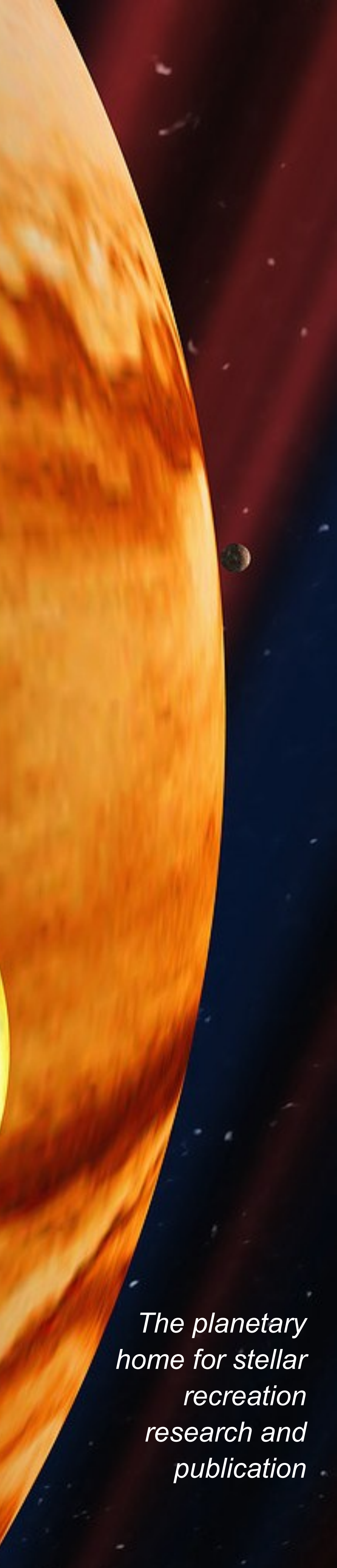

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Job Satisfaction
Among Outfitters: An Exploratory Study

Stephen L. Eliason
Montana State University Billings

The state of Montana is a prime destination for those who are interested in fishing and hunting activities. Outfitters operate statewide to provide guiding services to hunters and anglers, yet scant research has been directed toward the outfitting industry. Little is known about the attitudes of outfitters including the perceptions they hold toward their job. Using a symbolic interaction theoretical perspective, this study took a qualitative approach to data collection and examined job satisfaction among outfitters. Most outfitters found the job satisfying and would choose the job again if given the opportunity. The findings contribute to a greater understanding of the job of outfitter.

In contrast to the vast outdoor recreation literature that is available on hunting and fishing, scant research has been directed toward the study of guides and outfitters (Adams, 2000; Greer, Miller, & Yeager, 1999; Hussain, Munn, Grado, & Henderson, 2008; Nickerson, Oschell, Rademaker, & Dvorak, 2007). Given that it is a form of nature-based tourism (Curtin, 2009; Gaede, Strickert, & Jurin, 2010; Mordue, 2009; Reis, 2009), outfitting activities occur in rural areas that possess abundant populations of fish and wildlife resources (Dowsley, 2009; Dunk, 2002; Garland, 2008; McGrath, 1996).

Each year, millions of anglers and hunters in the United States go to the nation's lakes, rivers, and forests for outdoor recreational pursuits (Palmer & Bryant, 1985; U.S. Department of the Interior, 2006a). Some of these individuals enlist the services of outfitters to help them with their fishing and hunting experiences (Greer et al., 1999; Hussain et al., 2008; Wright & Sanyal, 1998). Outfitters also work at the international level and, for example, arrange hunts for individuals who go on safaris in Africa (Baker, 1997; Bryant, 2004; Bryant & Forsyth, 2005).

Dickson (2010) clarified the distinction between guides and outfitters: "*Guides* are licensed individuals who lead the hunts. Guides work for *outfitters*, who own the business of providing hunting services. Many outfitters are also themselves guides" (p. 23). It should be noted that prior to becoming outfitters most of these individuals were employed as guides for other outfitters and used the experience to acquire the knowledge needed to operate their own outfitting business.

In addition to hunting and fishing, individuals use outfitters for other outdoor activities such as trips into wilderness areas (Gray, 1992; Roggenbuck, 2000), mountaineering (Davidson, 2008), and boating (Hjerpe & Kim, 2007). Outfitter services are especially helpful for nonresidents (Adams, 2000; Dizard, 2003; Wright & Sanyal, 1998). Outfitters provide clients with accommodations such as food, lodging, and transportation on their trips and also provide clients with useful knowledge about hunting and fishing techniques, species, and habitats (Dizard, 2003; Hussain et al., 2008; Lowrey, 1986).

Prior research on outfitters and guides has examined the history of guiding (Johnston, 2007; Lowrey, 1986; Randall, 1960), risk management behaviors (Gray, 1992), and the social psychology of guides (Holyfield & Jonas, 2003; Sharpe, 2005). Other studies have addressed economic impacts of outfitting (Adams, 2000; Hjerpe & Kim, 2007; Hussain, et al., 2008; Janecek, 2006) and hunting issues that impact outfitters and guides (Baker, 1997; Little & Berrens, 2008; Miller, 2003; Nicolaysen, 1997). One area of research that has been neglected is that of attitudes toward the occupation among those employed in the outfitting profession including job satisfaction.

In Montana, wildlife issues are politically important and receive a great deal of attention at the local as well as the national level (Bidwell, 2010; Brownell, 1987; Kelley, 2001; Shanahan, McBeth, Tigert, & Hathaway, 2010). Each year, thousands of individuals hire outfitters to assist them with their fishing and hunting experiences in Montana, with most of these individuals being nonresidents (Adams, 2000; Eliason, 2008; Haggerty & Travis, 2006; Robbins, 2006; Robbins & Luginbuhl, 2005; Wright & Sanyal, 1998). Hunters come to Montana seeking big game species such as deer, elk, antelope, moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats as well as black bears, wolves, and mountain lions. Some hunters pursue upland bird hunting opportunities. Angling includes a diversity of fishing opportunities on lakes and reservoirs as well as trout fishing on world-class rivers. Describing the popularity of fly fishing in the state, Wright and Sanyal (1998) stated, "If fly fishing is reaching the status of a religion as some anglers have described, then Southwestern Montana is Mecca" (p. 37).

It has been noted that natural resources are an important part of the state's tourism industry (Wilton & Nickerson, 2006). In terms of the economy, Montana jobs are among the lowest paying in the nation (Fritz, 2002; Malone, Roeder, & Lang, 1991). According to Wilton and Nickerson (2006), the outfitting industry is important for local economies: "Outfitters and guides are local entrepreneurs who typically spend their money locally, thereby reducing leakage to outside areas. It is this type of tourism income that most states often encourage because of the local benefit" (p. 21).

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective used in this study was symbolic interaction. According to Shaffir and Pawluch (2003), this perspective has utility for the study of work since it focuses on "the experience of work from the point of view of those who engage in it" (p. 894). The concept of job satisfaction has to do with the extent to which individuals find their occupation satisfying. That is, it refers to whether or not someone likes their job and finds the work fulfilling and rewarding. An awareness of factors associated with job satisfaction is important since occupational turnover is more likely to occur when individuals do not find their work satisfying.

Outfitting is a traditional rural occupation that exists in an increasingly urban society. Outfitters are private entrepreneurs who utilize public natural resources including land, water, fish, and wildlife for profit-making purposes. To properly manage and direct activities and efforts within their respective domains, natural resource management as well as tourism agencies must be aware of attitudes and opinions of diverse stakeholder groups. Consequently, there is a need for studies to examine job satisfaction among those employed in the outfitting industry. Given the economic importance of outfitting and tourism to state economies (Hussain et al., 2008; Nickerson & Dubois, 2008; Nickerson et al., 2007; Wilton & Nickerson, 2006), the development of a knowledge base on outfitting and those who work as outfitters is particularly time sensitive.

Methods

This study took a qualitative approach to data collection and used the technique known as interpretive interactionism (Denzin, 1989). Denzin described interpretive interactionism as "…the attempt to make the world of problematic lived experience of ordinary people directly available to the reader. The interactionist interprets these worlds" (1989, p. 7). With this end in mind, extensive quotes from outfitters are presented. Respondents were allowed to speak for themselves in order to identify the factors influencing job satisfaction in the outfitting industry. Summarization and interpretation of comments precede outfitters' responses.

A list of licensed outfitters in 2004 was obtained from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. In 2005, a mail survey was sent to all licensed hunting and fishing outfitters in Montana (n = 638). The survey instrument contained mostly open-ended questions about the job of outfitter. Outfitters were asked to indicate how satisfying they found the job, the best and worst parts of the job, how stressful they found the job, and if they would choose the job again. Respondents were allowed to answer in their own words so their perceptions of job satisfaction could be obtained in rich detail (Fowler, 1993). A few demographic questions were also asked. A total of 156 surveys were returned for a response rate of 24%.

In addition, phone interviews were conducted with 28 of the outfitters who returned a survey and agreed to participate. Phone interviews were used to clarify information in the surveys as well as obtain additional information about the job of outfitter.

Results

Demographic characteristics of outfitters were obtained in order to describe the outfitting population. Outfitters had an average age of 51. Respondents in the study averaged almost 19 years of outfitting experience, and the average age at which these individuals decided to enter the outfitting occupation was 30.

Additional demographic data on outfitters is provided in Table 1. Almost all (97%) of the individuals were male, while three percent were female. In terms of educational attainment, 22% had completed high school, 33% had attended some college, and 45% had earned a BS degree or higher. In terms of marital status, 80% of the individuals were married, 11% had been divorced, and 7% of respondents reported they were single (never married). With respect to total household income, 49% of the outfitters earned $49,999 or less, and 51% earned $50,000 or more. And finally, in terms of racial composition almost all (99%) of the outfitters were White while one percent was Native American.

Satisfaction of the Job

When asked how satisfying they found the job, most outfitters responses were positive and indicated that the job was satisfying. Some outfitters reported that the job was very satisfying and described the satisfaction they derived from teaching others about the outdoors and helping them learn new skills.

> *Extremely. It's an honor that people are willing to spend precious vacation time on the water with me. And to teach someone a new skill is rewarding as well.*

> *Very satisfying. Teaching a child how to find the North Star. Watching an insecure teenager take the last step to the mountaintop. Very satisfying.*

> *Very. It's nice to introduce people to the outdoors who may not have a*

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Montana Outfitters in 2005

	N	Percentage
Sex		
Male	149	97%
Female	5	3%
Education		
Some high school	1	1%
High school graduate	33	22%
Some college	51	33%
BS/BA degree	44	29%
Graduate work	7	5%
Graduate degree	17	11%
Marital status		
Married	122	80%
Single (never married)	10	7%
Separated	1	1%
Divorced	17	11%
Widowed	2	1%
Household income		
$14,999 or less	5	3%
$15,000 - $24,999	17	11%
$25,000 - $34,999	23	15%
$35,000 - $49,999	28	19%
$50,000 - $74,999	39	26%
$75,000 or more	38	25%
Race/Ethnicity		
White	148	99%
Native American	1	1%

chance without an outfitter to help them. Also it's nice to help a fisherman or hunter get the trophy they are looking for.

One respondent was enthusiastic about the job and described outfitting as an enjoyable lifestyle.

On good days, fantastic. On bad days, still the best life to live.

Some outfitters indicated a preference for catering to fishing and non-consumptive clients such as wildlife viewers, instead of hunters. This was because hunters tended to have greater expectations for success on their trips.

Pretty satisfying! Fishing/sightseeing is very relaxing and rewarding—more helping people to enjoy the wilderness and outdoors. Hunting is more stressful, more goal oriented, harder on all.

The guest ranch summer clients are very satisfying. Hunting [clients] somewhat less because the hunting egos sometimes get in the way of the client enjoyment.

While they enjoyed the job and found it rewarding, some outfitters also indicated that it wasn't a very lucrative occupation.

Very satisfying at times. [It] requires a lot of work and is not as glorified as many people think. I do not recommend anyone to become an outfitter for the money.

It can be very rewarding at times, mostly though it's just a tough way to make a hard living.

Very rewarding physically and mentally. Financially [I] might make more washing dishes. Lifestyle is good overall.

Other outfitters described the job as rewarding for the most part, but also expressed frustration because of the fact they had to deal with governmental agencies.

Living in God's greatest creation is awesome. Shaking the hand of a happy client is absolutely rewarding. Being self-employed is challenging. Dealing with federal agencies is horrendous.

At times great. Other times not worth the BS required to be legal. It's frustrating to accept I am not free enterprise. The system controls us to death, i.e. high turnover, burnout rate of outfitters.

Best Part of the Job

Outfitters were asked to describe the best part of the job. Responses indicated that helping people have a great outdoor experience that would provide lasting memories was the best part of the job for many outfitters.

Helping others attain the game and trip of their dreams.

Feeling good when you know your client had a good experience. Having clients return year after year and knowing you are making their trip enjoyable, one that they will always remember and cherish.

The joy of people getting in touch with nature. Muscles are sore, faces sun burned and dirty, mosquito bites, but they're grinning and saying they had the best time of their life-then, it's all worthwhile.

Seeing clients have an outing that becomes a memory for life.

Some outfitters believed the best part of the job was getting to meet people.

Visiting with successful people from across the U.S. and Europe. Helping a young, old or any hunter accomplish their goal of getting an animal.

Meeting great people and being outside.

The people and livestock, the being out in the woods for such a long extended time. Also, the wildlife is rewarding.

Other responses indicated that being in the outdoors was the best part of the job.

Riding the high country, mules loaded and no phones, t.v., cars or noise.

The best part is being outdoors. No matter how bad the weather gets, I would rather be working outside than inside.

Some outfitters liked being their own boss, and rated it as the most positive aspect of their job.

Being your own boss.

Working with people to give them a quality outdoor experience. Being your own boss. Being outside working in the outdoors.

Worst Part of the Job

When outfitters were asked to describe the worst part of their job, government regulations and paperwork were frequently mentioned. In terms of government regulations, outfitters described having to deal with extensive bureaucratic regulations by agencies in both the state and federal government. Outfitters must be licensed by the state in order to work legally (Montana Code Annotated, 2009). Outfitters that work on public land also have to comply with regulations of federal agencies such as the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Putting up with the constant assault of governmental regulation be it state or federal.

It is a tossup between sales and dealing with governmental agencies.

Long days and weeks with not much rest. Government regulations by the thousands.

Short season, high expenses, regulating agencies constantly tightening the noose.

Dealing with the idiots at USFS [United States Forest Service].

Dealing with government agencies—Montana Board of Outfitters and the Forest Service.

Regulations, paperwork brought on by the Board of Outfitters and Forest Service.

Outfitters also expressed a dislike for paperwork, and indicated that much of it originated from regulations associated with governmental agencies.

Dealing with government paperwork.

Paperwork, not having control over how the government is going to regulate river use.

Paperwork, licensing, government permitting agencies.

Turning in a client who has made a game law violation. PAPER WORK.

The paperwork and all the rules and regulations.

PAPER WORK. Dealing with more and more government regulations.

Bureaucracy and paperwork.

Outfitting work is seasonal in nature and is often concentrated into relatively short time periods. Some outfitters reported the worst part of the job was working long hours when guiding clients. Others mentioned having to wake up very early in the morning to take care of clients.

I miss not being able to spend as much time with my family in the fall. The hours are long—even when I love what I do.

18 hours a day for 3 months.

Getting up at 3:00 a.m. to fix breakfast.

Up at 4 a.m. for five weeks.

Other responses indicated that certain facets of the job such as crowding issues, camp set-up and take-down, and the physically demanding nature of the job while in the elements, were regarded as the most negative aspects of the job.

The short over-intense work period. Working on such crowded rivers, in competition with so many non-guided out of state anglers.

Shoeing a hind hoof on a nervous horse. Hot day. Sweat stinging in the eyes. Horse tail swatting at flies. Back hurts. Empty belly. 3 more to go.

Setting up and taking down camp. A lot of <u>work</u>.

Stress of the Job

When asked to describe stress of the job, some outfitters indicated it was very stressful. Stressful events included the booking season, which is the time when outfitters obtain clients for the year. Other outfitters said the most stressful time was during the hunting and fishing seasons.

Can be very stressful from booking, to everyday trying to produce for your client.

Very stressful during the December through April booking season. No hunters means no income.

I am constantly worried about my livelihood.

I don't have any hair on top of my head, is that an indicator? It really is pretty stressful.

Highly, lots of outfitters get to drinking heavily.

Very. There are no old outfitters still outfitting. This is a young man's job.

During hunting, very, because you never get to leave the situation. As one corporate CEO put it to me, this is a real "pressure cooker" when you don't kill elk.

During the season stress is tremendous. Fishing might be slow, water conditions change. Clients want changes.

With some clients [there is] no stress, others can be demanding, but a lot of the stress comes from outside your business. It's the other people crowding the river. You don't go fishing to see people—you go to see fish and wildlife. Montana rivers are a crowd scene. Yet the state tries to represent itself like a wilderness. It's misleading to visitors.

Some outfitters reported that they found the job moderately stressful, and most of these comments suggested that stress was associated with uncertainty with respect to income.

Moderately stressful—a six on a ten scale with ten being wound tighter than [a] banjo.

Moderate. Mostly related to funds. We don't make huge money.

Moderate. Income each year is always uncertain. Will you get enough clients booked? Will there be fires/drought in [the] area? Shut off forest service [land]? What legislation will be passed to hinder business?

Like any other demanding occupation, outfitting has its own stressful moments but overall it is a very satisfying job when you can bring smiles to your clients. We certainly strive to provide the utmost satisfying experiences to all.

Some outfitters indicated the job was not very stressful, and claimed that stress can generally be avoided by consistently being prepared.

Compared to other professions, it is not that stressful. Most of the stress comes from lack of preparation (which I try to circumvent) or variables beyond the outfitter's control (weather, water conditions, etc.).

Can be stressful. Stress can be reduced through good preparation, good help, and hard work. This job is not for the lazy man.

In the field—not. At the desk—very.

Choosing the Job Again

Outfitters were asked if they would choose the job if they had it to do all over again. Almost ninety-one percent (90.8%) indicated they would choose the job again. When asked why most reflected on the general lifestyle.

Yes, it's a great way of life.

Yes, because it allows me a lot of free time to spend with my family and it is a healthy lifestyle. I am 53 and very few men in their 20's have my health and vigor.

Yes. The rewards far outweigh the negative aspects of the job.

Yes. It's the most fun you can have while going broke.

Other outfitters expressed a love of the job that was related to what they considered to be enjoyable work as well as the free time the job provided.

Absolutely. I wake up at 6 a.m. and can't wait to go to work. That is a feeling <u>most</u> people don't ever have.

Yes. To get paid for something you love is a dream come true.

Yes, I love my life, my office is on a river and I get 6 months off a year.

Some outfitters reported that they liked being their own boss and would choose the occupation again for that reason.

Yes. I like working for myself. Independence is great. I will meet more interesting people again this season.

Yes, because I enjoy being my own boss.

Some outfitters were more ambivalent in their responses, and indicated they might choose the job again but had some reservations that had to do with things such as crowding issues and the work hours.

> *Maybe/probably. As pressure on our resources increases it's going to get tougher and tougher to show clients a good time, i.e. a "quality experience."*

> *Yes. I think I would have, but I would have got out or changed jobs 15 years ago, just as the state and fly fishing started to really grow. It's been less enjoyable every year since 1990.*

> *Maybe, for the money, but not for the glory. It's terrible hours and a lot of disappointments. […] I'm trying to get out of the outfitting business. I don't enjoy the hours, the cold, the rich people and the difficulty of finding help. I made lots of money doing it but now I enjoy school bus driving. I do summer trips—camping—and hourly horseback rides which involves no pressure to get game.*

Some outfitters who indicated they would not go into outfitting again cited a variety of concerns for their negative decisions. These included government regulations, environmental groups, economic factors, and the physical demands of the job.

> *It used to be fun—a love beyond anything I could ever have done. But dealing with wolves, grizzlies, government regulations, greenies, anti's, Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Club, Humane Society—is wearing on me and it's not much fun anymore! […I would] not [go into outfitting] under the current conditions. With all of the above mentioned adversities, it's nearly impossible to have a "viable" business. [It's] impossible for someone starting out new and making huge payments.*

> *I regret to say no. I've had too many bureaucratic hassles and have no retirement and a business with no real value because permits and leases are all subject to whims or changes in rules or laws. I loved it when I could just enjoy guiding my guests and wasn't always fighting to survive the paperwork system.*

> *No. I don't enjoy hunting anymore. I don't like dealing with the government agencies with no common sense.*

> *No. My body is broke up and I have lost lots of money in the business. No glory. […] you don't get paid enough and you're disliked by many.*

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine job satisfaction among outfitters using a symbolic interactionist perspective. This perspective is useful because it helps us understand the meaning of work to those who engage in a particular occupation as described by Shaffir and Pawluch:

> Symbolic interactionism provides a way to understand, from the perspective of those who do it, the meanings that work has in their lives. It is an approach that concerns itself with the significance we attach to the work we do, the rewards we derive from it, the obstacles and problems we confront in doing it, the goals and ambitions we have for it, and the context that it provides for so many of our social interactions. (2003, p. 906)

Most outfitters in this study enjoyed their job and derived a great deal of satisfaction from helping others enjoy the outdoors. Although they feel that they do not earn a lot of money, outfitters enjoy the lifestyle because it tends to complement their personal interests.

Positive aspects of the job were helping people, meeting people, being outdoors, and getting to be their own boss. Negative aspects of the job were primarily associated with government regulations, paperwork, and long hours.

Job stress tended to result from the client booking season as well as during hunting or fishing seasons when outfitters feel pressure to "produce" results for their clients. The majority of outfitters would choose the occupation again if given the choice.

To enhance our understanding of the phenomenon, future research should continue to examine job satisfaction in the outfitting occupation. The outfitters in the present study engaged mostly in hunting and/or fishing activities. Studies should examine job satisfaction of outfitters who focus on other activities such as boating and mountain climbing. Studies should also examine outfitter attitudes in different states and regions of the country to provide additional perspective on factors that affect job satisfaction. Ethnographic methods would likely yield useful information.

Continuing research should take a quantitative approach to the study of job satisfaction among outfitters. Questions with quantitative measures could be developed and sent to a large sample of outfitters in order to further our knowledge about job satisfaction among individuals employed in this occupation. Age and duration in the outfitting business could be correlated with job satisfaction, leading to new insight about the phenomenon.

Outfitters in the present study expressed concern with government regulations. Future studies should analyze how government agencies regulate the outfitting enterprise at both the state and federal levels. It would be useful to understand the extent to which outfitting rules and regulations differ from state to state and across federal agencies. Another direction for future research would be to see if outfitters understood the reasoning behind the regulations and the consequences to the resources if there were no regulation of the industry.

Further research efforts should examine the clientele of outfitters. In particular, studies should investigate clients and the expectations they have of outfitters. What type of attributes do clients seek in terms of the outfitters they hire? Do clients focus on the overall hunting or fishing experience, or do they expect outfitters to provide them with a certain quality or quantity of game or fish in order for the experience to be considered successful? Studies could assess levels of client satisfaction with outfitters. This type of study would provide important information about the outfitting experience from the client's perspective.

It is hoped this study will stimulate additional research on outfitters and their clients to enhance our knowledge base about this important, but neglected, recreational occupation.

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Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trail Hikers: A Comparison of Benefits and Motivations

Eddie Hill
Old Dominion University
Edwin Gómez
Old Dominion University
Marni Goldenberg
California Polytechnic State University
Barbara Freidt
Old Dominion University
Stephanie Fellows
California Polytechnic State University
Laura Hill
Old Dominion University

The Appalachian Trail (AT) and Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) are two scenic trails named in the National Trails System Act of 1968. Recently, trails and footpaths have been used to promote such benefits as healthy lifestyles, sense of community, and an increased quality of life. The purpose of this study was to compare the motivations and benefits from hikers of the AT and the PCT. Grounded in Driver's benefits model and means-end theory, and using an Internet questionnaire, 766 usable questionnaires were collected. Significant differences were found between AT and PCT users who: hike to prevent a worse health condition; seek motivational attributes (e.g. scenic beauty); pursue motivational consequences (e.g. physical activity); and perceive motivational values (e.g. increasing self-esteem).

The Appalachian Trail (AT) and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) are two of eight designated National Scenic Trails. The AT and the PCT were the first of these eight scenic trails named in the National Trails System Act of 1968. Recently, trails, greenways, and paths have been used to promote healthy lifestyles (Hill, Swain, & Hill, 2008); however, literature on the motivations and benefits of hiking is less prevalent. An understanding of the motivations and benefits perceived from hiking on the AT and PCT were explored using Driver's benefits model and means-end theory. A better understanding of the motivations and benefits associated with hiking may encourage new and current users to explore trails, greenways, and walking paths to achieve desired benefits within Driver's (1997) categories (i.e., prevention of a worse condition, improved conditions, and awareness of psychological experiences).

American society is currently plagued with health issues directly correlated with lack of physical activity, many of which are preventable. Heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions are posing a serious threat to public health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2000). Obesity has increased 50% over the last two decades (DHHS, 2000), and 25% of adults engage in no leisure time physical activity (CDC, 2008). Physical activity has been shown to lead to improved health and, thus, the reduction of health risks such as heart disease and obesity (Allen & Cooper, 2003). The AT, PCT, and other trails are resources that could be useful in championing increased physical activity. For example, of the 14 states through which the Appalachian Trail traverses, only Vermont had over 55% of its population meet the physical activity recommendations in both 2005 and 2007 (CDC, 2010). The purpose of this study was to use the Benefits of Hiking Scale [BHS] (Freidt, Hill, Gómez, & Goldenberg, 2010) to determine the differences, if any, in motivations and benefits among AT and PCT hikers. The BHS is based upon Driver's benefits model (Driver, 1997), as well as means-end research gathered from AT hikers (Hill, Goldenberg, & Freidt, 2009).

Literature Review

Trends show that National Park Service visitations have increased in the last half century. According to the National Parks Service, in 2010, there were 281.3 million recreation visits to parks in the United States (Street, 2011). This was an increase of three million visits to national parks since 2006 (Smith, n.d.). Of these visitors, 49 million people visited national recreation areas (Street, 2011), some of which included visits to the Appalachian Trail (AT) and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Understanding why recreationists visited and utilized the AT and PCT are important in order to assess values, motivations, and benefits for hiking.

In 1968, Congress passed the National Trails System Act to "promote the preservation of, public access to, travel within, and enjoyment and appreciation of the open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources of the Nation" (National Park Service [NPS], 2009, p. 1). The act authorized three types of trails: (a) the National Scenic Trails, (b) National Recreation Trails, and (c) connecting-and-side trails. The creation of the first two scenic trails (Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trails) established the foundation for the National Trail System.

The Appalachian Trail

An assembly of volunteer hiking clubs joined together at the Appalachian Trail Conference in the 1920s and 1930s and designed, structured, and marked the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) (Manning et al., 2000). Begun in 1921 and completed in 1937, the AT was designated as the nation's first official National Scenic Trail in 1968 by the National Trails System Act (Appalachian Trail Conservancy [ATC], n.d.; Manning et al., 2000). Eight national forests, six national parks, several state and local forests, numerous state and local parks, and more than 2,000 incidences of animal and plant species regarded as rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive are within the path's borders (ATC, n.d.). The AT is well-known for its diversity and length, and is regarded as a one-of-a-kind park (ATC, n.d.; Manning et al., 2000; NPS, 2007). The trail consists of approximately 2,175 continuous miles of footpath, which span fourteen eastern states stretching from Georgia to Maine (ATC, n.d.). Each year, nearly 2,000 individuals attempt to thru hike (complete a continuous journey of the 2,175 mile trail) the AT.

The 2010 U.S. Census reported 308.7 million people in the United States (Mackun & Wilson, 2011). Almost two-thirds of all Americans reside within a day's drive of the AT (NPS, 2007). Of the approximate 200 million people living within a day's drive of the AT, the NPS (2007) approximated that four million people visit the trail yearly. Although the AT is known as the "People's Path," only two percent of the population, living within a day's drive of the trail, utilizes the trail. Arguably, the potential for this trail has yet to be realized. Because the AT is a resource offering a variety of activities of varying durations (ATC, n.d.), lengthy and accessible (ATC, n.d.; NPS, 2007), and perceived as safe (Manning et al., 2000), the AT is a good candidate for modeling the use of parks to advocate increased physical activity.

The Pacific Crest Trail

The PCT is comprised of 2,650 miles of trail from Mexico to Canada. The PCT was designated a National Scenic Trail officially in 1993, though the concept was developed in the early 1900s. Clinton Clarke, trail pioneer, envisioned "Trails for America" in the early 1920s. This dream became a reality in the Depression-era with the creation of the California Conservation Corps (CCC) (Great Outdoor Recreation Pages [GORP], n.d.). The CCC, coupled with significant contributions from the U.S. Forest Service, linked individual trail sections into one unified multiuse trail. The trail was dedicated to foot travel, thereby protecting scenic corridors for outdoor recreation (GORP, n.d.).

Once a trail of this magnitude was deemed feasible, supporters for the border-to-border trail lobbied the federal government to secure the trail corridor. Clarke and fellow trail pioneer, Warren Rogers, settled for several disconnected trails at the crest of each involved state. With its formal establishment granted, the PCT was able to receive money from the government for upkeep, as well as provide structured access and use of the area. For the millions of people every year who step foot onto the PCT, this provided recreation opportunities ranging from one day to multiple months on the trail. The PCT was not completed and dedicated until 1993, 25 years after its formal establishment (Pacific Crest Trail Association [PCTA], n.d.).

The PCT consists of five sections: Southern California, Central California, Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. The trail passes through 24 national forests, seven national parks, and 33 wilderness areas (GORP, n.d.). Each year, approximately 300 thru hikers attempt to complete the 2,650-mile stretch (PCTA, n.d.). The PCT is a multiuse trail that is accessible to equestrians and mountain bikers. These population groups join the myriad of hiker types (e.g., day and thru hikers) that utilize the trail.

Means-end Theory

The data in this study were collected using the means-end theoretical framework. This framework was utilized to create the Benefits of Hiking Scale (BHS). Means-end theory, developed by Gutman (1982), "links physical objects or services and means with outcomes and personal values of the individual" (Klenosky et al., 1998, p. 13). The theory uses a qualitative approach through a laddering process (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). Means-end theory looks beyond the benefit a participant gains from an outdoor experience and "views consumers as goal-oriented decision-makers who choose to perform behaviors that seem most likely to lead to desired outcomes" (Costa, Dekker, & Jongen, 2004, p. 405). The link between attributes, consequences, and values (ACV) constitutes means-end theory. ACVs were used in creating a Hierarchical Value Map, which is a pictorial depiction of means-end analysis. *Attributes* referred to the characteristics of the products or services, or in the case of outdoor recreation, an attribute could be a trail, the outdoors, or scenic beauty (Goldenberg, Hill, & Freidt, 2008). *Consequences* referred to benefits (desired outcomes) and also costs/risks (undesirable outcomes); examples could be exercise, environmental awareness, or camaraderie. *Values* refer to "highly abstract consequences that summarize desired end-states of being" (Goldenberg et al., 2000, p. 212). Such values in a hiking experience could include enjoyment of life, self-reliance, or an increase in self-esteem (Goldenberg et al., 2000).

Rather than approaching ACVs independently, means-end theory looks at the interrelatedness of the three. Product/service attributes equated to the "means" the consumers use in order to obtain their desired consequences/benefits. From this, a consumer achieves personal values or "ends" (Gutman, 1982). Means-end theory typically is used to understand consumer decision-making, and has been previously used in tourism research (Klenosky, 2002; McDonald, Thyne, & McMorland, 2007).

Goldenberg et al. (2008) utilized means-end theory to examine the motivations of AT hikers. Forty-three AT hikers were asked questions that focused on identifying the components of the most important experiences on the AT and how these components related to the outcomes desired. A hierarchical value map was used to depict the strength of connections between ACVs that the hikers held. Hill et al. (2007) identified that hikers of the AT reported that consequences (benefits) such as health, physical challenge, exercise, and relaxation were determined by attributes such as location, length of experience, activities completed in the wilderness, and number of participants in the group. The aforementioned consequences were linked to values. These values included self-fulfillment, self-reliance, fun and enjoyment of life, and warm relationships with others (Goldenberg et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2007). Means-end theory was used to indicate that the use of the AT trails "was motivated by physical challenge, exercise, and health" (Hill, Goldenberg, & Freidt, 2009, p. 19). Means-end theory was ideal for this study because of the "importance hierarchy" that was established as well as the linkage between ACVs. Through these findings, usage and stewardship of the AT was emphasized.

The Benefits Movement

Recreational professionals need to continue to provide quality services through evidence-based research in all aspects of recreation including trails. The need for tangible evidence in order to justify the utility of public services receiving tax funds has been an ever-growing demand of communities (Allen & Cooper, 2003; Moore & Driver, 2005). This need to justify these experiences led to the benefits movement (Allen & Cooper, 2003). The benefits movement refers to the "ongoing process of leisure service providers to identify desirable individual, social, economic and environmental benefits derived from recreational experiences" (Allen & Cooper, 2003, p. 30). The process includes: delegation of resources, promotion of benefits, documentation of outcomes, and promotion of success (Allen & Cooper, 2003).

Within the benefits movement, recreation professionals were asked to identify and measure the benefits (beneficial consequences) of recreation rather than simply assuming that recreation was inherently rewarding (Allen

& Cooper, 2003; Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991). The "magnitude, pervasiveness, and social significance of particular types of benefits" should be advanced and communicated to the public, other public agencies, related social service professionals, and those responsible for the provision of leisure services in the private sector (Driver, 1998, p. 26). In order to accomplish this, leisure professionals must recognize what the benefits are for their constituents. Recreational benefit research and statistics are increasingly needed to offer valid and reliable information regarding the benefits of recreation. This is essential to decision makers who allocate resources (Driver et al., 1991). The research support for the identified benefits from hiking trails is needed, and as Jordan (1991), a former member of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, noted, without statistical support, "…our arsenal still lacks essential weapons—proof that we are who we say we are, and proof that we do what we say we do!" (p. 366).

To further promote evidenced-based knowledge about the benefits of leisure, Driver operationalized the word "benefit," with respect to the leisure setting, as having one of three characteristics: (a) an outcome causing a change resulting in a more desirable condition than previously existed, (b) the persistence of a desired condition in order to avoid an undesirable condition from occurring, or (c) the realization of a fulfilling psychological experience with regards to recreation (Driver, 1997; Driver et al., 1991). Driver's first category of leisure benefits is the improved condition (a change in condition to a more desirable one); this type of benefit may include improvements to human, natural, or economic factors (Moore & Driver, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2013). Examples of the improved condition may include improved muscular strength, increased flexibility, and increased problem-solving ability. Prevention of a worse condition is categorized as a leisure benefit, which avoids deterioration in a human, natural, or economic condition (Moore & Driver, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2013). Prevention of a worse condition includes benefits such as prevention of depression, prevention of anxiety, maintenance of cardiovascular fitness, and weight maintenance. Realization of a psychological experience, Driver's final typology of leisure benefits, is defined as selection of a recreational activity due to the intrinsic value of the experience (Moore & Driver 2005; O'Sullivan 2013). Psychological benefits include items such as flow, spirituality, or a sense of freedom. Through an understanding of the benefits derived from a recreational experience, professionals may better manage, program, and promote the experience, thereby affording the recreationists an experience more likely to provide said benefits.

Targeting Healthy Lifestyles

Physical inactivity contributes to many of these life threatening chronic diseases (CDC, 2008). Inadequate physical inactivity is a cause of being overweight or obese (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2000; 2001). Being overweight or obese is associated with conditions such as arthritis, heart disease, stroke, certain cancer types, type 2 diabetes, certain breathing problems, and psychological disorders like depression (DHHS, 2001). Not only does being overweight or obese increase the risk of the aforementioned health conditions, but the risk of death also rises with increasing weight (DHHS, 2001). In fact, in comparison to individuals of a healthy weight, the risk of premature death can increase 50 to 100% in obese individuals (DHHS, 2001). An estimated 300,000 deaths each year may be attributed to obesity alone (DHHS, 2001).

Physical activity, such as hiking, may be used to contest the conditions of being overweight or obese as physical activity helps control weight (President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, n.d.). In 2005, only seven states had populations of which more than 55% met the physical activity recommendations (CDC, 2010). Because physical activity helps control weight and excessive weight is linked to premature death, disability, and decreased quality of life, physical activity tops the list of Leading Health Indicators in *Healthy People 2010*, (DHHS, 2000) which presents a nationwide health and disease prevention agenda. Increasing "the proportion of adults who engage regularly, preferably daily, in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day" (DHHS, 2000, p. 26) is an objective requiring Americans to begin choosing more active leisure time activities. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) have joined forces to address this health objective; in 2002, Dr. Eve Slater—the Assistant Secretary for Health (DHHS, 2002) said:

> Today the NRPA and [DHHS] affirm that our parks will also be a place of health, where community members can come to not only exercise but to learn about and participate in other ways to make a difference in their well-being. (p. 1)

Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne, acknowledged the role National Parks should play in health and fitness. In *The Future of America's National Parks,* it was noted "[national] parks restore minds, hearts, and souls. Many Americans, especially children, are increasingly disconnected from the great outdoors. National parks will be part of the solution to reduce obesity, chronic illness, and adult-onset diabetes" (Kempthorne, 2007, p. 12).

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between AT and PCT hikers' perceived benefits (defined as perceived improved condition benefits, prevention of a worse condition, and awareness of psychological experiences)?
2. Is there a significant difference between AT and PCT hikers' attributes, consequences, and values?
3. Is there a relationship between attributes, consequences, and values of users of the AT and PCT?

Methods

The purpose of this study was to use the benefits of hiking scale (BHS) to determine the differences, if any, of motivations and benefits among Appalachian and Pacific Crest Trail hikers. These individuals were chosen based on the criteria that they had hiked a portion of the AT or PCT and were affiliated with a club and/or an organization that supports the recreational use of the trails. The participants' involvement in clubs and groups provided the assumption that the individuals were interested in the AT or PCT. The AT users were primarily contacted via AT Clubs and AT websites. Most PCT participants were contacted through the Pacific Crest Trail Association's e-mail forum, the PCT-L. The data were collected between 2007 and 2009.

Description of Instrument

The 32-item BHS was developed to understand the values and perceived benefits associated with hiking trails (Freidt et al., 2010). The BHS was administered via an online survey using Inquisite. The BHS has been tested for psychometric properties, with reliabilities ranging from .75-.91 across six subscales: three from Driver's areas of benefits and three from the areas of means-end theory (Freidt et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2010). Internal and external validity checks were performed on the six factors/constructs; all were well defined with factor loadings of 0.60 or higher (Freidt et al., 2010; Gómez et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2010). The BHS variables were rated on a Likert-type scale from 1 (never/not applicable) to 7 (very much like me).

The BHS contains 16-items that examined hiking grounded in the three categories of Driver's (1998) benefits for recreating: prevention (PREV), improved condition (IMP), and recognition of psychological experiences (PSYC). Example items from the benefits dimension of the BHS are: I hike because I feel hiking reduces my number of illnesses (PREV); I hike because I feel that hiking improves my overall fitness (IMP); and I hike because I recognize that hiking gives me a sense of self-reliance (PSYC). The BHS also contains 16-items theoretically grounded in means-end theory measuring attributes (ATTRIB), consequences (CONSEQ), and values (VALS) of hikers. Example items from the means-end dimension of the BHS are: One of the main reasons I hike the AT is simply because I enjoy the act of hiking (ATTRIB); I hike the AT because hiking is good for my health (CONSEQ); and Overall, I feel that hiking the AT improves self-fulfillment (VALS).

Description on Analyses

In order to assess the three research questions in this study, several analyses were performed. Research questions 1 and 2 consider differences between AT and PCT users on means-end and benefits constructs. These questions were assessed using independent samples *t*-tests. Analysis for question 3 (testing for a relationship between the constructs of means-end theory) utilized a correlation analysis, which allowed for the assessment of the conceptualized traditional relationship (attributes → consequences → values), as well as the exploration of other possible relationships if significant correlations were found in the analysis.

Results

Descriptive Statistics on Respondents

Subjects for this study were hikers of the AT (*n* = 577) or PCT (*n* = 311) for a total *N* of 766. Subjects consisted of male and female hikers over the age of 18. Table 1 indicates that AT and PCT users were predominantly section hikers; however, the second largest group of users of the AT was day hikers (over twice as many as the PCT), whereas the PCT had multi-use users as its second largest user group. Additionally, PCT had nearly 22% of users as thru-hikers, as compared to the AT's 13%. In terms of hiking mileage, 50% of hikers on the AT hiked between 1-10 miles per day, whereas 50.5% of hikers on the PCT traveled between 11-20 miles per day. The vast majority in both groups were White/ Caucasian users. Lastly, AT users tended to be younger than PCT users. In summary, typical AT users were young, White, day users or section hikers, who hike shorter distances, and typical PCT users were older, White, thru, multi-use, and section hikers, who hike longer distances.

Research Questions 1 and 2

The next step was to ascertain whether or not there were differences between these six subscales and users of both the AT and the PCT. An independent samples t-test was used to test the statistical significance in mean differences between AT and PCT recreational users and values and benefits. There were significant differences between AT and PCT users according to the following:

- AT users demonstrated a **higher** likelihood of hiking because it may prevent a worse health condition (*M = 5.46, SD* = 1.44) than did PCT users (*M* = 5.28, *SD* = 1.56), *t*(747) = 3.35, *p* = 0.001;
- AT users demonstrated a **lower** likelihood toward the attributes as concrete reasons for hiking (*M = 6.34, SD* = 0.72) than did PCT users (*M* = 6.46, *SD* = 0.79), *t*(733) = -2.12, *p* = 0.04;
- AT users demonstrated a **higher** likelihood toward the identified consequences (*M = 5.35, SD* = 1.08) than did PCT users (*M* = 4.96, *SD* = 1.33), *t*(734) = 4.51, *p* = 0.0001); and
- AT users demonstrated a **higher** likelihood toward the identified values (*M = 5.99, SD* = 1.03) than did PCT users (*M* = 5.71, *SD* = 1.21), *t*(723) = 3.35, *p* = 0.001).

There were no significant differences between AT and PCT users and their likelihood toward using the trails for the purposes of an improved condition (e.g., hiking improves my overall fitness), nor for the purpose of realizing a psychological

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics on the AT & PCT

	AT n_1	PCT n_2	AT %	PCT %
Hiker Type				
Day	119	38	26.2	12.2
Overnight	44	29	9.7	9.3
Section	157	100	34.6	32.2
Thru	59	68	13.0	21.9
Multi-use	75	76	16.5	24.4
Miles per Day				
1-5 miles	48	23	10.6	7.4
6-10 miles	179	63	39.4	20.3
11-15 miles	165	77	36.3	24.8
16-20 miles	55	80	12.1	25.7
21-25 miles	5	25	1.1	16.7
26+ miles	2	16	0.4	5.1
Race/Ethnicity				
White	398	270	94.3	96.8
Non-White	24	9	5.7	3.2
Age Category				
18-25	29	13	6.9	4.4
26-30	26	24	3.2	8.1
31-35	36	12	8.5	4.1
36-40	35	14	8.3	4.7
41-45	41	16	9.7	5.4
46-50	64	33	15.2	11.2
51-55	69	45	16.4	15.3
56-60	49	57	11.6	19.3
61-65	40	41	9.5	13.9
66+	33	40	7.6	13.9

state (e.g., gives a sense of self-reliance). Thus, differences were found in all three means-end components but in only one of the three components of benefits (i.e., prevention of a worse condition).

Research Question 3

The next set of correlation analyses was performed to determine the existence of relationships among the means-end model constructs for AT and PCT hikers (i.e., laddering from attributes, to consequences, to values). It was also useful to determine variance explained if researchers knew only the attributes (i.e., to what extent would this help explain a participant's value for hiking). The following one and two-predictor models reflect the percentage explained (beta weight) for AT users (top number, above arrows) and for PCT users (lower number, below arrows). Figure 1 illustrates the traditional view in the literature of attributes affecting consequences, which in turn affects values. Figure 1 illustrates that the impact in both the AT (top scores) and the PCT (bottom scores) are also comparable.

We found that in addition to the *indirect* impact of attributes on values via consequence (Figure 1), there was a significant *direct* impact from attributes to values (Figure 2). Figure 2 also illustrates that in both the AT and PCT studies the direct impact from attributes to values was also comparable. Lastly, Figure 3 considers direct impacts of both consequences and attributes on values (a typical regression model). The beta weights in the regression model clearly indicate that consequences would have a stronger direct impact than would attributes on values.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to use the benefits of hiking scale (Freidt et al., 2010) to determine differences, if any, of motivations and benefits among AT and PCT hikers. Using Driver's (1998) framework for benefits, the first research question sought to determine if any differences existed between AT and PCT hikers with their respective scores on perceived benefits. Although these data show significant differences among AT and PCT hikers in prevention of a worse health condition, the results support that hiking is perceived to be beneficial by all users.

While there are many benefits derived from participation in outdoor recreation (Moore & Drive, 2005), the benefits of improved condition (IMP) and recognition of psychological experience states (PSYC) are perceived more equally among the AT and PCT users. Prevention (PREV) was higher in AT than in PCT users, which forces researchers to examine the reasons. One argument could be the majority of the population in urban areas felt that "fresh air and exercise" could lead to a better condition and an "escape" from the city. This is further reinforced by the knowledge that the majority (two-thirds) of the American population lives within a day's drive of the AT, also known as the "People's Path," (NPS, 2007). Additionally, parts of the Southeast have higher rates of obesity than the western states (CDC, 2008). From Virginia to Georgia there are nearly 1000 miles of the AT (almost half). Hikers of the AT in this part of the country might be motivated because of the higher rate of health concerns, thus attempting to prevent such outcomes by remaining physically active. Table 1 indicates that this proximity seems to facilitate more excursions to the AT (i.e., a higher frequency of shorter visits/day trips on the AT, but less time on the trail in terms of mileage). However, this did not seem to be the case for PCT users who had more extended trips. Recent trail studies exploring benefits can be a platform for

Figure 1. One Predictor Model (Traditional Model)

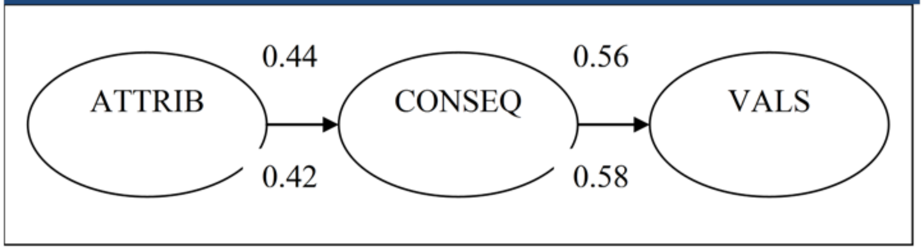


Figure 2. Two Predictor Model A

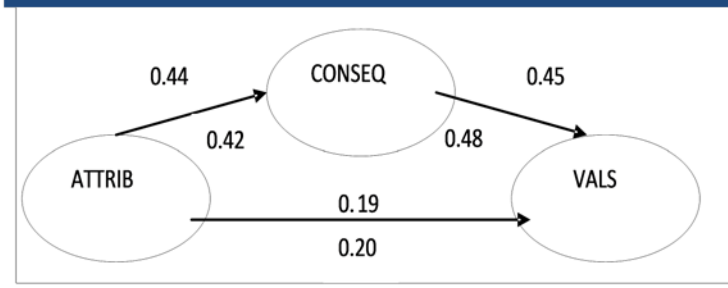
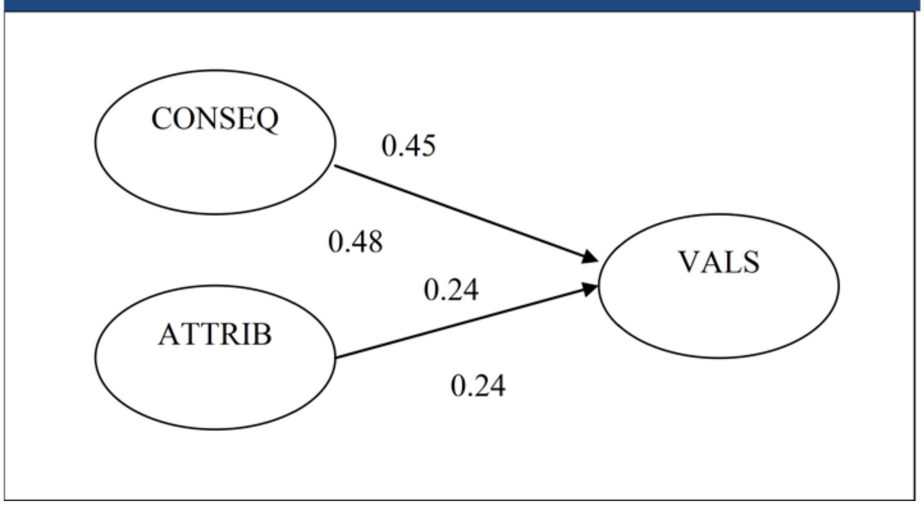


Figure 3. Two Predictor Model B



future research (Freidt et al., 2010; Hill et al., 2008) on trails found in closer proximity to urban areas. Local trails, greenways and other local footpaths are potential examples of resources for producing similar benefits attained from hiking one of our national scenic trails.

Grounded in means-end theory, the second research question sought to determine if differences existed between ACV among AT and PCT hikers. Gutman's (1982) original means-end theoretical framework based the values portion on Rokeach's (1973) seminal work. The basic notion was that a company could better market a product if they knew the consumer's linkages between attributes and values with any given product. Thus, a consumer benefit or the lack of an undesirable consequence could be effectively communicated to the public.

In this study, values and benefits were different among AT and PCT hikers, providing a need to further explore national views on the motives and benefits of hiking. The significant difference between AT and PCT users (e.g., values) presents a challenge for outdoor recreation managers. Does the AT "culture" offer a different level of value as compared to the PCT? Are the values truly different, or are they different interpretations of the same value? Questions of this nature should be further explored to determine the true motives of hikers in both nationally recognized and local trails. Although we are still left with some questions, by using Gutman's means-end theory we have placed the consumer (i.e., hiker) and the values (e.g., enjoyment of life) in a model that should help us further market trail usage to potential consumers. Certainly the AT and PCT are not accessible by all, nor do either have the carrying capacity for all Americans, but by using "all trails," we can possibly market a beneficial product (i.e., hiking) to much of the population. Given that the majority of users in our study were White, the values in this study have a strong hegemonic perspective. More research is needed among non-mainstreamed user groups for the purposes of comparisons to explore whether benefits derived from trail use are universal, or whether more target-based marketing would be warranted.

The third and final research question targeted the relationships between ACV among AT and PCT users. The traditional model of the relationship between ACV held. However, additional models explaining the relationship between ACV were also found based on the data from the respective AT and PCT users. In each of the models found in Figures 1-3, the variance explained was comparable in magnitude between the AT and PCT sites. Figure 1 illustrated the traditional conceptualization. Figure 2 considered both direct and indirect impacts of attributes on values. Lastly, Figure 3 considered a regression model, whereby the direct impact of consequences on values is somewhat attenuated due to the fact that it shares some variance with attributes – this is innately captured in Figure 2 via the indirect and direct impact of attributes on values.

Limitations

This study cannot be generalized to all hiking trails. Data were collected on two national scenic trails, thus values and benefits from users of non-national scenic trails is still needed. Data collection relied on partnerships with trail maintaining clubs and other organizations. Not all clubs or organizations were willing to assist in the study, thus not all views (i.e., values and benefits) of users are included. In some instances, survey information may not have been passed on to all club and organization members. Another limitation is the concern that many hikers that would have completed the survey could have been on the trail during the time in which the survey was available. Also, the survey was distributed online; individuals without Internet access, or who did not provide an e-mail as part of their membership, were not able to respond. Lastly, more research is needed on non-White groups given changing demographics in the U.S.

Conclusion and Future Recommendations

Practical Applications

Hikers of these trails could use this information to encourage others to hike on local trails or footpaths. For example, individuals could share information with prospective hikers that have an interest in any of the identified benefits (e.g., weight loss, socializing, healthy lifestyles, etc.). Hiking group leaders could use the information in the programming and promotion of trips. An example of this would be to increase awareness of values of hiking, such as meeting individuals with similar healthy lifestyles. Fatpacking, for example, is an organization that promotes the use of hiking trails, such as the AT, for weight loss (Fatpacking, n.d). Other researchers have used local trails for hiking among youth groups, targeting specified heart rate zones (Freidt, Hill, & Hill, 2007). Trail maintaining clubs may use the data to acquire new funding for footpath conservation and preservation. As an example, evidence-based research can assist in deciding how best to allocate funding in a manner supporting conservation and preservation while also supporting the provision of benefits desired by users. Benefits similar to those attained while hiking on our national scenic trails (e.g., healthy lifestyle, meeting others with similar interest, environmental awareness and appreciation of our natural resources) may be gained from hiking other trails such as local greenways and footpaths. Recently, many areas have identified the need to build local trails and footpaths to enhance sense of community. The BHS has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity and may be useful to planners, managers and others needing information about the motivations and perceived benefits of more commonly walked/hiked settings, such as local footpaths.

Theoretical Applications

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports well-documented research in means-end literature, as well as the benefits literature. Although these different benefits and means-end constructs were confirmed in previous studies, the current study found both differences and similarities between AT and PCT users among means-end and benefit concepts. As such, more research is warranted to explore both means-end outcomes and benefits with respect to hikers, as well as an application of the BHS to other recreationists.

Given the current fiscal uncertainty, the threat to close state parks (e.g., New York, California, etc.) is in the forefront, and recreation professionals need to act in a number of ways. Researchers can address this dilemma as they continue the promotion of our national, state, and local trails, and increase the amount of evidence related to beneficial outcomes of using local trails. Much of our population turns toward parks and trails to cope and alleviate with the struggles of society. At this time, we need to reassure the public, government agencies, and funding organizations that trails and parks are needed. Conducting evidence-based research identifying and providing data for promoting the benefits of trail usage is the most effective way to secure and protect trails for future generations.

From its inception, both the AT and PCT were created to provide benefits such as enjoying nature, scenery, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Additionally, the intent behind the designation was for the provision of enjoyment by all residents of the United States. The AT and PCT are thought of as providing the benefit for a healthy lifestyle – one such outlet is simply walking either of these foot paths, and thereby leading to beneficial outcomes such as a prevention of a worse condition (e.g., obesity) or simple "fun." However, little research had been conducted specifically on the various motivations and benefits of hiking either of these national trails. As such, this paper intended to fill a gap in the paucity of literature regarding the perceived motivations and benefits, and advocate for more research of users of our national and local trails.

The societal need to promote physical activity still exists. To challenge sedentary lifestyle choices and promote more active ones, an understanding of the motivations and benefits in choosing physical activities is needed. Motivation is a topic of central concern to leisure researchers because it helps determine why people participate by understanding the consequences associated with the leisure activity (Goldenberg et al., 2008; Hill, Ridinger, Shapiro, & Gómez, 2012; Hill et al., 2007). Understanding the relationship between psychological and physical outcomes may help managers, programmers, and other stakeholders "clarify" the product in terms of what the recreationists is seeking (Manfredo & Driver, 1996). Our study supports the continued use of parks and trails to increase physical activity, thus addressing some of our society's preventable health concerns.

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Personhood, Flourishing,
Disability, Leisure, and a Profession

James B. Wise
Minnesota State University, Mankato

The purpose of this article is to articulate a philosophical foundation for a profession aimed at enhancing the well-being or flourishing of people with disabilities through engagement in leisure practices. The core beliefs comprising the foundation are that people with disabilities are human beings who can flourish and experience leisure; leisure is essential to flourishing; and leisure promotes flourishing among people with disabilities. These beliefs emerged from an examination of the interrelationships among flourishing, people with disabilities, and leisure. The article concludes with a discussion of how the philosophical foundation meshes with the profession of therapeutic recreation and how the core beliefs guide the efforts of professionals who choose to promote human flourishing through leisure.

Throughout my career as a therapeutic recreation specialist I have been embroiled in a personal struggle wrestling with the question of what is therapeutic recreation (TR). This struggle and this question are not unique to me. In fact, both have been around since the profession came into existence. Over time, two primary responses to the question have been advanced. One, therapeutic recreation is a treatment oriented service aimed at improving the functioning and health of people with disabilities. Two, it is the provision of opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in leisure and recreation activities. My ruminations took on a philosophical tone once I began to study and understand what philosophers such as Aristotle, MacIntyre, and Pieper had to say about leisure, well-being, and leisure's role in human flourishing. One result of adopting a philosophical approach was to change the direction of my inquiry. Instead of trying to determine what TR is I began to wonder what it means to flourish as a person with a disability and how leisure contributes to flourishing. What my search has yielded thus far is the basis for this article.

This article contains five sections that articulate a philosophical foundation for a profession aimed at enhancing the well-being of people with disabilities through engagement in leisure practices. To be sound and robust, a profession needs to rest on a foundation composed of core beliefs (Sylvester, 2005a; Sylvester, Voelkl, & Ellis, 2001). A philosophical foundation is critical because it explains "*who* we are and *why* we are here." (Sylvester et al., 2001, p. 4) Sylvester et al. (2001, p. 4) asserted a philosophical foundation is "the single most important, structural dimension of a profession, providing a rational basis for its existence as a legitimate social institution. Without it a field literally has nothing to support its existence."

More specifically, the first section answers what makes something a human being and describes one particular theory of human flourishing. Section two focuses on people with disabilities and flourishing. The third section examines the relationship between leisure and flourishing. The fourth section explores the interrelationships among leisure, people with disabilities, and flourishing while the final section discusses the applicability of the preceding findings to therapeutic recreation and professionals who choose to promote human flourishing through engagement in leisure practices.

A Theory of Human Flourishing

Answering the philosophical question of human nature carries at least two important practical implications. One implication is that those who possess the qualities of personhood are bestowed with the status of moral beings and as such are owed and, in return, owe each other such things as care, respect, justice, and dignity. Lacking the status of a moral being potentially means being treated inhumanely. History has recorded many such instances including the enslavement of Africans in early American history, treatment of people with mental disabilities and illnesses with lobotomies, and large scale extermination of Jews and people with disabilities by the Nazis.

The second practical implication concerns human flourishing. To flourish as human beings is to excel at what it means to be human. Without a clear idea of what constitutes a human being it is virtually impossible to formulate an accurate theory of human well-being. The lack of an accurate theory impedes any concerted efforts to support and facilitate human flourishing. Consequently, it is important for a profession that endeavors to promote the flourishing of people with disabilities to answer the question of what makes something a human being or person.

Personhood

Philosophers have debated the question for millennia, but the debates have not produced a universally agreed upon response. Numerous philosophers including Aristotle (2001) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1952) have argued the defining characteristic of human beings is the ability to reason. Intuitively, this is an appealing response but if reasoning is accepted as the sole defining attribute of personhood an obstacle is immediately encountered. Those who serve people who have a limited or, in some instances, severely limited ability to reason, find themselves asking if the people they serve are human. Do people with disabilities, particularly those with severe cognitive impairments qualify as moral beings to whom other people owe care, respect, justice, and dignity? Do they possess the potential to live well or flourish and therefore deserve the opportunity to do so?

The theory of flourishing (MacIntyre, 1999, 2007) presented here acknowledges reasoning plays a role in determining personhood but views reasoning as a continuum rather than a dichotomous variable. This is a critical distinction because a continuum accommodates people with severe cognitive impairments since they have some capacity to reason.

> Even the profoundly disabled-even those, for example, in a persistent vegetative state… have a radical capacity for free action and rational thought, even if, by disease, genetic impairment, or environmental causes, some particular human being or other is rendered unable to actualize that

radical capacity. (Tollefsen, 2010, p. 221)

Movement along the reasoning continuum is partially, if not largely, reflective of a second central feature of humanity, dependency. In other words, people learn how to reason from other people. But dependency upon others is not limited to becoming rational agents. Dependency also arises from human vulnerability and disability. "It is most often to others that we owe our survival, let alone our flourishing, as we encounter bodily illness and injury…mental defect and disturbance" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 1). People rely upon one another for protection, nourishment, comfort, care, advice, and acquisition of necessary goods and resources throughout the lifespan. As counter-intuitive as it may initially seem, we become human because of the dependency inherent in human life; we rely upon others to learn how to reason, excel in various human endeavors, act virtuously, and flourish. Viewing the ability to reason as a continuum, and including dependency as the second defining feature of personhood, make it possible to assert that people with disabilities including those with severely diminished reasoning abilities are human beings and capable of flourishing.

MacIntyre's Theory of Human Flourishing

According to MacIntyre (1999), the telos (Greek for final end) of human beings is a state called flourishing. "…to flourish is to develop the distinctive power it possesses *qua* member of that species" (p. 64). His conception of flourishing has two aspects: biological and sociological.

The first aspect of MacIntyre's (1999) theory of human flourishing is based in biology. Along with other intelligent, non-human animals (e.g., chimpanzees, dolphins) humans have the capability to reason. To reason means to act in a certain manner in a particular context because doing so leads to desired outcomes. For example, a student studies her math textbook and notes tonight because doing so increases the probability she will pass tomorrow's math exam.

Though humans share this biological propensity for reasoning with other animals, language enables people to progress from the simple level of reasoning employed by intelligent, non-human animals to the level of independent practical reasoners (IPR) (MacIntyre, 1999). IPR are marked by three characteristics. First, they can evaluate reasons, their own and those forwarded by others, for acting in a certain manner as good or bad. Second, they can detach themselves from immediate desires so they can decide if a certain course of action is the best way to act right now in a specific situation to satisfy a particular desire. Finally, they can envision realistic futures that could result from performing different actions at the present time. People who employ these skills, in comparison with those who lack the skills, are less dependent upon others for guidance on what they ought to do at any given time.

IPR are able to conceive of what it means to flourish and the best means by which to achieve a state of flourishing. This ability is exemplified by the types of questions posed. As human beings develop into independent practical reasoners they go from answering questions of the type epitomized by "What do I want?" to pondering telos-based questions such as "What is the best life for me?" and "What ought I to do to live that life?" (MacIntyre, 1999).

Reasoning is best conceptualized as a spectrum (Butts & Rich, 2004; MacIntyre, 1999) with the end points of *simple reasoners* and *independent practical reasoners*. Toward the end of simple reasoners are people with severe cognitive impairments who have reasons for acting in a certain manner but may be unaware of or unable to conceptualize and articulate those reasons. For example, they may cry out because they feel pain (a reason to cry out) but do not have the ability to determine what is causing the physical discomfort. Toward the other end of the scale are people who reason at a more complex level, asking and answering questions such as "Why should I perform this action rather than that action at this time in this situation?" The members of this group feel the same pain as the previous group but engage in a more complicated evaluative process in judging what to do to alleviate the pain. This process may include considering multiple courses of action and judging which is best to follow in this situation, at this time to obtain the desired outcome. Rather than just crying out they may judge it is better to remove the object causing the pain and apply first aid to the resulting wound.

Movement from the simple end to the IPR end of the spectrum is impacted by several factors, many of which are sociological in nature and addressed in the next section. However, some factors are biological or organic. For example, disabling conditions such as Alzheimer's, Down syndrome, and traumatic brain injury may impair the acquisition or exercise of the three skills and prevent people from becoming or maintaining status as IPR (Butts & Rich, 2004). Though not completely IPR, people with severe cognitive impairments can reason to some degree and thus possess the potential to flourish to some extent and help other people flourish (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; Khader, 2008; MacIntyre, 1999; Taylor & Bogdan, 1989).

The biological aspect of human flourishing interacts with and is influenced by sociological factors. Reasoning and, therefore, the three characteristics of IPR are developed or under-developed within social contexts. People learn how to reason, to a large degree, by watching others reason; having others teach them how to reason; and exercising reason with others and receiving performance-based feedback from them. This development takes time, which is why children are not IPR. They have not had sufficient time or experience to fully develop their ability to reason (MacIntyre, 1999).

As laid out by MacIntyre (2007), there are five components to the sociological aspect of human flourishing: practice, narrative, telos, tradition, and virtue. Each of the components is briefly described below.

Practice. Practices are at the heart of human flourishing. A practice is defined as:

> any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 187)

Examples of practices include many of the leisure activities people participate in as well as the different roles they inhabit and their professions. But not every activity is a practice. Riding a mountain bike is an important skill to possess by those in the practice of mountain bike racing; reading a book is an important skill to possess by those in the practice of book club discussions; and firing a rifle is an important skill to possess by those in the practice of deer hunting.

People excel at practices when they acquire and employ necessary technical knowledge and skills, act ethically, and work with other people to achieve standards or expectations established by the experts in a particular practice. For example, to excel at the practice of snow skiing participants need to act as a skier is expected to act such as not to cut in front of other skiers in a lift line and yield to skiers who are downhill. Furthermore, they must be knowledgeable about equipment and how it works, be able to ski a variety of snow conditions and terrains, and understand how different snow conditions influence skiing techniques.

The standards associated with practices are dynamic. Over the past two decades there have been numerous advances in adaptive ski equipment and teaching techniques. These advances have contributed to the formulation of new, more demanding standards for skiers with disabilities in terms of the range of terrain and snow conditions they are expected to be able to ski, the level of physical impairment someone can experience and still have the capability to ski independently, and the time it takes to learn how to ski. Present day skiers are expected to ski the entire range of terrain and snow conditions found at ski areas, ski independently even if they have a high level spinal cord injury, and learn skiing techniques quickly.

Specific internal goods are associated with specific practices, are accessible only to participants of a practice, and are available to everyone who attains the standards of a practice. Skiers who excel at the practice access internal goods such as satisfaction from skiing well or learning a new ski skill, friendships with other skiers, improved physical functioning, and increased freedom. Accessing these goods enriches their lives.

External goods are those goods or outcomes not specific to a practice but associated with multiple practices. While these goods contribute to flourishing they are often in limited supply and people frequently compete to acquire them. External goods include power, fame, and money. Institutions (e.g., organizations, agencies) are often concerned with the acquisition and distribution of external goods.

Narrative. Practice-related experiences are woven together to create a coherent, unified narrative or life story (MacIntyre, 2007). A narrative links discrete events, separated by time and context, together in a meaningful way that helps a person explain who she is, what she likes to do, and what matters most. Envision a skier with a physical disability asked to describe herself. Even if not asked directly, it is very likely she will talk about her skiing experiences. The contents of her narrative contribute to the formation of an identity as a skier and reflect her passion for skiing.

A narrative also provides a context for a person's actions. Imagine walking by the skier's backyard one spring day and seeing her jumping down from an 18" high box and upon landing jumping straight back up into the air as high as she can. If you did not know the woman you would probably wonder what she was doing and why. However, if you knew her narrative and that she was a skier her actions would more likely make sense to you as you might recognize she was performing plyometric jumps to increase the explosive power of her legs and improve her skiing.

Telos. When people reflect on or share their narratives they become more aware of who they are, what they like to do, and what matters most to them. This increased awareness leads to the formulation of a telos or life-goal (MacIntyre, 2007). A telos is specific to a person but different people may have similar teloi. Once a telos is formulated, reasoning is employed to create a plan to attain the telos (Little, 2007; MacIntyre, 1999, 2007). The resulting framework guides a person's actions.

Keeping with the skier example, by sharing her narrative with other people, the woman realizes she values and enjoys skiing, thinks of herself as a skier, and recognizes other people see her as a skier. As a result she decides to become a ski racer and compete in the Paralympics. This telos imbues the woman's life with purpose and meaning and guides her behaviors in the future by serving as a criterion. In other words, whether or not she strength trains, attends an advanced ski racing techniques camp, or practices mental imagery will depend, in part, on the probability each course of action will propel her toward achieving her telos.

Tradition. Practices and narratives occur against the backdrop of traditions (MacIntyre, 2007). Traditions are the extended histories surrounding each person and practice. At a personal level, traditions can center on familial, ethnic, religious, and communal features. For example, this author is a white male who lives in rural, Midwestern United States. He is a husband, father of two children, as well as a university professor. Each of these elements (i.e., white, male, rural, citizen of the Midwest, husband, father, and university professor) has a history associated with it and these histories exert varying degrees of influence on his life story (Dieser, 2002; Shapiro, 1998).

Virtues. Virtues, the final component of the sociological aspect of flourishing, bind all of the aforementioned elements together. Virtues are those habits people *must* cultivate and exercise in order to excel in practices, create coherent narratives, negotiate traditions, pursue their teloi and flourish (MacIntyre, 2007). Unlike previous philosophers such as Aristotle and Aquinas, MacIntyre does not create an exhaustive list of virtues. Instead, the virtues a person cultivates depends upon the person's telos, the practices he/she strives to excel in, etc. However, honesty, justice, and courage have been identified as requisite virtues. For example, when beginning a new practice, people have to be: honest by admitting they lack knowledge of and the ability to attain the standards; just by acknowledging contributions previous participants made to the practice; and courageous by acting as they should even if afraid to do so.

According to MacIntyre's theory, a flourishing life is marked by excelling in practices, authoring a coherent personal narrative, formulating and pursuing a meaningful telos, negotiating traditions, and acting virtuously. Now that an incomplete but sufficient picture of what is meant by human flourishing has been provided attention is turned toward flourishing and people with disabilities.

People with Disabilities and Flourishing

Generally, people with disabilities (PWD) are ignored or given little consideration in conceptions of human flourishing. And when directly considered, disability is regarded as a disadvantageous state that acts as an impediment to human flourishing (Burtt, 2007; Garland-Thomson, 2012; McMahan, 1996; Vehmas, 2004a, b). Not so with MacIntyre (1999), who wrote extensively and quite positively about PWD and flourishing.

It may seem implausible to assert that people with severe cognitive impairments can flourish. However, there are least two reasons why this is the case. First, when reasoning is viewed as a continuum, most PWD possess some capability to reason (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989; MacIntyre, 1999; Taylor & Bogdan, 1989). Second, flourishing is a communal endeavor requiring the participation of people with and without disabilities.

> Individuals just on their own are insufficient for their own flourishing: they require friends, marriage requires a spouse, and even substantive goods such as knowledge and aesthetic experience will suffer in the absence of cooperation and the generation through time of social forms and practices aimed at the pursuit of these goods. So a flourishing human life is necessarily communal in various aspects. It requires families, networks of friends, and cooperative social structures for the pursuit of goods. (Tollefsen, 2010, p. 215)

One communal feature is the exercise of virtues. Two virtues, in particular, are critical: just generosity (MacIntyre, 1999) and philo-cosmopolitanism (Burtt, 2007).

Just generosity is based upon acknowledged dependence. Acknowledged dependence is recognition that at certain times (e.g., in infancy, advanced aged, or disability) people are more dependent on others. These times call for the virtue of just generosity. People who exercise just generosity give to others what is needed simply because the need exists and because they recognize life is full of situations where they received assistance when they needed it and are confident their needs will be met in the future. It is essential to think of both virtues in a co-joined manner, not separately. People are owed what they need and they owe the same to others who are in need (justice). Giving is proportional to need and unconditional (generosity). People do not give based upon what they have received from others or expect to receive from others.

Philo-cosmopolitanism, the second critical virtue:

> calls upon us…to welcome into the moral, social, cultural, and political community all persons, regardless of their disorders, deformities or abilities….we need this openness to difference, this willingness to wonder at the variety of human capabilities, to value the presence of a range of ways of being human, and to appreciate the possibility of forging mutually rewarding relationships across those boundaries even without ever having come personally in contact with physical or mental disability. (Burtt, 2007, p. 578)

One type of intentional community that exemplifies these two virtues is composed of people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) who live together in a cluster of homes (Randell & Cumella, 2009; Vanier, 1989). No professional human services staff care for community members with disabilities, rather many of the community members without disabilities live in the community because they felt "called" to live with and assist PWD. Everyone who can work does so and income is pooled and used to meet the needs of all community members. "Work and remuneration operate on the principle that each contributes according to their abilities and each is rewarded according to their needs" (Randell & Cumella, 2009, p. 724).

Another communal feature is the ongoing dialogue among people to determine what it means to flourish is and what contributes to flourishing (MacIntyre, 1999, 2007; Abma et al., 2008). People with disabilities who are not IPR may need the assistance of proxies in order to participate in the ongoing dialogue. A proxy has to accurately take a person with a disability's point of view regarding his/her telos and plan for attainment of the telos. To enhance accuracy, a proxy should have known the person as he/she fulfilled a number of roles in a variety of contexts across the lifespan and frequently asked why the person with a disability acted in the manner he/she did. The conditions just mentioned are more likely to be met in situations where a person acquired a disabling condition such as traumatic brain injury, dementia, or coma after becoming an adult and his/her proxy is a confidant.

It is critical for PWD to be part of the ongoing dialogue because they contribute to human flourishing by teaching society and professionals what they would not learn otherwise (Garland-Thomson, 2012). "Each member of the community is someone from who we may learn and may have to learn about our common good and our own good…that we will not be able to learn elsewhere" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 135).

"Professionals, who act as independent practical reasoners, … must acknowledge that they have something to learn from disabled people, that giving and receiving flows in both directions in flourishing communities" (Butts & Rich, 2004, p. 409). For instance, caring for someone with a severe disability provides IPR with opportunities "of learning something essential, what it is for someone else to be wholly entrusted to our care, so that we are answerable for their well-being" (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 139). In another example, PWD may teach IPR not to make decisions based on misconceptions such as believing people in wheelchairs are less intelligent than people who do not use wheelchairs (Reinhardt, et al., 2011). Finally, in an illustration of how people with disabilities contribute to social relationships in a meaningful but unconventional manner, a caregiver recounted that she learned how complex the notion of freedom is from the woman (Mary) she serves who is nonverbal and has multiple disabilities including Alzheimer's disease.

> Mary is one of the freest people I know…. She finds ways to live life fully without having the means most of us rely on, since her vision and language are severely limited…. Mary's freedom is striking but it also paradoxical. She has a real autonomy to follow her desires and insist that assistants help her to meet them, while simultaneously being totally dependent in terms of personal and home care. (Cushing & Lewis, 2002, p. 184).

This section established that people with disabilities can flourish because they possess the capacity for reasoning and because flourishing is a communal endeavor requiring the participation of people with and without disabilities. In the next section, the relationship between leisure and flourishing is examined.

Leisure and Flourishing

Leisure can be broadly defined as time free from productive necessity during which people pursue practices for the associated internal goods (Sylvester, 2007). Sylvester (2007, 2009) has argued leisure itself is a practice with two levels of internal goods. At the general level, which encompasses all individual leisure practices, are two internal goods – freedom and community. At the second level, that of individual leisure practices, are internal goods specific to each practice. Excelling in leisure and accessing both levels of internal goods requires participants to exhibit the virtues of playfulness, respect, disinterestedness (i.e., intrinsic motivation), and phronesis. Phronesis, Greek for practical reasoning, is a meta-virtue because it involves deciding what virtue should be applied in a particular context at a given time.

A number of philosophers since Aristotle have identified leisure as a principal contributor to flourishing since it is through leisure that people realize their human nature. According to Aristotle, eudaimonia, a Greek word which is most often translated as happiness but also as flourishing (Dunn & Brody, 2008) and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Waterman, 1993), was the telos for human beings. Aristotle explicitly believed flourishing or happiness was dependent upon leisure, "happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure" (Aristotle, 2001, 1177b, 5-6). Contemplation was the best leisure activity because it involved the distinctively human capacity to reason. People were most happy or flourishing when they lived virtuously and exercised reason during leisure to discover truths.

St. Thomas Aquinas merged Aristotle's thoughts with the Catholic Church's teachings. For Aquinas (1952; Dare, Welton, & Coe, 1987), contemplation of the nature of God during leisure was the activity that enabled people to be most happy or flourish because it employed their capacity to reason. As with Aristotle, people had to act virtuously throughout life in order to flourish.

More recently, Josef Pieper (1964) echoed the general sentiments of Aristotle and Aquinas. He believed people become wholly human during leisure by utilizing their ability to reason to grasp the totality of life, the essences of things.

> Leisure does not exist for the sake of work…no one who looks to leisure simply to restore his working powers will ever discover the fruit of leisure….The point and the justification of leisure are not that the functionary (people) should function faultlessly and without a breakdown, but the functionary should continue to be a man…that he should fulfil himself, and come to full possession of his faculties, face to face with being as a whole. (pp. 30-31)

Charles Sylvester (1987), a present day therapeutic recreation specialist and philosopher, has said leisure is necessary for the expression of human nature, "we require leisure in order to be fully authentic, choosing values that reflect who we are and what we want to be" (p. 82). Echoing that conviction, Cathy O'Keefe (2005), another therapeutic recreation specialist and philosopher, said "Leisure is the freedom to become our true selves" (p. 79). Because of the freedom and autonomy inherent in it, leisure makes it possible for people to act upon their values and teloi with self-determined choices and courses of action (Groff & Kleiber, 2001; Kleiber, 1999; Sylvester, 1985, 1992, 2005b). Choices made without coercion and consistent with internally held values are authentic because those choices reflect who a person is, what he/she really likes to do, and what matters most (Kleiber, 1999).

Freedom

As noted in the preceding discussion, freedom and leisure are intimately connected. In fact, freedom is frequently stated as the defining quality of leisure (Bregha, 1991; Brightbill, 1963; De Grazia, 1994; Pieper, 1964), and when freedom is absent leisure becomes something other than leisure (Mobily, 1985; Sylvester, 1985, 2005b; Sylvester et al., 2001). The linkage between leisure and freedom was clearly articulated by Brightbill (1963), "Free choice is the heart of…leisure" (p. 109). In concurrence, Bregha (1991) said "Leisure is the highest expression of our freedom and freedom, in turn, thrives best in our leisure time…freedom can flower best in pursuits that are leisurely" (p. 53).

Bregha's quote highlights the reciprocal relationship between the two constructs. The relationship was also noted by Sylvester (2007) who stated leisure provides people with opportunities to become competent in the use of freedom. Competence is marked by making moral choices congruent with personal values and pursuing those choices with ethical means. By acting in such a manner people are more likely to experience satisfaction, enjoyment, and personal growth rather than boredom and social sanctions. As people gain competence with the use of freedom leisure becomes more pleasurable and so they seek more leisure.

However, in what may seem to be a paradox, there is a limit to the amount of freedom in leisure activities. To participate in many leisure activities, people have to willingly give up some freedom because the activities are bounded by rules and standards. For example, soccer players are not to touch the ball with their hands and card game players must follow a pre-arranged order of play and abide by numerous rules. The structure imposed by rules and standards constrains freedom but enhances participants' enjoyment. Without it, the games would be marked by anarchy and confusion.

What is meant by freedom? Although defining the concept may seem like a simple task, in actuality, freedom is a complex, multifaceted construct. It entails more than just doing what you want to do when you want to do it. Freedom consists of two facets, one negative and one positive. The negative facet is denoted as "freedom from" while the positive facet is denoted as "freedom to" (Berlin, 1970; Bregha, 1991; Mobily, 1985; Partridge, 1970; Sylvester, 1985).

Negative freedom.

The negative facet of freedom or "freedom from" refers to "the absence of coercion or constraint imposed by another person….the state, or any other authority" (Partridge, 1970, p. 94). Constraints can be in the form of rules, regulations, discrimination, and physical restraint as well as man-made environmental obstacles such as stairs and tall curbs. To a large extent, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was crafted to address this facet of freedom. While necessary, the absence of coercion and obstacles are not sufficient for people to experience a full measure of freedom; those conditions only represent one half of the equation as illustrated in the following scenario.

> Removing the physical barriers to the local community center or making the bathrooms accessible are necessary conditions for freedom….But if programs…are provided only during low use times or if proper instruction…is absent, the environment could hardly be considered a free one. A truly free … situation requires the presence of positive, facilitative resources, not just the absence of negative, constraining circumstances. (Mobily, 1985, p. 27)

Envision a woman receiving treatment at a physical medicine and rehabilitation center because she recently had both legs amputated above the knees. During rehabilitation sessions she tells the leisure specialist she enjoyed participating in outdoor adventure activities such as snow and water skiing prior to the amputations and expresses desire to continue participation in the activities. The leisure specialist informs the patient she possesses the physical ability to snow and water ski and adaptive equipment exists to enable her to participate in the activities. Her desire to attempt both activities intensifies after she watches videos of people who also have double leg amputations snow and water ski. Upon completion of formal rehabilitation, the woman is discharged and returns home. Once there she discovers the local community is completely physically accessible and free of discrimination but lacks opportunities for people with disabilities to snow or water ski. The woman in this scenario is "free from" coercion and constraint imposed by other people and from man-made environmental barriers but she is not "free to" snow or water ski because there are no opportunities to do so. The woman in this situation is not fully free because as Brightbill (1963, p. 106) indicated, "Freedom … means that we have a choice to make and that its determination rests with us. If there is no chance for selection, no alternative, then there is no freedom."

Positive freedom.

The presence of alternatives and the ability to make selections form the core of the other half of the freedom equation: positive freedom or "freedom to" (Berlin, 1970). Positive freedom results when a person makes a choice from a set of alternatives and acts upon the choice; the choice is congruent with personally held values; and the person is aware of and prepared to accept the consequences likely to result from pursuing his/her choice. Further, the choice and means employed reflect an understanding of right and wrong and do not diminish his/her freedom or the freedom of others (Bregha, 1991; Pieper, 1964; Sylvester, 1985). For example, although the activity of driving around a neighborhood and shooting people with a paintball gun may have been chosen from a set of options and the person may have known the likely consequences of making such a choice, the action would not be a responsible use of freedom because the shooter's freedom would be curtailed if jailed and physical injury may limit the future freedom of those shot.

Positive freedom, as implied by the content of the previous paragraph, requires the acquisition and utilization of knowledge (Bregha, 1991; Mobily, 1985). People need to be knowledgeable of available opportunities and the means by which those opportunities can be turned from potentialities into actualities. They also need self-knowledge because to be free means to act in accordance with personal likes, goals, strengths, abilities, and values (Pieper, 1964; Sylvester, 1985).

> Leisure, like freedom, is an end in itself….We do not occupy our leisure in order to become healthier or more productive. Leisure allows us to be free, to be what we want to be. Hence the importance of examining our own thoughts, desires and hopes and reflecting whether our lifestyle translates them or not into a coherent, meaningful life. (Bregha, 1991, p. 52)

To illustrate the full nature of freedom consider the following case. Suppose after watching a television program on the topic of mountain biking a young man with mental illness decides to try the activity so he takes stock of his situation. On one hand he is relatively free from constraints. He works four consecutive ten-hour days and makes enough money to meet his needs and pursue desired leisure practices. At his recent annual physical exam he asked the physician about mountain biking and the doctor said he could try it as long as he started out easy and gradually increased the intensity. Finally, there are no local ordinances forbidding mountain biking. On the other hand, he has several options. The local ski area has trails as does a local county park and both locations are just a 10 minute drive from home. Most of the trails at the ski area are rated intermediate to expert while those at the county park are predominately beginner and intermediate level. Different types of bikes and safety gear can be rented from three local bike shops and many bikers have told him they are willing to teach him basic riding skills. Finally, the young man accesses his self-knowledge. He thinks of himself as a physically active person who likes being outdoors. More specifically, he likes to participate in human-powered leisure activities that do not extensively damage the natural environment. In sum, the young man is free from coercion and constraint and free to mountain bike.

Leisure is a principal contributor to human flourishing. Freedom is what makes leisure leisure and in the absence of freedom leisure is not leisure. In the next section, the discussion of leisure and flourishing is expanded to include people with disabilities.

Leisure, People with Disabilities, and Flourishing

Disability doesn't preclude flourishing (Garland-Thomson, 2012; MacIntyre, 1999). Through excelling in leisure practices, people with disabilities author positive narratives, cultivate valued identities, and discover new skills, strengths, competencies, friends, and a sense of community (Chun & Lee, 2010; Fullagar & Owler, 1998; Hutchinson & McGill, 1998; Kelly & Godbey, 1992; Kleiber, Reel, & Hutchison, 2008; Lundberg, Taniguchi, McCormick, & Tibbs, 2011; McGill, 1996).

This section illustrates how excelling in a leisure practice, specifically wheelchair basketball, contributes to the flourishing of people with disabilities. The illustration touches on how to play, and the practice's history, standards, internal goods, narratives, and traditions.

Wheelchair Basketball

Wheelchair basketball is one example of a leisure practice that promotes flourishing through the pursuit of excellence (Juette & Berger, 2008; National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), n.d.-c; Ozawa & Osada, 2007). Wheelchair basketball was first played in 1944 by World War II veterans who were rehabilitating at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England (National Wheelchair Basketball Association, n.d.-a). From England the practice quickly spread across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States, catching the interest of patients at various Veterans Administration Hospitals. Soon afterward, wheelchair basketball expanded to encompass nonveteran populations such as university students and women.

Wheelchair basketball is played by two five-person teams on a regulation size basketball court. A game consists of four 12-minute quarters and points are scored by shooting the ball through a 10-foot high basket. Although stand-up and wheelchair basketball share many similarities, including scoring, probably the most noticeable difference is how traveling is defined. In wheelchair basketball, traveling is called when a player touches the wheels of his/her wheelchair more than two consecutive times after catching a pass or dribbling the ball (NWBA, n.d.-b). After touching the wheels two consecutive times the player must dribble, shoot, or pass the ball to avoid a penalty.

To create balanced competition between teams, players are placed into one of three classes based upon the physical location of their impairment (NWBA, n.d.-b). Class I includes players with impairments at or above the seventh vertebra of the spinal column or with conditions that result in comparable, complete motor loss. Class II players experience complete motor loss due to impairments originating between the eighth thoracic and second lumbar vertebrae. Players who have impairments in the lower level of the range may have some movement in their hips and thighs. Players who have bi-lateral hip disarticulation amputations are also included in class II. Class III encompasses players with lower body paralysis or paresis due to impairments at or below the third lumbar vertebra and any kind of lower limb amputations other than bi-lateral hip disarticulation.

Each class has an associated point value. A class I player is assigned 1 point, a class II player is assigned 2 points, and a class III player is assigned 3 points. The total value of a team's members on the court at any time cannot exceed 12 points and no more than three of the players can be from class III.

Participants in the practice of wheelchair basketball strive to attain standards. They must abide by clearly defined rules and regulations (NWBA, n.d.-b) which "are constructed in a way that allows players to embrace rather than reject their impairment" (Berger, 2008, p. 650). Players who excel also exhibit physical skills. They are able to maneuver with the ball, make long and accurate passes, shoot effectively, change directions rapidly, and quickly accelerate (Brasile, 1986, 1990; Brasile & Hedrick, 1996; Doyle, Davis, Humphries, et al., 2004). The practice's standards have evolved as what it means to excel in wheelchair basketball has changed (Brasile, 1986, 1990; Brasile & Hedrick, 1996; Doyle et al., 2004). To illustrate, over time experts in the practice came to recognize the need for players to be proficient in performing skills on both sides of their bodies (i.e., passing and shooting) and not just with the dominant side (Brasile, 1986, 1990; Brasile & Hedrick, 1996).

Standards not only change over time they also differ according to the context a player is in (Williams & Kolkka, 1998). For example, in comparison to seasoned players, novice players who are just joining a team are held to relatively less demanding standards and are not expected to achieve every standard all of the time. Instead, it is understood they will fall short of some standards because they do not have the requisite skills or because they are not fully aware of what is expected of them. However, players competing at the national or international level are expected to regularly achieve relatively more challenging standards and little tolerance is displayed toward those who breach expected codes of conduct.

In accordance with Sylvester (2007, 2009), participants who attain standards report both levels of internal goods. At the general level they experience increased freedom and friendship (Ashton-Schaeffer, Gibson, Holt, & Willming, 2001; Giacobbi, Stancil, Hardin, & Bryant, 2008; Juette & Berger, 2008). In addition, they experience goods more specific to wheelchair basketball including increased independence, health, functioning, and confidence in various domains of life; improved ability to manage the stigma associated with disabilities; a strengthened sense of belonging; and increased opportunities to experience physicality, and competition (Ashton-Schaeffer et al., 2001; Berger, 2008; Giacobbi et al., 2008; Juette & Berger, 2008; Ruddell & Shinew, 2006; Taub, Blinde, & Greer, 1999).

Wheelchair basketball influences personal narratives and teloi. Participants who have invested time, effort, and resources into becoming wheelchair basketball players have narratives largely centered on the practice (Juette & Berger, 2008). These same players frequently identify themselves as wheelchair basketball players and have teloi related to excelling at the practice (Ashton-Schaeffer et al., 2001; Berger, 2008; Giacobbi et al., 2008; Ruddell & Shinew, 2006).

Similar to a personal narrative, wheelchair basketball has a narrative that conveys the practice's standards, internal goods, traditions, and virtues to participants so they can "assume the identity of wheelchair basketball players and coaches and behave appropriately" (Williams & Kolkka, 1998, p. 359). Behaving appropriately entails acting honestly, responsibly, courageously, justly, and with integrity and respect. Participants in the practice learn they must demonstrate competitiveness, perseverance, independence, dedication, athleticism, humility, patience, generativity, and self-initiative (Berger, 2008; Juette & Berger, 2008; NWBA, n.d.-c). Information on how to behave is transmitted by current participants and institutions such as teams, sport camps, and national organizations (NWBA, n.d.-a; Ruddell & Shinew, 2006; Williams & Kolkka, 1998).

As with other practices, there are numerous traditions simultaneously influencing the narrative of wheelchair basketball. For example, some university-based wheelchair basketball programs have extensively documented histories extending 40 years or more (Berger, 2008), and these histories are embedded in the broader tradition associated with the overall practice (NWBA, n.d.-a). These wheelchair basketball oriented traditions influence one another but they are also influenced by traditions associated with health, education, and sport (Williams & Kolkka, 1998). To illustrate, wheelchair basketball was initially closely linked with the tradition of health because the activity was promoted as a means to improve the physical conditioning and functioning of war veterans, but currently the practice is widely recognized as linked to the tradition of sport because participants are considered athletes who play predominately to win and excel and not to improve their health (Juette & Berger, 2008).

Frequently, leisure practices expressively developed for people with disabilities such as wheelchair basketball have empowering and transformation inducing narratives and traditions (Ashton-Schaeffer et al., 2001; Juette & Berger, 2008; Taub et al., 1999). In the case of wheelchair basketball, the practice enables participants to demonstrate that people with disabilities can be athletic and excel at a physically demanding activity. Participants view themselves as athletes rather than as people with disabilities, and this view is also adopted to an extent by members of society (Ashton-Schaeffer et al., 2001; Berger, 2008; Fullagar & Owler, 1998; Lundberg et al., 2011; Taub et al., 1999).

However, narratives and traditions are not without controversy or criticism. Two issues are presented as examples. First, consider the connection between the physical skills deemed necessary for wheelchair basketball and its' classification system. Ideally, players in different classes should display different levels of performance with players in class III outperforming players in classes I and II. However, research has not shown significant differences in levels of performance between class II and III players (Brasile, 1986, 1990; Brasile & Hedrick, 1996; Doyle et al., 2004). Rather, the studies' results suggest that either classes II and III be combined into a new class II or that classification be based upon physical function rather than the physical location of impairment. Though research indicates a need to revise the classification system, debate on the issue continues and no changes to the system have been implemented.

Second, some people with disabilities who use wheelchairs and are not participants in the practice consider the standards pursued by elite wheelchair basketball players as unrealistic and inappropriate (Berger, 2008; Juette & Berger, 2008). Non participants fear society will expect all people who use wheelchairs to be physically independent and require very few accommodations. In addition, non-participants do not support tying self-worth to the winning of competitions and perpetuating the use of masculine power and privilege in relationships with the opposite sex.

Excelling in leisure practices contributes to the flourishing of people with disabilities. Next, this relationship is used to ascertain which of the two orientations associated with TR is best suited to the promotion of flourishing. Then it is contended a profession other than TR ought to be charged with the mission. Lastly, core beliefs of the profession are enumerated and its' principal tasks are outlined.

A Profession

Armed with a conception of what it means to flourish as a person with a disability and how leisure contributes to flourishing it is time to respond to the question of what is TR. If TR seeks to facilitate flourishing it is clear the profession should concentrate on supporting people with disabilities' involvement in leisure practices. Leisure should be at the heart of TR practice and their expertise in leisure should be what differentiates therapeutic recreation specialists (TRS) from other professionals (Anderson & Heyne, 2012).

Recent developments are in-line with these conclusions. The latest two TR practice models, Leisure and Well-Being (LWB) (Carruthers & Hood, 2007; Hood & Carruthers, 2007) and Flourishing Through Leisure (FTL) (Anderson & Heyne, 2012; Heyne & Anderson, 2012), explicitly acknowledge that engagement in leisure practices has a salutary effect on well-being and flourishing. Furthermore, the FTL model defines TR as:

> the purposeful and careful facilitation of quality leisure experiences and the development of personal and environmental strengths, which lead to greater well-being for people who, due to challenges they may experience in relation to illness, disability or other life circumstances, need individualized assistance to achieve their goals and dreams. (Anderson & Heyne, 2012, p. 130)

The first of the two models to be constructed, the LWB model (Carruthers & Hood, 2007; Hood & Carruthers, 2007) is compatible with MacIntyre's theory of flourishing (Wise, 2010) and focuses on personal factors that enhance well-being and are malleable. To illustrate, TRS strive to increase people with disabilities' knowledge of leisure and competency with leisure practices and decision making skills. The second model, FTL, resulted when the LWB model was broadened to include environmental factors that contribute to well-being (Anderson & Heyne, 2012; Heyne & Anderson, 2012). So, in addition to increasing people with disabilities' knowledge, competency, and decision making abilities, TRS work to ensure that those they serve have, among other things, physical access to facilities, adaptive leisure equipment, and welcoming facility staff.

The definition and models have implications for academic programs, most notably with respect to the emphasis placed on leisure. Anderson and Heyne (2012, p. 147) noted:

> The professional preparation of future therapeutic recreation specialists must focus as much on the concepts of recreation and leisure, including delivery systems, as it does on therapeutic practices. The curriculum must give future professionals a sound theoretical and practical foundation on the leisure experience and how to facilitate it.

In stark contrast to the preceding paragraphs, a number of professionals espousing the treatment orientation have jettisoned the concepts of leisure and recreation from therapeutic recreation (Sylvester, 2009). For example, the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (2009, para. 1) now endorses the following definition:

> 'Recreational Therapy' means a treatment service designed to restore, remediate and rehabilitate a person's level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations caused by an illness or disabling condition.

Other professionals endorse the inclusion of leisure, but the manner in which it is to be used is contrary to its nature. Porter and Burlingame (2006, p. 259) define recreational therapy as "a clinical specialty which uses leisure activities as the modality to restore, remediate, or rehabilitate the patient's functional ability and level of independence and/or reduce or eliminate the effects of illness and disability." According to this definition, leisure practices are a form of therapy. However, it is not possible to prescribe leisure practices because doing so strips them of the defining attribute of freedom and renders them as something other than leisure practices (Mobily, 1997; Sylvester, 1985, 1997; 2005b; Sylvester et al., 2001). Therapy is antithetical to leisure because therapy restricts people's freedom; their actions are largely controlled by therapists and their choices are severely limited and may not be congruent with personal values (Austin, 1998; Stumbo & Peterson, 1998; Van Andel, 1998). While internal goods such as improved health and functioning are consequences of pursuing excellence in leisure practices such as strength training or yoga, freedom is absent when the activities are treated as therapy. What is experienced is activity therapy and not leisure (Lee & Lane, 1997; Sylvester, 1997; Sylvester et al., 2001).

This does not mean leisure practices should be absent from healthcare settings. Just the opposite is true; healthcare patients should participate in leisure practices while receiving treatment (Haun, 1994; Mobily, 1997). Doing so allows them to retain their humanness in environments where self-expression, self-determination, intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment are largely absent. Furthermore, doing so accentuates the effectiveness of traditional therapies by fostering a milieu in which patients are confident, optimistic, and willing to endure the discomforts of treatment.

Although there have been recent promising developments in TR, there is enough contradictory evidence to raise serious doubt about TR being *the* profession best suited to promote flourishing through excelling in leisure practices. This point is supported with three examples. First, contrary to pleas made by Anderson and Heyne (2012) for more attention and emphasis on leisure during the academic preparation of professionals, a review of standards issued by both accrediting bodies for TR education reveals the potential for students to receive a minimal amount of exposure to the concepts of leisure and recreation, possibly only three credits worth of instruction (Anderson, et al., 2011; Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education, 2010). Second, according to the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC, 2007), 73 topic areas constitute the knowledge base of TR. Of the 73, fewer than 15% of the titles or descriptions directly mention leisure, recreation, or play. Finally, learning or advancing one's skills in a particular leisure practice does not count toward maintaining certification as a TRS (NCTRC, 2013).

Conflicting messages within the TR profession regarding the purpose and value of leisure suggests the formation of a profession dedicated exclusively to the promotion of human flourishing through participation in leisure practices may be appropriate. Harkening back to the beginning of this article, a profession rests on a foundation composed of core beliefs that justify and guide the profession's existence (Sylvester, 2005a; Sylvester et al., 2001). In the current case, at least three beliefs comprise the foundation. One, a disability does not preclude someone from personhood, flourishing, or leisure (Garland-Thomson, 2012; MacIntyre, 1999, 2007; Sylvester, 1992, 2005b). Two, leisure is intimately connected with human flourishing; without leisure, people cannot flourish (Aristotle, 2001; De Grazia, 1994; Pieper, 1964). Three, leisure promotes flourishing among people with disabilities (Anderson & Heyne, 2012; Carruthers & Hood, 2007; Dunn & Brody, 2008; Garland-Thomson, 2007; Heyne & Anderson, 2012; Hood & Carruthers, 2007; McGill, 1996; Mobily, 1997; Sylvester, 1987, 1989, 1997). Professionals who base their efforts on the aforementioned tenets are *leisure specialists-adaptive* (Sylvester, 1987) whose mission is to promote human flourishing through excelling in leisure practices. The title clearly reflects the central feature of the profession and that practitioners possess knowledge and skills related to leisure and can provide the necessary support so people with disabilities, illnesses, or other limiting conditions can participate in leisure activities.

Tasks of Leisure Specialists-Adaptive

What do leisure specialists-adaptive (LSA) do? At this point, the author's intention is to highlight three of the primary tasks to be undertaken by professionals. In the future, additional tasks need to be identified and expounded upon as do the three listed here.

First and foremost, LSA counter the long history of limited access for people with disabilities (Bullock, Mahon, & Killingsworth, 2010; Hutchison & Gill, 1998; Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997) by advocating for opportunities for them to excel in personally expressive leisure practices (Waterman, 1990). Through participation in personally expressive practices people convert capabilities into abilities and skills, improve existing skills, and pursue their teloi (Waterman, 1990, 1993). Personally expressive practices promote flourishing because participation requires utilization of personal strengths and virtues and leads to flow, intrinsic motivation, and feelings that engaging in the activities is what people were meant to do (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1997; Seligman, 2002; Waterman, 1990, 1993, 2005).

As advocates for engagement in leisure practices LSA need to "accept the unique role of facilitating freedom and enabling people to savor the intrinsic goods that accompany the realization of leisure" (Sylvester, 1985, p. 12). As freedom facilitators LSA work to eliminate or prevent impediments to freedom such as discrimination and architectural barriers. They also help people gain knowledge of themselves, leisure opportunities, and ethics and become competent with self-advocacy, decision making, virtues, and leisure activity skills.

Freedom is not without boundaries. Sometimes freedom should be restricted in order to nurture greater freedom and flourishing in the future. However, any decisions to limit freedom should arise from dialogue involving those affected by such decisions including people with disabilities, their families, and relevant professionals. Decisions should be specific, context-sensitive, and acknowledge the complexities of the people, relationships, and environment involved (Abma, et al., 2008). This might mean, for example, prohibiting a person from skiing who was recently admitted for a spinal cord injury until he is medically stabilized and has completed in and out-patient treatment. The prohibition would not necessarily extend to other leisure practices he enjoys or beyond the completion of in and out-patient treatment.

In another example, an appropriate intervention for some people with Prader-Willi Syndrome is a life-long restriction of their access to food (Dykens et al., 1997). The limitation, which initially seems extreme, might be considered reasonable once it is understood the syndrome is marked by impaired intellectual functioning and hyperphagia. Due to physiological dysfunction, people do not feel full or satiated which causes them to overeat. Curtailing their freedom to choose what, when, and how much to eat prevents obesity, hypertension, Type II diabetes, and death.

A second task of LSA is to listen to the personal stories of the people they serve (Franits, 2005; Garland-Thomson, 2012). Shapiro (1998, p. 100) underscores the importance listening holds for professionals,

> …we need to listen in an open, appreciative way for what … narratives might teach us of lost voices or opportunities in our own lives. Every therapeutic encounter offers the possibility for this kind of mutual learning, as we gaze in wonder at the strengths revealed in the stories unfolding before us, and appreciate the awesome courage some people bring to the demands of troubled lives. This does require that we see the people we work with in whole, engaged ways so that they too can use the relationships as a new social mirror from which to reexamine and reweave the fabric of their life stories.

Listening enables LSA to gain an in-depth understanding of the rich complexity of people's lives including impediments to flourishing and dreams regarding who they want to be and how they want their narratives to "read." Armed with this information, specialists can work with them to formulate and implement plans to overcome obstacles to flourishing; challenge, alter, and/or negotiate traditions that may be impeding progress toward teloi; and achieve desired identities and narratives by excelling in personally expressive leisure practices (Fullagar & Owler, 1998; Groff & Kleiber, 2001; Henderson, Bendini, & Hecht, 1994; Kleiber, Brock, Lee, Dattilo, & Caldwell, 1995; McGill, 1996; Phoenix, 2001; Taylor, 2000).

Once people participate in leisure practices, listening plays another role. Encouraging people to recount their personal stories helps them integrate leisure experiences into their narratives, increase their self-awareness, and discover a purpose in life (Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008; Lee & McCormick, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1995; McAdams, 2008; O'Keefe, 2005; Shapiro, 1998; Smith & Sparkes, 2005). Listening also supports people's "growth-expanding self-perceptions against the grain of socially imposed stereotypes" (Shapiro, 1998, p.100).

A third task of LSA is to nurture, among all people, the development and exercise of virtues required to excel in leisure practices and to flourish. These virtues include but are not limited to: courage, honesty, justice, just generosity, philo-cosmopolitanism, respect, playfulness, disinterestedness, and practical reasoning/phronesis (MacIntyre, 1999, 2007; Sylvester, 2007).

In addition, LSA ought to cultivate within themselves the virtues of compassion, humility, caring, patience, tolerance, and trustworthiness (Armstrong, 2006; Sylvester, 2009). Two other virtues of import are mutuality and openness (Pedlar, Haworth, Hutchison, Taylor, & Dunn, 1999; Sellman, 2003). Mutuality aims for "mutual respect, support and authenticity between people" who are engaged in giving and receiving relationships (Cushing & Lewis, 2002, p. 179). These conditions result when people expand their notion of what benefits are available to those who participate in such relationships. Specifically, expansion is produced via a constellation of behaviors. Namely, by recognizing people with disabilities as the authors of their own lives and not solely as objects of care; valuing the distinctive ways people with disabilities contribute to relationships; and listening thoughtfully to what people with disabilities have to say (Crepeau & Garren, 2011; Cushing & Lewis).

Mutuality is an important virtue to develop and exercise because many people with severe disabilities who are in giving and receiving relationships are often unable to reciprocate in an intimate, personal manner. This disparity is especially apparent in situations where professionals provide specialized care to people with disabilities. Parties in these interactions occupy asymmetrical positions of power and the giving and receiving is contractual and instrumental in nature. Care providers, based on their professional training, render clearly defined services in return for a predetermined, impersonal, standardized amount of monetary compensation which is dispensed by a third party entity such as an insurance company (Cushing & Lewis, 2002). In contrast, when the virtue of mutuality is practiced, parties engage in a "dynamic, interactive relation" (Gewirth, 1996, p. 75) and are committed to broadening the definition of what constitutes a satisfactory exchange. So in circumstances marked by mutuality, participants, particularly professional caregivers and people without disabilities, come to appreciate an enlarged and more existentially based conception of benefits. For example, one caregiver shared how she gained the courage to reach out for and accept help from other people because the person with a disability she cared for modeled these actions (Cushing & Lewis, 2002). Other caregivers noted that many people with severe intellectual disabilities have "fewer hidden agendas, less self-imposed rigidity around social etiquette, and a more direct approach to issues that surface. Many caregivers find that all of this creates a safe, neutral, relational space for being themselves that feels liberating and authentic" (Cushing & Lewis, 2002, p. 183).

Exhibiting the second virtue, openness, is imperative in a pluralistic society marked by numerous and diverse conceptions of flourishing that encompass a wide range of practices, narratives, traditions, and life-goals (Riggs, 2010; Sellman, 2003; Stewart-Sicking, 2008). A lack of openness can lead to serious consequences including patients leaving treatment prematurely (Dieser, 2002). To prevent such an outcome and foster the flourishing of all, LSA need to actively seek out, learn about, acknowledge and appreciate conceptions of flourishing that differ from their own (Stewart-Sicking, 2008). This is accomplished, in large part, by ascertaining a person's history with leisure practices, his personal narrative, the traditions he is a part of, and his telos and using the knowledge to gain insight into the best way to enhance his well-being (Dueck & Reimer, 2003; Richardson, 2003).

Conclusion

The contents of this article describe how people (with disabilities) can flourish through involvement in leisure practices. Based upon the presented theory of human flourishing, TR should adopt a leisure and recreation orientation. However, a new profession, devoted solely to promoting the flourishing of people with disabilities through their excelling in leisure pursuits, may be called for. The philosophical foundation for such a profession consists of at least three core beliefs: people with disabilities are human beings who can flourish and experience leisure; leisure is essential to flourishing; and leisure promotes flourishing among people with disabilities. The practitioners of this profession, Leisure Specialists-Adaptive, have a critical mission to fulfill, they are charged with supporting the flourishing of people with disabilities which in turn contributes to the flourishing of everyone.

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