of large blocks of time, kept people from doing some activities, but declining health seemed to have the strongest impact by denying people access to long-favored recreational pursuits.

Interpersonal leisure constraints represented the complex diversity of relationships that people have with one another. Family responsibilities played a big role as an interpersonal constraint for many of these people, though many spoke about family as a "given" rather than as a constraint that prevented them from doing other things. Had this sample included adults with very young children in their household, the impact of family constraints would likely have been magnified. In addition to family as an interpersonal constraint, some people felt the impact of having no leisure partner and other people were equally pained by having partners who did not share their leisure interests.

Intrapersonal constraints were surprisingly pervasive in the interviews with a few people in this sample. Everet, who did not like the personality he had been given, was struggling to find a meaningful direction to his life. Alcoholism had contributed to the loss of his wife, children and a career and the anomic nature of his leisure was symptomatic of broader issues that troubled his life. For Everet and others, intrapersonal constraints had such widespread influence on so many things that it seemed artificial to speak of it as a *leisure* constraint. It was apparent that intrapersonal factors had a great effect on leisure by restricting social relationships.

The *ex post facto* nature of this analysis, drawing examples of leisure constraints from interviews in which people simply talked about their normal daily routines, gives some support to the leisure constraints literature. Unlike other studies which intentionally asked about leisure constraints, this study found evidence of leisure constraints even though that was not the intent of the interview. The fact that constraints emerged from these data even when that was not a purpose of this study might validate the salience of leisure constraints as a factor that shapes people's leisure.

Recent discussions have emphasized the ways that people are able to negotiate leisure constraints (Henderson et al., 1993; Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw, Bonen, &

McCabe, 1991). In addition to providing examples of leisure constraints, our data also appear to provide effective examples of constraint negotiation. For example, Wendy's reliance on a friend who would go out to eat with her was one way to deal with her extreme shyness and insecurity. Likewise, camping at closer locations allowed Chris to negotiate the constraints imposed by short two-day weekends.

We should have felt good that this analysis appeared to validate the leisure constraints model. However, having spent a considerable amount of time studying these people's transcripts and re-listening to their tapes, we felt that this analysis did not produce an effective understanding of these people's leisure. That dissatisfaction led us to question the ability of leisure constraints as a mechanism for studying the factors that shape people's leisure choices and behavior since it did not capture the dynamic reality by which these people's leisure was actively shaped and nurtured. Thus, we faced the surprising dilemma of finding strong evidence of what we were looking for while progressively losing confidence in the constraints model as an effective tool for understanding leisure behavior. In order to better represent what we had heard in these interviews, we were led into a second analysis that was not shaped by leisure constraints theory but was grounded more closely in the qualitative data of these interviews.

In presenting this second analysis, and in our focus on broader dimensions of leisure, we are aware that we are expanding beyond the original intent of the leisure constraint models. However, as noted in our introduction, there is growing precedent in the literature to use leisure constraints as a framework for understanding many facets of leisure behavior (cf. Goodale & Witt, 1989; Jackson, 1990b; Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Henderson, 1995). Given our concern that leisure constraints had not provided an effective framework for understanding everyday leisure choices and behavior, and given the widespread tendency to use leisure constraints as a premise for statements about general patterns of leisure, we felt it was important to reanalyze these data from a different perspective. After presenting that analysis, we will return to a discussion of leisure constraints and say more about our reluctance to use constraints or constraint negotiation as a basis for understanding everyday leisure choices.

Part II: Grounded Analysis and Emergent Themes

Dissatisfied with the way that the leisure constraints analysis had portrayed these people's leisure, we returned to the data and tried to capture more fully the factors that were influential in shaping and structuring leisure within these people's normal daily routines. We did not impose leisure constraints as a filter for understanding what was in the interviews; instead, we tried to let the data drive the interpretation in a method more typical of qualitative data analysis.

Using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we identified several emergent themes that, in our opinion, best captured the critical

factors that influenced these people's leisure. Transcripts were examined and
coded for emergent categories (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by means of no-
tations in the margin of the text; these were later color coded to aid in
identification and consolidation of the categories. Although we were re-
stricted to the transcripts of the 88 people originally in the study, we em-
ployed a technique comparable to theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss,
1967, p. 61) and continued to search the transcripts for examples until no
new categories emerged and we began to see the same types of examples
over and over again. The researchers met on a regular basis to discuss cat-
egories and share transcripts in order to increase confidence and reliability
in the findings.

Four themes emerged from this grounded analysis: making time for self,
coordinating time with others, compromising on activity, and the significance
of sharing.

Making Time for Self

In spite of excessive demands on their time, many of these people were
able to alter their routines or establish rules that reconciled the busyness of
their lives with their desire for some private space. Many people actively
scheduled their days to create a period when they could be alone, either in
preparation for or relaxing from a hectic day at work. This private time,
without demands from others, was an important part of their daily routine:

> Gary (mid-50's, married, no children, security officer): The mornings are my
> time. My wife usually sleeps in, so that early morning stuff is my time alone.
> With the job that I have you wind up spending an awful lot of energy on other
> people, and I need time for me, so the morning time is nice.

> Beverly (married, no children, store employee): Probably that's the reason I
> get up early in the morning. That way I assure myself some time each day, and
> it's easiest to get it in the morning when nobody's up.

> Dave (50's, married, 1 child at home, broker): In the afternoon I come home
> and go for a three and a half mile walk. That's the relaxing part of my day, my
> leisure time. I would compare my walk as being the same as what you do to a
> horse after a race, you have to walk him to cool him down. I'm no different.

> Joyce (married with children, secretary): When it gets to the evening, about
> 9:00 or 9:30, I usually take a bath, make a cup of tea, get into bed and either
> watch a little TV or read a book. Almost always I have that period between
> 9:00 and whenever I fall asleep that's just leisure time.

What was particularly striking in these examples was the active role that peo-
ple played in structuring their days to create this private, quiet time. This
time did not just happen, it was created and protected in a very dynamic
fashion.

Coordinating Time With Others

Perhaps as important as finding time for one's self were concerns about
finding time that coordinated with the free time of a partner or spouse.

Incompatible work schedules and on-going family responsibilities were the source of great dissatisfaction, for they made it difficult to spent time together with a partner or spouse. However, people reported creative solutions that allowed them to coordinate their schedules in order to find time together.

> Jim (second marriage, 3 children, author): We make a practice of blocking out time to be together. One night a week we go out to dinner, just us, no friends, no kids, just the two of us. And we always try to have at least one meal a day together.

> Jane (late 30's, medical professional, 2nd marriage): We make time to be together. At least one full weekend a month is for recreation where we are away from everything and everyone. We schedule it. We tried to have it spontaneous before and it doesn't work.

> Carin (family business, children at home): Sometimes we take a night and go stay in a motel, have dinner out. That's the only way he knows that I'll be there and he'll have my undivided attention.

Representing an even greater commitment to be together, some people demanded that their work schedules be altered so that they could spend time with their families.

> Arlene (20s, married 2 years, store clerk): At work I just told them I needed one weekend day off to be able to spend time with my husband.

> Gary (50s, married, no children): I have seniority so I get to pick my shift, so I just tied mine in with hers. We get home about the same time so we have time during the day, and then our weekends are together. It works out nicely.

> Kathleen (early 40s, married, 3 children, public administrator): I resigned from my full time job and have just started working half time, and the reason for doing that was to have more family time. We found with three children and busy careers and a big house that we were spending our weekends doing nothing but chores and errands, and we never had time to play.

Clearly, the motivating factor that made people change their schedules was their desire to be with family or friends. Simply having free time was not enough; these people wanted to have free time that was shared with particular people. Like the examples illustrating the creation of private space, the examples about coordinating schedules with others show that these people actively and dynamically shaped their lives to make space for the type of leisure that they desired.

Compromise on Activity

Another significant theme that emerged from these interviews was the way that people compromised on activity with their leisure partners. In many cases, being together was so important that people would engage in activities that they might not otherwise choose or enjoy. In these instances, the activity became a secondary concern that could be compromised for the sake of being together.

Beth (single, social worker): I like action/adventure and he likes a little more sedentary pursuits. We're working on the compromise of semi-sedentary and semi-action oriented.

Miriam (married, 3 grown children, school district employee): My husband likes to bowl. I used to bowl years ago, but with the way my knees are I just haven't taken it up again. But I do go watch him once in a while. You've got to have some interest in the other person!

Matt (married 38 years, grown children): My wife likes music a great deal more than I do. To make her happy, I go to quite a few concerts at the university and things. Sometimes I sleep! [laughter] Sometimes I really enjoy it, but I'm not the music buff she is.

Lynne (30s, married, no children; work requires extensive travel): He likes to watch sports. I think that's thoroughly disgusting, but it's worth it to me to be in the room with that horrible noise just to be with him. So, I might read a book or take a nap on him.

It is important in the above examples to note the secondary role of activity relative to the importance of being together. Much of leisure research, including most of the work drawing from leisure constraints models, places central importance on explaining activity; for example, activity is the dependent variable "explained" by the constraints model of Crawford et al. (1991). If activity participation is not the primary goal that directs people's choices about leisure, models which attempt to explain activity participation might be misguided.

Significance of Sharing

In each of the above examples, it was strongly apparent that people's leisure is influenced by other people. In some instances, privacy from others is important and people create private spaces where they can enjoy being alone. But outside of those quiet times, these people repeatedly emphasized the importance of sharing leisure with others. The reason people changed their schedules and compromised on activities was because they wanted to be with someone in particular during their leisure.

The significance of sharing came across in other ways as well, and was particularly obvious in many people's responses when asked if they would be willing to travel alone.

Dean (50s, musician): I think it's a little bit more fun to be able to share with someone you know.

John S. (married 18 years, 3 children): I've taken time where my wife has stayed home and I've gone off and just done sightseeing myself. Not usually though. It's more fun to go with her than without her.

Wendy (single, 1 child): Even if I had a chance to travel, I wouldn't go alone. I'd take along my daughter and my ex-husband.

Brenda (married, 2 children): I wouldn't want to travel alone. I couldn't enjoy myself going without my husband—and going somewhere by yourself and not knowing anyone, I couldn't see having a good time.

> Beverly (married, no children): If you're all by yourself and you see something neat, you can't say, "Oh boy! Did you see that?"

People's desire to share their leisure with others, to the extent that they might refuse to travel alone, again emphasized the importance of sharing as an essential component of many leisure experiences. For Beverly and others, the meaningful part of a trip came not from seeing grand sights, but from the experience of sharing those sights with someone else.

Summary

The above themes, drawn from interviews with 88 people, emphasize the dynamic ways that people are structuring their lives to create space for leisure. Their goal was sometimes to make a private space, but often it was to find a shared time when leisure could be spent with significant others. The most influential factors that shaped this process were social relationships. Few people spoke simply about finding time for an activity; instead, they described how time and activity were interwoven with their desire to be with others. It is apparent that people do not just want leisure; they want to *share* their leisure with someone. Compared to the initial analysis based on the leisure constraints model, this second analysis emphasized the interactional processes and dynamic patterns through which people were tied to and influenced by their social environments (see also Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1993).

Discussion

After pursuing the two distinct analyses reported above, we were left with some important concerns about traditional leisure constraints research which we will discuss below.

Revisiting Constraint Negotiation

The data reported in our second analysis emphasize the active and dynamic ways that people encounter and address factors that shape their lives. People are not passive responders but active creators who interact with their environments and construct their daily life experiences. The original analysis focusing on leisure constraints seemed artificial and removed from the dynamic realities of these people's lives. By making time for themselves, coordinating time with others, and compromising on activity, these people actively intervened to make desired leisure opportunities come about. There could be a strong argument for viewing these actions as leisure constraint negotiation.

The idea of static, insurmountable constraints has been attacked in recent years by researchers who suggest that people are able to have leisure *in spite of* the presence of leisure constraints (Henderson et al., 1993; Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Rucks, 1995; Kay & Jackson, 1991; Shaw, et al., 1991). Constraint negotiation was not a salient interest when we

undertook this study; however, the notion that people actively negotiate lei-
sure constraints is compelling in our data. Even the busiest people pur-
posively set aside time for themselves on a regular basis to ensure that their
personal needs were being met, often rearranging work and family schedules
so that their free time could be shared with another person. In these inter-
views, the idea that constraints are negotiated seemed to be more salient
than the idea that barriers exist which actually block participation.

However, we have several concerns about the adequacy and utility of
interpreting these actions as leisure constraint negotiation. Most significantly,
these people seldom used a term comparable to "constraints" when speaking
about the factors that influenced their leisure choices (with the exception
of people who spoke of health restrictions that prevented them from contin-
uing with favorite recreational activities, or people who felt that severe prob-
lems with self esteem kept them from being happy). Instead, most people
viewed themselves as active agents who sought ways to balance external de-
mands against personal desires and interests. To label these situations as
constraint negotiation imposes a term and framework that does not seem to
fit the reality that these people shared in discussing their own lives. In fact,
to interpret their behavior as constraint negotiation does little more than
affirm an external model without significantly enhancing our understanding
of the factors that motivate leisure choices and behavior.

Kuhn (1970) warned that paradigms can restrict new insight by
"forc[ing] nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that the
paradigm supplies" (p. 24). Scientific endeavors require a paradigm to unify
the field and to focus attention on common phenomena, but once a para-
digm has been adopted alternative explanations become difficult to see. In
leisure studies, the growth and development of a cumulative body of research
attests to the significance of the constraints model as a "paradigm" that has
shaped much of contemporary leisure research. However, we must remain
alert to the ways that this model might restrict or inhibit alternative expla-
nations.

Popper (1962) spoke about this as well, focusing on the hidden danger
of paradigms that have broad explanatory power. "Once your eyes were thus
opened you saw confirming instances everywhere; the world was full of ver-
ifications of the theory....[But] what did it confirm? No more than that a
case could be interpreted in light of the theory" (p. 35). The danger, ac-
cording to Popper, is when a paradigm is mistaken for a theory. By their very
nature, paradigms are agreed-upon explanations *that are not falsifiable*, in con-
trast to a theory which may be proven wrong. When it became obvious that
leisure occurred in spite of constraints (cf. Shaw et al., 1991), the field might
have discarded the constraints model as an ineffective tool for explaining
leisure behavior. Instead, instances of leisure in spite of constraint were in-
terpreted as evidence of successful constraint negotiation. We must carefully
balance the value of this interpretation against the risks that it imposes. To
interpret the absence of constraints as evidence of successful constraint ne-
gotiation raises the dangerous possibility of reifying the model while pre-

venting new understandings that could emerge from another paradigmatic perspective.

Our reluctance at interpreting the second analysis as evidence of constraint negotiation stems from these concerns. To us, the label "constraint negotiation" does not effectively capture the spirit in which these people arranged their lives or the way they sought out favored leisure opportunities. Labeling their behavior as constraint negotiation does little to enhance our understanding of those behaviors and stops woefully short of explaining the factors that motivated negotiation. In focusing on the absence (or negotiation) of constraint we missed the richness of the social motives that impelled these people to organize their lives in that fashion.

By using many quotes in the discussion of our second analysis, we allow readers to make their own judgments about whether these emergent themes can be adequately captured under the rubric of leisure constraints and constraint negotiation. Our feeling was that they could not.

Revisiting Leisure Constraints Research

After engaging in the grounded analysis and examining its emergent themes, we returned to leisure constraints research with a more critical perspective. According to Crawford et al. (1991), constraints operate in a unidirectional sequence; intrapersonal constraints are presumably the most influential since, if they are not overcome, progression towards participation is arrested. However, the model did not effectively convey the different impact that intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints have on leisure. In our data, structural constraints prompted relatively minor substitutions of one activity for another with perhaps little impact on leisure satisfaction, while intrapersonal constraints such as personality disorders had a profoundly detrimental impact on leisure (and on many other domains of life). We were concerned that the traditional model of leisure constraints disguises the significantly diverse effects that constraints can have, extending well beyond simply blocking leisure participation.

The leisure constraints model proposes a hierarchical relationship between intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints, suggesting that one type of constraint must be negotiated before the next type could emerge. Our data were somewhat supportive of this hierarchical perspective; for example, intrapersonal constraints seemed to inhibit friendships and social relationships, and interpersonal constraints precluded some activities that could have occurred if the social support had been available. However, there also was evidence that this hierarchy was not absolute. For example, Wendy utilized friendship (an interpersonal relationship) in order to go out to dinner when her own lack of self confidence (an intrapersonal constraint) would have prevented her from going alone. In this example, the interpersonal relationship exerted a backwards influence according to the leisure constraints model by facilitating action in spite of an unresolved intrapersonal constraint.

In addition to examining the assumptions of power and hierarchy implicit in the leisure constraints model, we also became concerned that much of the evidence in leisure constraints research was an artifact of the methods that have been used to study it. For example, many studies of leisure constraints begin by asking participants to think about an activity which they would like to do but in which they do not participate (cf. Buchanan & Allen, 1985; Jackson, 1990a, 1990b; Jackson & Searle, 1985; Kay & Jackson, 1991) or in which they would like to increase their frequency of participation (cf. Shaw et al., 1991). From its inception, that method produces hypothetical data that are removed from the reality of people's lives. Without any measure of saliency, we might be mixing stories from Leroy who reluctantly gave up his motorcycle after having hip replacement surgery, with stories from Marlene who vaguely indicated that she might get out of town more often if she had more money. A method that studies reasons why people do not engage in some wishful activity may not produce consistently salient or reliable data.

More importantly, an approach that specifically looks for leisure constraints might not reveal more significant factors and processes that shape people's leisure. We, too, found evidence of leisure constraints when we entered into the data with that purpose in mind; however, we felt that analysis missed many of the more dynamic factors that influenced how leisure was shaped and structured. We fear that other studies which impose the constraints framework on question design and analysis may also produce understandings that confirm aspects of the constraints model but hide more significant factors that actively shape people's leisure choices. The concern we raise here is whether or not leisure constraints is the most effective premise for understanding broader aspects of leisure behavior (cf. Kuhn, 1970; Popper, 1962).

We also were struck by how the leisure constraints literature has focused on the end goal of leisure activity participation. The leisure constraints model (c.f. Crawford et al., 1991) identifies activity participation as the primary variable to be explained; in like fashion, Jackson (1988) specified that leisure constraints are best used for understanding reasons for specific activity non-participation. By conceptualizing leisure constraints as factors that impinge upon participation, this body of research moves away from more contemporary theory that discards activity as the most salient feature of leisure. This focus on activity may have particular strengths for discussion of managerial strategies to remove or reduce constraints to participation in specific leisure programs (cf. Blazey, 1987; Bialeschki & Henderson, 1988; Frederick & Shaw, 1995; Jackson, 1990a, 1994). However, when leisure constraints are used as a framework for understanding broader aspects of leisure behavior this emphasis on activity participation may be extremely limiting.

Our second analysis illustrates some of the shortcomings that stem from focusing too intently on activity participation. For these individuals, activity itself was often secondary to, or at least deeply embedded within, the social environment in which that activity occurred. Our participants restructured their days so that they could find time to share with others or, in some cases,

to find time apart from others, and they compromised on activity for the sake of being with a partner or friend. In their discussions, the dimensions that gave meaning to leisure were its shared nature and the chance to be with others. Their emphasis on the social dimension of leisure could be too easily lost in a study that focused simply on activity participation.

A Final Point

One last point must be raised, and in some respects this returns us to many issues central to the above critique. Describing these examples as leisure constraints or constraint negotiation stops painfully short of an explanation of leisure behavior. There is nothing in constraints theory to explain *why* some situations were viewed as constraints, or *why* some people were motivated to negotiate those constraints. Why did Glenn want his wife to spend more time with him instead of watching television? Why was Stacy unwilling to go camping alone? Why did Arlene ask for Saturdays off so she could be with her husband? We need to extend outside the boundaries of constraints theory, or even constraints negotiation, in order to reach a deeper understanding of these situations.

That deeper understanding emerged, for us, in our second analysis with its emergent emphasis on the social meanings of leisure. So much of what these people talked about related to the social context of their activities and the personal meanings they associated with that context. This moved us further away from a focus on leisure activities and towards a deeper respect for the significance of social relationships and the role of leisure in maintaining those relationships. For Glenn (and many others), leisure was a context for expressing connections with a spouse; her dismissal of him during leisure signified much broader concerns about the nature of their marriage. Stacy was a very lonely person who lacked significant relationships in her life; for her, camping alone would have painfully magnified that sense of isolation. Arlene was recently married; since she and her husband both worked full time jobs, she was distressed by the limited time they had to spend together. The meanings of these constraints or the impetus for negotiating them seemed to stem, most often, from the central role of social relationships. It became clear to us that interpersonal relations are not simply one of three types of leisure constraints; instead, they underlie and pervade the meanings that people gave to leisure in very general terms.

Looking back to our second analysis, we also see that the framework of leisure constraints or constraint negotiation fell short of explaining many other leisure situations. Matt went to concerts he didn't enjoy because his wife wanted him to go with her, and Lynne remained in the room when her husband watched sports because she valued the limited time they had together. Those behaviors cannot easily be interpreted within the constraints framework which offers no tools for understanding the motives for compromising on activity; they are better understood by examining the attractions that made these compromised situations better than their alternative. In

many cases, the motives for compromising on activity stemmed from a greater value on the associated social relationships than on the activity itself.

Leisure constraints were never intended as a universal framework for explaining all of leisure behavior, so to some extent our critique is unfair. However, leisure constraints research has grown so steadily in past years that it represents a significant focus in the field of leisure studies (Jackson, 1991). Leisure researchers have suggested that leisure constraints can help us understand differences in leisure behavior between subgroups of our society (Henderson, Stalnaker, & Tayor, 1988; Henderson, Bedini, Hecht, & Shuler, 1993; Jackson 1990b; Jackson, 1993; Jackson & Henderson, 1995; McGuire, Dottavio, & O'Leary, 1986; Shaw, 1994) and broader contextual variables that shape people's leisure choices (cf. Goodale & Witt, 1989; Jackson, 1990b; Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993; Jackson & Henderson, 1995). Thus, our critique of leisure constraints as a premise for understanding general patterns of leisure choice and behavior is founded on a large and growing body of literature that discusses leisure constraints in this fashion.

On the surface we appeared successful by finding evidence of leisure constraints in people's everyday routine; however, our deeper goal of understanding everyday leisure from the premises of leisure constraints was severely limited. We are left with serious concerns about the utility of leisure constraints as a broad framework for understanding leisure, and with a renewed interest in the role of social relationships as a driving factor that shapes leisure behavior (see also Ingham, 1987; Kelly, 1981, 1983; Kelly & Kelly, 1994 and others for discussions of the social nature of leisure). In most situations, people are not passively impacted by leisure constraints, nor is activity participation the central motivating force that drives an interest in negotiating leisure constraints. Rather, people are dynamic players who shape their environments in ways that enhance the meanings they draw from leisure, and in many cases those meanings are fundamentally social.

More than any other topic of leisure research, leisure constraints have generated a large cohesive body of research which has tested, extended and modified our understanding of one model of leisure behavior. However, it may be important to balance the value of further validation of this model against a critical examination of whether it truly is leading us towards a deeper understanding of the choices and factors that shape leisure behavior.

There are undoubtedly many good applications of leisure constraints theory. For people who feel encumbered in their desire to participate in a particular activity, or for practitioners who offer leisure programs, the leisure constraints model may provide an effective framework for understanding reasons for non-participation. Likewise, the concept of negotiation may be a helpful model by which to understand efforts that eventually lead to participation for people who originally felt constrained. Our admonition is not to discard leisure constraints altogether, but rather to understand its limitations as a vehicle for studying the broader nature of leisure choices and meanings. When our intent is to understand factors that shape and give

meaning to leisure more broadly than engagement in a specific activity, we might be better served by stepping outside the limited perspective of leisure constraints.

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