Sociocultural Factors Affecting Leisure

Jen Welter reflects on what it means to be the first female coach (Arizona Cardinals) in the history of the NFL.

Why do I put myself out there like this? Well, football has often been referred to as the final frontier for women in sports, so for an NFL team to have brought a woman into the coaching ranks, that speaks volumes. It's an important step for girls and women to see. Being a woman is part of who I am. It's not all of who I am, and I'm not here just because I'm a woman. I'm here as a football coach.

If my opportunity in the NFL is a chance to show other women what's possible in this world, and to show guys that there is another dimension to a lot of women—that this game that they love can be loved and respected by a woman—why wouldn't I highlight that? At the same time, my most important obligation right now is helping Coach Arians and this team.[1]

Learning Objectives

1. Examine the influence of the following on leisure: age, gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, and socioeconomic status.

2. Explain gender differences in leisure.

3. Identify how agencies can better serve the LGBT community.

4. Explain race and ethnicity factors influencing leisure.

5. Describe differences in leisure participation among social classes.

INTRODUCTION

Many sociocultural factors affect personal leisure values and involvement today including: age, gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, and socioeconomic status.

It is easy to see the major changes that children experience as they grow. The same thing holds true for adults. Albeit, we change at a much slower pace, but differences exist based on age. Our leisure preferences evolve. We try new activities. Some of them remain activities for a lifetime and others stay with us until we reach a certain point in our lives. Interests may influence these changes as well as physical abilities, family status, education, or work, among others. Progress in this field has been striking with respect to expanded recreational opportunities for girls and women in sport and

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outdoor recreation. Although the chief concern has been about females and leisure, the role of boys and men in contemporary leisure has also been an issue.

Sexual orientation affects leisure pursuits in a number of ways. Focus is changing from ignoring those who identify as other than heterosexual to seeing them as a viable market as the numbers of identified lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people become more visible.

Racial and ethnic identity also has limited many individuals from full participation in organized recreation in the past, and continues to influence the leisure involvement not only of African Americans, but also of the growing number of Hispanics and those of Asian background. With continuing waves of immigration from other parts of the world, religion linked to ethnic identity will pose new policy questions as Muslims, as well as other people who are neither Christian nor Jewish, become part of the national landscape.

Socioeconomic status limits leisure participation as well as where people participate in leisure activities. Those who are in poor or working classes have fewer opportunities and get most of their services from the non-profit and public sector, whereas the upper class has relatively unlimited access to services and utilizes commercial services almost exclusively. This is only the beginning of the vast differences among classes.

AGE FACTORS INFLUENCING LEISURE

The influence of one's age on recreational values, motivators, and patterns of participation have been analyzed for many years. There are key periods of the life span as well as growth processes and development tasks to be accomplished at each stage. Apart from differences in individual personalities within each age group, there is also the reality that developments in modern technology, economic and social trends, and shifts in family relationships have been responsible for major changes in age-related norms of human behavior. People develop physically, socially, and cognitively throughout their lives, and recreation activities must reflect these changes and be age appropriate.[2]

We have seen dramatic shifts in life experiences. Today, children are exposed to the realities of life and mature physically at a much earlier point than in the past. At the same time, paradoxically, they have a longer period of adolescence and schooling before entering the adult workforce. Adults now tend to marry later and have fewer children, and many adults are choosing not to marry at all. Older people have a much longer period of retirement, and a significantly greater number of older persons live more active and adventurous leisure lives today than in the past.

To fully understand the impact of societal trends on public involvement in recreation, park, and leisure-service programs, it is helpful to examine each major age group in turn. Rather than discuss the development stages of each age group, an overview of some important issues is presented, from the perspective of children, adolescents, and adults including young adults, middle adults, and older adults.

Children develop physically, emotionally, and socially through play and recreation.
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Recreation in the Lives of Children

Childhood is the age group that includes children from early infancy through the preteen years. Throughout this period, play satisfies important developmental needs in children—often helping to establish values and behavior patterns that will continue throughout a lifetime. Psychologists have examined the role of play at each stage of life, beginning with infancy and moving through the preschool period, middle and late childhood, and adolescence.

Children typically move through several stages: (1) solitary play, carried on without others nearby; (2) parallel play, in which children play side by side without meaningful interplay; (3) associative play, in which children share a common game or group enterprise but concentrate on their own individual efforts rather than group activity; and (4) cooperative play, beginning at about age 3, in which children actually join together in games, informal dramatics, or constructive projects. By the age of 6 or 7, children tend to be involved in loosely organized play groups, leading to much more tightly structured and organized groups in the so-called gang age between 8 and 12.[3]

Play contributes to children's physical, social, and cognitive development.

- Physical growth through play contributes to fine and gross motor development; body awareness; and physical growth, such as building or maintaining energy and increasing joint flexibility and muscular strength.
- Social skills are developed through interacting with other children and adults, including language, personal awareness, emotional well-being, and negotiation skills.

◆   Cognitive development in children improves creativity, problem solving and decision making, the ability to engage successfully in new situations, and learning ability. When young children use their imaginations in play, they are more creative, perform better at school tasks, and develop a problem-solving approach to learning.[4,5]

Change of the Family Structure   No longer is there a typical family structure with two parents raising their children together. The number of children in single-parent households (35% or 24,689,000) has remained steady over the last 10 years.[6] Of these, there are 16.2 million single mothers and 2.7 million single fathers raising their children.[7] Another 5.6 million children are living with an adult who is not their parent (e.g., grandparent, aunt, nonrelative). For many decades, there was a decline in the number of stay-at-home moms. However, over the last 12 years, in the U.S. a slight increase in stay-at-home moms can be seen. In 2012, 29% of all mothers were stay-at-home moms.[8] Dads represent the biggest increase among those caring for families as the total number has doubled since 1989.[9]

This change in family structure means an increased need for recreation services for working families. This includes such things as after-school and before-school programming, child and grandchild activities, and mentoring programs for children with single parents.

Overscheduled Children   The overscheduling of children is becoming a problem in today's culture. For example, there are increasing opportunities for youth to participate in sport clinics, camps, and leagues for children as young as 4. Many go on to be a part of traveling sport teams that go to different communities on the weekends to play in tournaments. Parents feel if they do not start their children in sports this young, they will be left behind. Couple this with the demands of household responsibilities, school assignments, and any number of other recreation activities, classes, and clubs and the result is dwindling free time for today's youth.

Although art and music lessons as well as sport and other educational activities may be beneficial to the child, there comes a point when the child has too many things going on in her life. This can result in damage to a child's self-esteem because she sees that her parents are always trying to improve her and she is not good enough the way she is. This overscheduling can add unnecessary stress to a child's life and quite possibly lead to escalated incidences of depression, anxiety, and a lack of creativity and problem solving skills. Experts on overscheduled children suggest a need for a balance between athletics, academics, and character-building activities. Athletics and academic achievement cannot be thrust upon children to the point they worry about not measuring up to adult expectations. These activities should be fun and meaningful. Free time with family and time to just do nothing builds character, reduces stress, and shows children they are loved.[10]

Overparenting   Each generation seems to increase its role of parenting and obsession with protecting its children. The recently coined terms "helicopter parenting" and "snowplow parenting" are becoming more common in our language. Helicopter parents are very involved in their child's education, experiences, and issues. They have a tendency to hover and are never far away from their children. Helicopter parents try to solve problems for their children, and, as a result, the children become reliant on their parents to do this for them. The snowplow parents are ones who plow right through any obstacles that stand in their child's way. Both helicopter and snowplow parents are raising children to believe they have few faults and will always be successful. These same parents are the first to confront a teacher or coach about unfair treatment of their child.

Helicopter parenting inhibits children's ability to make decisions for themselves—and not just young children but also young adults.[11] These children sometimes are also unable to accept responsibility for their actions because their parents bail them out of problems and issues they have gotten into.[11] Although helicopter parenting is often portrayed as a negative thing, and most parents deny they are helicopter parents, there are positives to this. A close relationship with a child and one where the parent helps a child make good decisions is beneficial to the child becoming a self-sufficient adult.

Influence of Commercial Media: Violence and Sex   Another important influence on the lives of children today stems from the overwhelming barrage of violence and sexual content contained in the movies, television shows, video games, and music that saturate their environment.

Because children spend more time watching television than any other activity, discussions about media portrayal of violence and sex have prevailed. Seventy-five percent of all children have televisions in their bedrooms and are exposed to 14,000 sexual messages each year. By age 18, children and teens will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence.[12]

Case Study

Helicopter Parents

Take the following quiz from your parent's perspective to see how closely your parent hovers over you as a college student.

◆   Do you call or email your student frequently (more than once a day)?
◆   Have you ever spoken to a professor about your student's grades?
◆   Do you frequently wake up your student in the morning to ensure they attend their classes?
◆   Have you played a heavy hand helping select the courses in your student's class schedule?
◆   Have you talked with university staff to resolve your student's problems (e.g., roommate conflict)?
◆   Have you completed your student's assignments or gone above and beyond assisting your student with their academic work?
◆   Do you remind your student of college-related deadlines (e.g., assignment or test, paying a fee)?
◆   Have you pressured your student to pursue a particular major or profession?

If you answered "yes" to three or more of the questions above (especially one in which your parent has contacted the university on your behalf), you may have helicopter parents.

Questions for Discussion

1.   How did you score your parents on this quiz?
2.   Before the quiz, did you think your parents were helicopter parents?
3.   How do you view helicopter parents and their relationship with their child?
4.   At what age do you consider yourself an adult and not need/want this level of help from parents?
5.   How many questions can a parent answer yes to without being a helicopter parent? Why?

Source: University of Oregon.
http://counseling.uoregon.edu/Topics-Resources/Parents-Family/Helpful-Articles/Helicopter-Parents.

For the past 30 years, the American Psychological Association has posited that media increases aggressive behavior in children. Additionally, limiting violence seen on television can reduce aggressive behaviors in children toward their peers.[13]

Learning a new skill, expressing creativity through art, or experiencing nature all lead to enhanced personal well-being.
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Lack of Outdoor Play   Children are staying inside and spending more and more time with their computers, video games, and televisions rather than being outside experiencing all that nature has to offer. Richard Louv authored a book in which he explains how children do not have the same outdoor experiences previous generations had.[14] Parents keep a closer watch over children and limit where they can play and explore. They prefer the structured, supervised activities to free play in the outdoors. The radius that children are allowed to roam outside of their home is one-ninth of what it was 20 years ago. Much of this is because of safety concerns when in actuality child safety has steadily improved during the past decade, and they are far safer than they were 30 years ago.[15]

Louv reviewed research on the positive effects of children being close to nature. It was determined that nature can improve a child's emotional health. Furthermore, nature helps relieve everyday stress that leads to depression, and children with nature near their home had fewer problems with behavior disorders, anxiety, and depression.[16] Nature also is seen as an intellectual enhancer. Moore and Hong suggest that natural settings will stimulate a child's senses and bring together informal play with formal learning, and that these sensory experiences help a child grow intellectually.[17]

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a growing phenomenon among today's youth. More and more children are taking prescription drugs to curb the symptoms of ADHD that include a difficulty in paying attention, focusing, listening, and following directions. Researchers have claimed that being in nature can boost a child's attention span and relieve symptoms of ADHD.[18] Something as simple as taking a walk in the woods, playing in an open space such as a park, or spending time in the backyard can have tremendous rewards, yet these types of activities are on the decline.

Recreation in the Lives of Adolescents

The teenage population, which began to climb in the early 1990s following years of decline, is expected to keep growing until at least 2045, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections. By then, it is projected there will be more than 51 million Americans between the ages of 10 and 19.

This group of young people matures faster, is quite technologically savvy, and knows what they want from their leisure. The group is proving to be quite challenging for parks and recreation professionals for many different reasons, some of which are discussed here.

Teen Employment   The teen labor force has remained fairly steady since 2010 with teens working mostly in the summer months. Twenty-seven percent of employed youth work in the recreation and hospitality industry (including food service), 20% work in retail, and 11% work in education and health services.[19] Obviously this is a prime population to fill recreation jobs such as lifeguards or camp counselors. While many teens are employed, there are still many who do not have jobs until after they graduate from high school. This may be due to parents wanting teens to focus on a sport or academics. It could be a lack of viable jobs within the community or several other reasons. What this employment outlook means for parks and recreation departments is the continuing need to offer programs and services for this age group.

Trends in Negative Adolescent Leisure Pursuits   Negative leisure pursuits by teens include such things as drug and alcohol use, gambling, and sexuality, among others. Participation rates are changing with each one. For example, the National Institute on Drug Abuse saw a decline in alcohol, cigarette and illegal drug consumption in teens over the last 5 years. Marijuana use rates are steady with marked decrease in synthetic and prescription drug use. However, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of e-cigarettes.[20]

Alcohol is also a major problem with adolescents. The problem is not so much social drinking as it is binge drinking. Binge drinking is consuming a large amount of alcohol over a short period of time. This means that at least twice within the past 2 weeks males have consumed five drinks in a row and females four.[21] Binge drinking continues to decline from 41.2% of the population in 1980 to 23.7% in 2012.[22] The results or consequences of binge drinking are fighting, aggressiveness, blackouts, increased sexual activity, and memory loss.

Teen gambling is also on the rise. It is estimated that 60–80% of all teens have gambled at least once in the last year.[23] That may include buying lottery tickets, small bets with friends, online gambling, or participating in an NCAA basketball tournament pool. If gambling becomes a problem among adolescents, they may experience irritability, exhaustion from lack of sleep, declining grades in school, and an increase in petty crimes and delinquent activities to fund these bets.[24] Online gambling may be a major player in teen gambling behaviors because tens of thousands of websites are available to them as well as advertisements running on television. There is never a lack of exposure to gambling opportunities for this age group.

In 2013, the Planned Parenthood Federation reported that the United States had the highest rate of teen pregnancies among Western developed nations. However, teen pregnancy rates are at their lowest level in the United States in 40 years due to increased contraception use.[25] In 2013, 47% of all high school students reported ever having sex, which is a decline from 54% in 1991. Thirteen percent of females and 17% of males report having more than four sexual partners in high school, and 34% report being currently sexually active. Of these students, 22% reported using alcohol or drugs during their most recent sexual encounter.[26]

"Sexting," where explicit messages and/or photos are exchanged with others through their cell phones, has been in the news over the last several years. There is a lot of discrepancy about its prevalence, which has been reported as low as 7% of teens who have sexted up to 54%. Sexting gains media attention when it is used as a bullying tactic or results in negative consequences such as teen suicide.

Technology   Teens are avid users of cell phones and other technology. Seventy-three percent of all teens have a smart phone. Teens use their cell phones to access the Internet more than any other device. With this shift in cell phone use, teens are constantly connected. Teens text friends more than any other form of non-face-to-face communication and reserve phone calls for their closest friends.[27] Because of the amount of time teens spend with their phones, parents are concerned about relationships established through social media, cyber bullying, the impact their online activity will have on their future academic or employment opportunities, and inappropriate sharing of personal information.

Boredom and the Need for Excitement   Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, the perceived need to provide positive recreation programs and facilities for children and youth has been based on the belief that constructive free-time alternatives not only keep youngsters off the street but also help prevent the kinds of delinquent play that otherwise might result from boredom. Again and again, adolescents apprehended for criminal

Case Study

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The Challenge of Recreation Programming for Teens

Many of the teen issues discussed here influence their recreational needs. For many parks and recreation agencies, teens are one of the most difficult groups to develop programs, activities, and events for. Due to the changing teen experiences already discussed, agencies have tried many different approaches, including establishing teen centers and teen advisory boards. For example, the City of Palo Alto (CA) Recreation Department established the Teen Advisory Board and the Youth Council. The Teen Advisory Board is a group of high school students who plan and lead activities for their peers. They also have a teen center specifically for these activities. The Youth Council was established to give teens a voice in the community. They work closely with the Recreation Department and the City Council and study problems, activities, and concerns of youth in the community.

Questions for Discussion/Tasks to Complete

1. What were your recreation experiences as a teenager in your community? Were they focused on school, family, friends, or the neighborhood? Were these activities part of an agency such as the local parks and recreation department or the YMCA?
2. What challenges would parks and recreation agencies face in providing recreation opportunities for teens? How could they overcome some of these challenges?
3. Search and find three teen advisory boards across the country. Compare and contrast them.
4. Select a community without a teen advisory board. Outline how you would establish a board and how it would operate.

Source: http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/csd/teen_services.asp

activity use the excuse that they were bored, that there was nothing else to do, or that their delinquent actions were a form of fun. Often, however, such forms of thrill-seeking play end in tragic episodes of violence, drug- and alcohol-fueled accidents, or other self-destructive experiences.

Changing Teen Experiences   Adolescence is a challenging time for the teens, their friends, and their families. They are struggling with self-identity issues, moodiness, puberty, greater reliance on friends, and a greater need for privacy and independence.[28] They are overly concerned with being popular; they challenge the status quo; they are concerned with their appearance; and they are strongly influenced by their peers.[29] Although parents feel this is a difficult time for them, it also is difficult for the adolescent.

Recreation in the Lives of Adults

The adult population in modern society, defined as those in their late teens and older, may logically be subdivided into several age brackets, lifestyle patterns, or generations. Although many life experiences occur in this broad age range, it is important to look at an overall picture of how people progress through these years.

Young Adults   The population of young adults, extending from late teens through late 30s, includes Gen Y and a few of the older generations. For them, the single population has exploded. People are marrying later, if at all. In the past, the word *single* usually meant a lonely person, or someone whose solitary status was a temporary sidetrack on the way to happy matrimony. However, in the decade of the "Me Generation," with its emphasis on narcissistic pleasure and self-fulfillment, singlehood came to be regarded as a happy ending in itself—or at least an enjoyable prolonged phase of postadolescence. When this trend became obvious, a vast number of singles-only institutions sprang up to meet the needs of this newly recognized population that had an estimated $40 billion of annual spending power. Singles apartment complexes, bars, weekends at resort hotels, social groups at local churches, cruises, and a variety of other leisure programs or services emerged—including computer dating services.

As a subgroup of the young adult population, college students are usually strongly influenced in their choice of leisure activities by their status as students. Students living at home are likely to have relatively little free time, often holding jobs and traveling back and forth to school, and they frequently find much of their recreation with friends in their neighborhoods. Students living on college campuses generally take part in social or religious clubs, athletic events, fraternity or sorority functions, and college union programs, entertainment, or cultural activities. Many young college students regard their first experience in living away from home for a sustained period of time as an opportunity to engage in hedonistic forms of play without parental supervision. In part, this appears to be a response to the stress that challenges many first-year college students. Both male and female freshmen suffer from higher levels of anxiety and stress than in past generations. Many worry about the debt

☀ GENERATIONS

Generations are groups of people who share similar formative years by experiencing history, fads, and events. One way to divide the generations is as follows:

Silent generation: Born between 1937 and 1945, they experienced the Depression, World War II, Amelia Earhart's solo flight across the Atlantic, and the passage of the Social Security Act.

Baby boomer generation: Born between 1946 and 1964, this group saw Woodstock, the Korean War, Jackie Robinson break into Major League Baseball, and the assassinations of Bobby and President John Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

Generation X, or Gen X: Born between 1965 and 1976, they experienced Watergate, the peak of Michael Jackson, break dancing, and Madonna.

Generation Y, or Millennial generation: Born between 1977 and 1990, this group experienced the technology boom with MP3 players, cell phones, and handheld computers.

Generation Z: Born between 1991 and 2012, this group is exposed to highly diverse environments in their community, school, and play; they have never known a world without the Internet, cell phones, or terrorism.[30]

they are incurring for their college education, job prospects upon graduation, having to work part time, and the pressure for success. This has resulted in today's college students having the lowest level of mental health in several decades.[31]

The majority of young single adults are able to use their leisure time in positive and constructive ways. Particularly for those who have finished school and are financially independent, travel, participation in sport or fitness clubs, social clubs, or forms of popular entertainment and involvement in hobbies and creative activities enrich their lives, both in college and in community settings.

Although millions of men and women have joined the trend toward a continuing single lifestyle, a majority of young adults today choose marriage and family life. Leisure behavior is markedly affected when people marry and have children. Social activities tend to center around the neighborhood in which the couple lives, and the home itself becomes a recreation center for parent and child activities. The family takes part in social programs sponsored by religious agencies, civic and neighborhood associations, or parent–teacher organizations (PTOs). As children move into organized community programs, parents begin to use their leisure time for volunteer service as adult leaders for Scout groups, coaches and managers of sport teams, or in similar positions.

The group in this age bracket that is most deprived of leisure consists of single parents who often must work, raise a family under difficult economic and emotional circumstances, and try at the same time to find needed social outlets and recreational opportunities for themselves.

Leisure for young adults often encompasses both family and friends.
© Monkey Business/Fotolia.com.

Middle Adults   The current middle adult age group is considered Gen X and baby boomers. They are approximately 40–65 years old and make up the largest section of the population.

Baby boomers have immense diversity in their lifestyles as well. Some are devoted to their families; others remain unattached. Some boomers are sport minded or wilderness oriented, whereas others are committed to the arts, hobbies, or literary pursuits. Growing numbers of this age group have begun to place a high value on the creative satisfaction found in work or to devote a fuller portion of their time to family and personal involvements.

For parents in the middle adult years, patterns of leisure involvement begin to change as children become more independent and even establish their own families. Many nonworking parents, who have devoted much time and energy to the family's needs, begin to find these demands less pressing. They have more available time, as well as a need to find a different meaning and fulfillment in life through new interests and challenges.

Many leisure-service providers are realizing the impact of the baby boomers and what it means for their agencies. As more of this age group moves into retirement, they are going to be looking for activities to keep themselves busy. This group is going to retire with money to spend, and they are healthier than retirees of the past. Furthermore, baby boomers are not afraid to try new things and go to new places. They refuse to retire and

BOOMER BITS

Boomers:

◆ are healthier, more active, and trendier than previous generations.
◆ are interested in travel and technology.
◆ see that time is of the essence. They have places to go and people to see.
◆ heavily rely on word of mouth for advertising.
◆ do not consider themselves old; they feel 10 years younger than their actual age.
◆ understand the importance of pampering themselves and are the largest purchasers of luxury cars, jewelry and gourmet foods.

St. Clair, S. (2008). A Booming Market: Recreation and Fitness for Baby Boomers. Recreation Management. http://www.recmanagement .com/feature_print.php?fid=200802fe03

Case Study

Programming for Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are currently the largest segment of our population. They have financial resources to spend, are retiring at rapid rates, are not afraid of technology, and want to travel and have new experiences. This makes them a prime target market for parks and recreation. Because of this, the local parks and recreation agency has recognized a significant need for increased programs for this group. You have been hired as the new director of adult activities in your community. Your charge is to develop programs targeted at the 65+ age group.

Tasks to complete:

1. Without doing any research, make a list of activities and events that you would like to offer for baby boomers. Compare your list to others in the class. How many of the activities are sedentary vs. active? How many are stereotypically for "old people"?
2. Find five agencies online that offer programs specifically for the baby boomer population. Gather the following information:
   a. What are these programs called (e.g. Senior Adults)?
   b. Are there active and sedentary programs?
   c. What type of fees are assessed?
   d. What programs do you consider to be stereotypical for older adults?
   e. What programs surprised you?
3. Select the best and most creative programs you found in your research. Develop a schedule of activities you would like to initially offer.

go quietly to a senior citizens center to play passive games, because they do not see themselves as seniors. They plan to stay active to show that they are not old, and will need recreation and tourism services to do it.

Recreation in the Lives of Older Adults

Older adults are defined here as people in their mid-60s and older, or the older baby boomers and silent generation. Given the increase in life expectancy, this group is quite large and diverse. They pass through several stages, much like those in the adult category do.

Active Older Adults   Recreation and leisure assume a high priority in the lives of most older adults, particularly for those in their late 60s and beyond who have retired from full-time jobs. Without work to fill their time and often with the loss of partners or friends, such persons find it necessary to develop new interests and often to establish new relationships.

HOUSE-SWAPPING BECOMES A POPULAR VACATION OPTION

Older adults are increasingly engaging in house swapping, or home exchange. *House swapping* is when people offer their home to someone in another geographic location, often another country, in exchange for use of that person's home. So, a couple in Florida allows a couple in Spain to use their home for a 2-week vacation in exchange for the Florida couple using the home in Spain at the same time.[32]

It is now popular to assert that older adults are far more active, vigorous, economically secure, and happier than had been assumed in the past. With improved financial support and pension plans, a much higher percentage of older persons are relatively well-to-do and able to enjoy a far longer period of retirement. Research has shown that many older adults continue to enjoy sexual relations and to maintain active and creative lives well into their 70s and 80s.

The lives of older adults have changed dramatically over the past three or four decades. Not only can they expect to live much longer, but their living circumstances are likely to be radically different from those of past generations in terms of familial roles, social activities, economic factors, and other important conditions.

Changes in Family Structure   In the past, it was common for several generations of family members to live together. Older persons continued not only to receive the affection and support of their children and grandchildren, but also to play meaningful roles in family life. An increasing number of older adults continue to live by themselves for longer periods of time. Although many do not want to live in a nursing home, there is still need for some additional care as people age. The number of senior living communities, retirement communities, and assisted-living environments is growing. Depending on the level of care needed (from no care at all to full-time nursing care), these types of living situations can meet the needs of people as they age. These communities provide nursing care, daily living assistance, socialization, and recreation opportunities for the residents. Many see this as a better alternative than living with grown children and their families. Some retirement facilities have graduated living quarters where the level of care increases based on what the individual needs. An older adult may enter the facility being totally self-sufficient and, as health declines, can be moved to other areas within the same facility. This living arrangement lends itself to continuity and familiarity to the individual.

Older adults are breaking away from stereotypical leisure pursuits and engaging in a variety of activities.
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Positive Changes   Even though these negative trends must be acknowledged, the reality still is that most older people are living longer, happier, and healthier lives than in the past. Indeed, there is striking new evidence that the very old are enjoying remarkably good health in comparison with other age groups. The average annual Medicare bill for people who live to their late 80s and 90s is significantly lower than that for those who die sooner. Part of the reason is that older adults tend to be relatively robust. Cancer and heart disease, the two chief killers of retired persons in the younger age brackets, tend not to affect the very old, and Alzheimer's disease also attacks slightly younger men and women. Today, there are more and more centenarians—people who have made it to their 100th birthday—80,000 with 85% of these being women.[33]

With improved medical care, people are not just living longer, healthier lives—they are living them differently. Particularly in the so-called retirement states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and Florida, which have fast-growing populations of older men and women, they are engaging in active sports, volunteering, going back to school, and developing new networks of friends and relationships.

Specific Contributions of Recreation and Leisure   Recreational involvement meets a number of important physical, emotional, and social needs of older adults. Regular physical exercise has immense health-related value for older persons, with a range of specific benefits that include preventing heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes; assisting in weight reduction; improving immunity against common infections; reducing arthritic symptoms; countering depression; and even helping to improve memory and the quality of sleep.

In terms of social benefits, one of the key problems affecting older adults is that they tend to become isolated and lose a sense of playing a significant role in family life or in the community at large. Therefore, community service and volunteerism are useful leisure activities for older adults. In fact, volunteerism is frequently conceptualized as a satisfactory substitute for paid work for older persons. Older adults gain an important sense of recognition and self-worth through volunteerism. It provides structure in their lives in terms of regular time commitments and offers social contacts that often lead to friendship and other group involvement.

Another important leisure pursuit for older adults consists of continuing education—either on a fairly casual basis with classes or workshops and community center programs or on a more formal basis in noncredit courses taken through Road Scholar (previously known as Elderhostel) or other college-sponsored programs.

Older adults are increasingly technologically savvy and use the Internet to gather information about travel and leisure. This further emphasizes the importance of leisure-service providers using electronic means to communicate with this group.

Other older adults break new ground by entering a new period of creative development in the arts, writing, social service, or other unknown kinds of personal involvement. Much of today's increased life expectancy has been added, it seems, not to the end but to the middle of our lives—extending the opportunity for "late bloomers" to realize their dreams.

GENDER FACTORS INFLUENCING LEISURE

Beyond the issue of one's age group, a second factor that plays an important role in leisure has to do with sexual or gender identity and values.

A distinction should be made between the two terms *sex* and *gender*. Although they are often used interchangeably, social scientists generally accept the principle that the term *sex* should be used to identify biological or physical classification in terms of the structure and functions that are possessed by one sex or the other. In contrast, the word *gender* is used to describe a broad range of characteristics, roles, or behaviors that society usually attaches to males and females. Stated simply, the words *male* and *female* apply to one's sex, whereas the words *masculine* and *feminine* are descriptive adjectives applying to gender traits.

Throughout history, distinctions between males and females have been made that extend beyond the procreative functions. These distinctions encompass family or marital roles, educational status, career opportunities, political influences, and all other aspects of daily life.

Among younger children, play has served to reinforce gender-related stereotypes. Little boys were given toy guns or cowboy outfits and encouraged to playact in stereotypically masculine roles such as doctors, fire fighters, or airline pilots. Girls were given dolls or play equipment designed to encourage stereotypically feminine roles such as caring for babies, cooking and sewing, or playing as nurses or flight attendants. Only after the resurgence of the feminist movement following World War II did society begin to question these roles and assumptions and challenge such sexist uses of play in childhood.

Leisure for girls and women has changed and improved from the impact of the feminist movement.
Courtesy of Deb Garrahy.

Women and Leisure

During the early decades of the twentieth century, leadership roles and activities assigned to girls and women, as well as the expectations regarding their ability to work well in groups, reflected past perceptions of women as weak and inferior in skills and lacking drive, confidence, and the ability to compete. Victorian prudery and misconceptions about physical capability and health needs also limited programming for girls and women.[34] Physical activity was seen as detracting from womanliness, having a negative effect on motherhood, and being detrimental to women's mental health.[35]

Impact of the Feminist Movement   Although times have changed since the Victorian age, there are still differences in experiences, attitudes, and expectations of women's participation in sport and recreation versus that of men. A major influential factor in the changes toward equality was the feminist movement.

Feminism is defined as political, social, and economic equality among men and women. This equality first came to light politically with women

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Although many associate Title IX with athletics, it also covers education (including career and vocational programs), admissions and employment policies, standardized testing, and treatment of pregnant and parenting teens.

Title IX has been instrumental in improving opportunities for female athletes at both the high school and collegiate levels. Those opposed to Title IX often argue that it decreases athletic opportunities for men. However, this is not an accurate assessment. Here are the numbers of athletes from 1972–2015:[36]

	1972	1981	2011	2015
Men	170,384	225,800	235,800	273,114
Women	31,852	98,700	177,800	209,419

wanting the right to vote just as men could. With the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 giving women this right, feminism virtually disappeared until women entered the workforce in large numbers starting in the 1950s. As women entered the workforce, they wanted equal pay as well as access to jobs that were stereotypically a "man's job." Political and economic aspects of feminism still exist today, but it is the social aspect of feminism that is most affected by leisure.

What did this mean for leisure? Feminism gave women an understanding that they had freedom in their choices of activities and participation. Limits and stereotypes could be removed. Furthermore, it gave women the same opportunities as men in terms of leisure.

Implications for Women's Leisure   Women's leisure has been a prominent topic in research for more than 20 years. By examining what scholars have learned, there are several implications regarding women's leisure.

◆ Women's participation in physical activity continues to grow. Women are moving beyond traditional physical fitness classes and staying active through activities such as outdoor recreation pursuits, cycling, running, and intense fitness programs such as CrossFit.
◆ Leisure has changed for women from being centered around family and household responsibilities, to women also taking time for their own recreational activities. They still enjoy attending their child's soccer game, but want their own activities as well.
◆ The difference between men's and women's leisure is diminishing. Once stereotypical activities have more blurred gender lines. Men can enjoy yoga as much as women can have a poker night with friends.
◆ Women value the social aspects of leisure. While time is a constraint to leisure for many, the resulting social opportunities with others and physical benefits drive women to pursue leisure activities.

AUGUSTA NATIONAL FINALLY ADDS FEMALE MEMBERS IN 2013

Many golf clubs have been resistant to having female members with full rights as allocated to men. One glaring example is Augusta National Golf Club, which admitted its first two women members—Condoleezza Rice and Darla Moore—in 2012.[37] Rice was the U.S. Secretary of State under President George W. Bush. Moore is vice president of Rainwater, Inc., a private investment company and the founder and chair of The Charleston Parks Conservancy, a foundation focused on enhancing the parks and public spaces of Charleston, SC. Augusta National is one of the most exclusive clubs in the world and host to the Masters Golf Tournament.

These issues make women's leisure quite complex. Their lives mean assuming several different roles over time that affect leisure choices.

Men and Leisure

Although most of the professional literature and research studies dealing with gender in recreation and leisure focuses on past discrimination against girls and women and the efforts made to strengthen their opportunities today, it is essential to examine the changing role of males in this area as well. Generally, men have been portrayed as the dominant sex within most areas of community life and have been seen as responsible for denying women access to a full range of leisure pursuits and professional advancement. However, it would be misleading to assume that men's lives are invariably richer and more satisfying than those of women.

Moreover, men and women are becoming more balanced. Men are spending more time in the home sharing day to day tasks, while more and more women are spending time outside the home with work and other demands.

Shifting Masculine Identities   Parents, family, friends, and teachers all play a major role in helping a child define what it means to be masculine. The media portrays males as being in control of themselves and situations around them, aggressive, physically desirable, and heroic. Male-oriented magazines show men with muscular bodies, well dressed, and successful. Although these images encourage men to behave in certain ways, not all men buy into this image. Increasingly, men are breaking free of these rigid stereotypes and behaving as they want, regardless of the associated stereotypes.

The Role of Fatherhood   A man's role as father has changed drastically over the past two decades. With more women entering the workforce, fathers are taking more responsibility for raising children and contributing to the household responsibilities. Some studies show that more men are beginning to take on childcare responsibilities, for reasons ranging from rising daycare costs to the growth in the number of working women. In addition, the stay-at-home dad is not quite so rare as he once was. As women's salaries are rivaling men's, many families are finding it just as beneficial if the father stays home to raise the children.

In addition to fathers who are living in the same household as their children, there are fathers who are living elsewhere or who started another family. There is an increased expectation that fathers will be more involved in their children's lives,[38] more emotionally connected to their children, and more egalitarian in terms of gender role expectations.[39] No longer is it a given that in a divorce the mother is automatically granted custody. The quality of parenting is a bigger dictator than gender is in most states.

Men, and fathers in particular, are using leisure as a means to build social relationships. For men in general, similar interests such as poker, hunting, fishing, or watching football on Sunday afternoons are used as social outlets. Fathers are participating in leisure activities to share experiences with their children. They may coach their child's soccer team, go to their piano lesson, or take their little girl to the Daddy–Daughter Dance at the local recreation center. Like mothers, these fathers are sometimes constrained in the fact that they choose leisure activities not because they particularly want to participate, but because their child wants to participate or the father understands the value of participating with the child.

Constraints to Leisure   It is evident that both men and women have issues that affect their leisure participation. These issues have been labeled as constraints to leisure. An entire body of research examines these constraints and their impact. Constraints to leisure occur when an individual is unable to participate in a leisure activity, unable to participate as much as the individual would like, or when the quality of the experience is diminished for some reason. Constraints are categorized as interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural.

Interpersonal constraints are associated with the individual's relationship with others. The constraint occurs because of this relationship with friends, family, or even co-workers. An example of an interpersonal constraint would be lacking another person to participate with or participating in an activity because of the desires of others rather than an actual desire to do so. If a person goes along with friends to see a baseball game but really has no interest in the game, this is considered an interpersonal constraint.

Intrapersonal constraints are factors that affect an individual's preference for, or interest in, an activity. For example, a person may not feel he or she is skilled at an activity and as a result will choose not to participate. Another example is having feelings of self-consciousness. Women in particular sometimes feel self-conscious about their bodies. If this self-consciousness leads to a woman not joining a gym, she is experiencing an intrapersonal constraint. Likewise, if a man has interest in improving his cardiovascular fitness, he will most likely avoid an aerobics class because it is seen as an activity for women, even though he is interested in taking an aerobics class.

Finally, *structural constraints* are factors that intervene between the desire to participate and actual participation in an activity. The most common structural constraint is a lack of time. Other examples include lack of transportation, money, or opportunity.

While women face constraints to leisure, so do their male counterparts. A major constraint that men face more than women is the lack of companions with whom to participate. Women are much more likely to find a friend for such things as taking a class or attending a cultural event than men are. Furthermore, men are more likely to feel the constraints of gendered activities than women. Traditionally female activities such as ballet or aerobics are often seen as prohibitive for male participants because of the fear of being perceived as less than masculine.

Implications for Men's Leisure   What are the implications of these trends in masculine identity and lifestyle values for recreation and leisure? First, many boys and men who formerly felt pressured to be involved heavily in sports, both as participants and as spectators, may now feel free not to conform to this traditional masculine image. Further, growing numbers of males are increasingly likely to take part in domestic functions or hobbies, the creative arts, or other leisure pursuits that in the past might have raised questions about their degree of "maleness." This new freedom to engage in leisure pursuits once considered inappropriate for men also extends to attitudes toward women. Increasingly, many parents are becoming sensitive to the way they permit their sons to behave toward girls.

With respect to both sexes, it is important to note that many of the barriers that separated males and females in the past have been broken down in recent years. For example, a number of leading youth organizations that formerly were separate in terms of membership have now joined forces, as in the case of Boys and Girls Clubs of America. In other cases, national organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) not only have substantial numbers of members who are girls and women, but also in some communities are directed by women executives and division heads.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION FACTORS INFLUENCING LEISURE

Leisure is affected by sexual orientation as well as by gender. Although everyone has a sexual orientation, whether it is heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transgendered, the focus here is on those who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered (LGBT). This group of people faces additional situations, challenges, and obstacles in their leisure and their life as a whole.

Members of this group have had a difficult past in terms of acceptance by the mainstream population. In the 1930s and 1940s, a backlash developed against gay forms of entertainment, with state assemblies barring the performance of plays dealing with sexual "degeneracy" and Hollywood agreeing not to depict homosexuality in movies. State liquor authorities closed many bars that catered to gay and lesbian clientele, and in the 1950s, homosexual government employees lost their jobs because it was assumed that they could be easily blackmailed into spying for other countries on the basis of their hidden identities.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the effect of the Stonewall Riot in New York City (a mass protest against police persecution of gays and lesbians), the impact of the counterculture movement with its emphasis on sexual freedom, and the activism of leaders such as Harvey Milk, a San Francisco city supervisor who was assassinated in 1978, all converged to help homosexuals gain a greater measure of public acceptance.

A major change in attitudes toward the LGBT community resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court ruling 5–4 in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage on Thursday, June 25, 2015, making it the 21st country to legalize marriage for all LGBT couples. Although today there are more identified LGBT people than ever before—an estimated 29 million—there are still many who do not openly identify as LGBT for a variety of different reasons. It could be fear of not being accepted by friends and family, fear of losing their family support system, concerns about harassment and discrimination, or worry about losing a job. As a nation, we have seen tremendous improvements in acceptance of LGBT people. Much of this can be attributed to the millennial generation who are more open to different sexual orientations than their older counterparts. There are several reasons for this. For example, there are more people who are open about their sexuality, so millennials may be raised around someone who identifies as LGBT; there are LGBT characters regularly seen on television; millennials have access to technology to answer questions and keep them more informed; and more people talk about LGBT issues than ever before.[40]

While great strides have been made, those in the LGBT community sometimes experience discrimination and violence. One of the most recent examples occurred when an Orlando gunman attacked a gay nightclub, leaving 49 people dead. What started as a night of dancing to salsa and merengue music ended in tragedy. Many of those who survived said the club was a place for fun, where they could be themselves and enjoy an evening of entertainment.

Implications for Leisure

There are several issues to consider with this group in terms of recreation. First, LGBT people have been labeled a gold mine for recreation companies and agencies. This group is more highly educated and has a higher income level than the national average. It is estimated that they have $884 billion per year in buying power [41] and spend $70.1 billion per year on travel.[42] Second, on a more negative note, teens who identify as LGBT have a higher than average suicide rate among their peers. They often feel isolated and rejected by family or friends and have very few outlets for social and recreational opportunities where they feel comfortable. Third, LGBT people are increasingly becoming parents through past marriages, adoptions, or other means. All of these factors affect their leisure in a number of ways.

The following are a few examples of how these issues have sparked leisure-service providers to welcome and support LGBT people:

◆   In Boulder, Colorado, a play group has been established for young children of gay and lesbian couples.
◆   Olivia Cruise Lines focuses solely on cruises for gays and lesbians. R Family Vacations offers family cruises for gays and lesbians with children.[43]
◆   Key West, Florida, Portland, Oregon, New York City, and Palm Springs, California, specifically target gay and lesbian tourists by promoting the city as a tourism destination and providing information on gay/lesbian-friendly hotels, resorts, restaurants, and recreational opportunities.
◆   The Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center (LYRIC) is a recreation center for youth aged 24 and younger. It was opened in 1988 and offers social and recreational programs and services for LGBT, queer, and questioning youth. The center provides community, education, and recreation programs and events.[44]
◆   In New York City, there is a nonprofit group called Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE). SAGE started in 1977 for adults, serving as a drop-in center and offering discussion groups and various recreational activities such as arts, exercise, dances, and trips.[45]
◆   FountainGrove Lodge is an LGBT retirement community that focuses on wellness and active lifestyles to maintain health for older adults. The community features such recreation amenities as a fitness center and classes, walking trails, pet park, golf course, and movie theater.[46]

Given the growing numbers of LGBT people, the economic impact of this group, and the special issues faced by them, it is important that recreation and leisure-service agencies understand the need to offer programs, activities, and events for LGBT youths to adults.

Case Study

LGBT Sports League to Form?

A group of 10 LGBT people in the community come into the local parks and recreation department to discuss sport opportunities for those who identify as LGBT. They are requesting that a volleyball league and a co-ed softball league be formed. They also guarantee that they can put together at least six teams in each league, and that they will not limit players to just people who are LGBT. Your agency already has adult sports leagues, but this group wants their own league.

Questions to Consider

1. Assume you are part of the LGBT group seeking a league. What arguments would you use to convince the agency to start a league for you?
2. Take the other side of the argument. List potential reasons why forming the league would not be a good idea.
3. Because this is an adult sports league, it will generate revenue from the players and not rely on tax support. Does this make a difference in whether or not you would start this league? Why or why not?
4. You have decided to go ahead and run the softball league as a trial. You have two choices in location. One open field is in a complex of three other diamonds and is one of the best fields in the city. The other location is a decent field, but it is a standalone diamond on the edge of town. Which diamond would you choose for the league and why?

☀ CLASSIFYING RACE IN THE CENSUS

The U.S. Census Bureau is confounded by the difficulty of classifying race for people in the United States. In 1990, people could choose from the following categories: white, black, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and American Indian or Alaska Native. In 2000, the census expanded to include 18 races including a category for "other" and the ability to select more than one race. In 2010, there were 15 racial categories with space to insert any specific races omitted.[47] Because of the difficulty in classifications, discussions are currently underway to eliminate the long list of options and to list a limited number of categories with examples within each category.[48]

RACE AND ETHNICITY FACTORS INFLUENCING LEISURE

A fourth major sociocultural factor is of key importance in determining leisure values and behaviors. A succession of past research studies shows that recreational involvement is heavily influenced by one's racial or ethnic identity. The provision of public, nonprofit, and other forms of recreation facilities and programs is also affected by these demographic factors, and the broader fields of popular culture—including the sport and entertainment worlds—continue to reflect their impact.

Meaning of Race and Ethnicity

Before examining the actual influence of race and ethnicity on recreation and leisure, it is helpful to clarify the meaning of the two terms. Although they are often used interchangeably, social scientists distinguish between them. *Race* refers to the genetic makeup of a person. The genetic makeup often results in biological characteristics that are exhibited among various groups. These characteristics include such things as the shape of one's eyes, texture of one's hair, and the color of one's skin.

In contrast, *ethnicity* involves having a unique social and cultural heritage that is passed on from one generation to another. Ethnic groups are often identified by patterns of language, family life, religion, recreation, and other customs or traits that distinguish them from other groups.

Despite the limitations of racial or ethnicity-based identification and its meaning in scientific terms, the reality is that the public continues to accept the concept of race and to apply it in terms of popular stereotypes about one group or the other. This is particularly significant for recreation and leisure because our traditional patterns of facility development and program planning were essentially based on the assumption that the public being served was predominantly a white, middle-class population familiar with the literature, traditions, and customs that came to North America from the British Isles.

Now, we are seeing the rapid growth of non-European populations in the United States as a consequence of recent immigration and birthrate trends. In a number of major cities throughout the country, nonwhites now outnumber those of European background, with the percentage of African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American children in the schools representing sizable majorities in some cases. States such as California are seeing nonwhite Hispanics become a majority group, and major cities across the country are not showing any majority groups.

This population trend has seen Hispanics become the largest minority group in the United States; it is estimated that by 2050 they will represent 30.2% of the U.S. population. Similarly, the number of Asian Americans has grown from 3.5 million in 1980 to more than 14.7 million in 2010 and is expected to climb steadily in the decades ahead.[49]

In addition to race, ethnicity can have a major impact on leisure preferences. One guiding force in ethnicity is religion. The United States continues to be dominated by Protestants (46.57%) and Catholics (20.87%). However, overall Christian religions are on a 7.8% decline from 2007 and 2014. During this same time period, non-Christian faiths (e.g. Jewish, Muslim) and non-affiliated (e.g., Atheist, agnostic, no religion) have both increased. Non-Christian religions grew by 1.2% and non-affiliated grew by 6.7%.[50] Another striking trend is the growing number of Muslims and Buddhists in the United States. The 2008 American

Dance in Hawaii is a tradition that tourists expect to see when visiting.
© Jose Gil/Shutterstock.

The Holi Festival of Colors in Malaysia is one of the largest traditional Indian cultural celebrations.
© Dimitry Berkut/Shutterstock.

DEFINING WHO IS HISPANIC

Hispanic or Latino are defined as Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish cultures or origins regardless of race. Other Spanish culture can include such categories as Argentinean, Columbian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and others.

Source: United States Census Bureau. "Who's Hispanic in America?"
www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/hispanic/2012.06.22_cspan_hispanics.pdf.

Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) claims that there are 1,349,000 Muslims in the United States, which is a 156% growth since 1990. The number of Buddhists has grown 194% in that same time period, and that religion has 1,189,000 followers in the United States. Interestingly, 15% of the population claims no religion. This is an increase of 138% since 1990.[51]

The racial and ethnic composition of the United States is rapidly changing. Beyond the sheer numbers, it is evident that growing minority populations are also exerting powerful influences on the nation's cultural scene and recreational life. No longer is it acceptable to offer programs from a predominantly white, middle-class perspective and interest level. Leisure services need to be more inclusive than that. Programs can be offered from a "melting pot" perspective or a "mosaic" perspective. The melting pot perspective gives leisure-service providers the opportunity to merge groups to allow people to learn about different races, cultures, and ethnicities together, whereas the mosaic perspective allows programmers to offer activities, programs, and events tailored to the unique wants, values, attitudes, and beliefs of a particular group.

Implications for Recreation and Leisure

The approach to delivering services to people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds has changed and improved over time, but still has incredible room for growth. Scott[52] suggested that recreation services needed to be accessible, affordable, safe, culturally relevant, and welcoming in order to meet the needs of all racial and ethnic groups.

Accessible   The importance of access to parks and recreation is immeasurable. People who live near a park are more physically active, healthy, and have higher levels of psychological well-being.[53] Accessibility can refer to financial resources, transportation, and physical access; accessibility to parks is not equal in most communities. The research on accessibility is limited, but people of color are less likely to live near a park, or the parks they do live near are smaller with fewer amenities than are found in predominantly white neighborhoods. Accessibility via transportation could be problematic both in terms of getting to local recreation opportunities as well as the ability to travel to rural locations for outdoor recreational activities. If there are no parks within walking distance, public transportation is limited, or there is little family discretionary income, people living in these areas face significantly more obstacles to using parks than anyone else.

Affordable and Safe   Many research studies have shown that racial and ethnic minorities are limited in their recreation participation due to affordability and safety issues. Those who have lower levels of discretionary income do not have the financial resources to travel to a national park, go skiing in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, go to the Texas Rangers game, or pay the fee to take a cooking class. The link between income and safety is significant. For example, lower income neighborhoods often have elevated crime rates and residents who are concerned about their safety. This fear can diminish use of public spaces for many. Low income neighborhoods often have high traffic roads, railroads, or other barriers making access to parks difficult and unsafe, especially for those with limited transportation options.[54]

Culturally Relevant and Welcoming   Many cultural factors prohibit the use of recreation facilities and programs. Some may not feel welcome because they view activities as being planned by and for whites, or that their own religious or personal values do not match those of others. For example, agencies that are not mindful of significant non-Christian religious holidays, or lack understanding of requirements regarding modesty and mixing of males and females in activities for such religions as Muslim will not draw these groups into their facilities. Essentially, some people do not feel there is anything for them, and see no need to participate. However, working with different groups to learn what activities they want and involving them in the planning can help them feel they have a voice and are welcome. Skokie, Illinois does this well through the Skokie Festival of Cultures. This

citywide event has a planning committee with representatives from 24 different racial and ethnic groups residing in the community. Each group is represented and plans its facet of the event including food, art, entertainment, and activities.

Agencies must continually review their program offerings, marketing, administration, and staffing to best meet the needs of the community. Schneider, Shinew, and Fernandez[55] provide several suggestions for agencies to better serve the entire community:

◆ Show diversity in marketing materials through photos, content, and distribution to locations that reach diverse populations.
◆ Work with the city, public transportation agencies, schools, and nonprofit organizations to coordinate transportation options.
◆ Conduct an access assessment and include safety as a factor. Outline ways to increase access to parks, programs, and facilities.

Case Study

Pokémon GO: Where Augmented Reality, Culture, and Race Intersect

Days before this text was sent to print, Pokémon GO was released and hit the public by storm. In less than a week, the number of users rivaled Twitter. Here is a brief description of the game:

Players or "trainers" use a GPS map to locate Pokémon or "pocket monsters." When a character is tapped, the smart phone camera is launched by the app for a mini-game where the Pokémon appear in the real world. Once Pokémon are captured, trainers use them to battle in specialized locations called Pokémon gyms. Pokémon can be found anywhere in the world including "Pokémon stops" that are cultural and historic landmarks. While this component adds to the educational benefits of the game, not everyone is pleased to be a stop. For example, the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. and the Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camp sites in Poland have requested they be removed from the game because they feel the game dishonors Holocaust victims.

Pokémon GO has caused many millennials to be out in the community looking for the characters. The trainers can be seen with their heads down looking at a phone screen and wandering back and forth in an area chasing a character. Many communities have warned about the safety of the activity because of the disruption to traffic and trainers stumbling over fixtures on the sidewalk or bike racks in parks.

A USA TODAY article interviewed some African American men who felt recent racial tensions have become an issue for some who play the game. Pokémon GO was released at the same time that two African American men were shot and killed by police officers in Baton Rouge and a suburb of Minneapolis, followed by a fatal shooting of 5 police officers in Dallas who were working at a peaceful rally for the men. Those interviewed expressed their concerns that people could call the police on them because they look suspicious as they walk by a window three or four times trying to catch the character. One player said, "my brain started combining the complexity of being Black in America with the real world proposal of wandering and exploration that is designed into the game play of Pokémon GO, there was only one conclusion. I might die if I keep playing."

Questions to Consider
1. Should the Holocaust museum officials have asked that it be removed from the game as a location for a character? Why or why not?
2. Can games like Pokémon GO impact physical activity for the players? Why or why not?
3. Read the Guynn article in USA TODAY listed below. Discuss the points made in the article. Are the concerns legitimate?

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MUSLIM RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Islam is a worldwide religion with more than 1 billion followers. Leisure is closely connected with religious activities for Muslims because free time is allotted to be spent with family and on religious activities and festivals.[56] Activity and sport are encouraged in Islamic countries for the purpose of a healthy body and mind. Livengood and Stoldolska found that Muslim Americans participate in the same mainstream leisure activities that the rest of Americans do, but their leisure style, location of leisure, and the individuals with whom they participate are different.[57] Lack of participation by Muslims in leisure has been attributed to such issues as disapproval from family, concern over contact with the opposite sex, which is discouraged, unacceptable facilities, immodest sport clothes, agency dress codes for participation that go against religious beliefs about what parts of the body should be covered, lack of experience in an activity, and obligations to family.

◆ Build culturally competent staff through ongoing diversity training. One-time training is insufficient, as employees must continue to learn about their community and the people within it.
◆ Develop social activities that can build relationships among community members, especially helpful to those new to the neighborhood such as recent immigrants.
◆ Hire a diverse staff. A customer seeing staff from their same racial or ethnic group can be an opening for groups to feel welcome.

A Muslim family plays cricket in London's Kensington Gardens.
Courtesy of Deb Garrahy.

Obviously, racial and ethnicity issues go beyond what recreation and park professionals are expected to deal with. However, within the total field of intergroup relations, it is essential that leisure-service managers plan programs that will contribute to intergroup understanding and favorable relations. This may be done through community celebrations, holidays, ethnic and folk festivals, friendly sport competition, and a host of other activities. It is also essential that leisure-service managers continue to strive to overcome the long-standing patterns of prejudice and racial discord that linger in many communities today.

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING LEISURE

Socioeconomic status (SES), or *social class*, is a means of classifying people based on their income, education, occupation, and wealth. Although sociologists have developed several labels for the different social classes, there are five common ones: poor, working class, lower middle class, upper middle class, and upper class.

Social class affects leisure in a number of ways. The amount of education and/or the amount of money a person has dictates the amount of free time and discretionary income available for leisure. Traditionally, lower classes are underrepresented in recreation activity participation. It was seen previously that this was particularly true for health and fitness programs. On the other hand, those in higher classes usually have more education and money and look for more refined and prestigious leisure.[58]

In the United States, the poor, the working class, and the lower middle class have been the dominant users of public and nonprofit services. Depending on the agency, these sectors provide programs for all income levels but target the lower and middle classes in particular. Logically, as income increases, so does the ability to pay more for services; thus, the upper class will use commercial services almost exclusively. This could be for a number of reasons. For example, it may be an attitude of "you get what you pay for" where the commercial sector is seen as higher quality. Arguably, this is not an accurate assessment at all because many public and nonprofit agencies offer recreation services that rival commercial agencies. Another reason for using commercial services over the other two sectors may be a prestige or status issue. Status is assigned to such things as exclusive club memberships or exotic travel destinations booked through a travel agency.

Implications for Recreation and Leisure

Although there are several activities that transcend all social classes such as watching television, reading, or socializing, many others could be placed within each social class almost exclusively. For example, yachting, attending the symphony, or having a second home in the Hamptons would most likely be assigned to the upper class, whereas a trip to Disney World or playing golf at a public course, would more likely be activity choices of the middle classes.

Sometimes there are activities that are popular among all classes, but the way in which they are enjoyed differs. Travel is a common activity to all classes. However, the poor and lower class may take short day or overnight trips and stay with family and friends; the middle class may vacation in a popular tourism destination in the United States and stay at a Holiday Inn; whereas the upper class may take an extended cruise, travel abroad, or stay in a luxury hotel where a night's stay is equal to a month's rent for people in the lower classes.

In ancient Greece, leisure and upper classes were supported by the poor, slaves, and women. In some ways, this has not changed in modern society. The leisure of the middle and upper classes is often supported by the poor and working classes. Take tourism, for example: The economically stable classes travel to destinations and enjoy activities where the workers are making minimum wage. In today's economy, minimum wage is below the poverty level. In addition, when an area is tourism dependent, there is a tendency to drive up the cost of living, including housing and food. This makes it difficult for the workers to live in these communities that provide leisure for the middle and upper classes.

Age, gender, sexual orientation, race, and socioeconomic status all have some impact on leisure activity choices, and it is the responsibility of leisure professionals to understand these impacts and provide services that meet the needs of the community. Because it is not feasible for all agencies to provide services to all people, the different segments and agencies must find their niche and work to understand the needs, leisure patterns, and preferences of their intended population so that no group is underrepresented or denied leisure opportunities.

PROGRESS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Although this chapter deals in detail with many of the past limitations that have affected the ages, genders, people of different sexual orientation, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with different socioeconomic status with respect to recreation and leisure, it must also be stressed that immense progress has been made over the past several decades.

While we have seen changes at all age levels, one age group has had a significant impact over the last 20 years. The aging baby boomers and their economic impact have driven leisure-service providers to rethink traditional services. The need for experiences; desire for physical activity, health, and wellness; and the ability to pay have created a whole new array of program opportunities as people age.

Women and people who identify as LGBT are treated today with far greater respect and have achieved impressive levels of public support—including the right to marry for LGBT—and have access to a wide range of recreational opportunities that were not available to them in the past. Furthermore, women and men alike have been more accepted in activities that are stereotypical for the opposite sex. Many disregard past stigmas and choose activities of interest rather than what they "should" choose.

In terms of race, similar gains have been achieved—particularly for African Americans—even though injustices and forms of discrimination continue. In many cities, particularly in such states as Florida, Texas, and California, large Hispanic American populations have begun to achieve economic success and a degree of political power. Agencies increasingly are recognizing this growth and the need to provide specialized services.

Ability to pay for leisure services by individuals and the ability of agencies to fund free programs for low-income people are issues. With the economy the way it is today, many agencies have to generate income to stay in business, even nonprofit and public entities. So, "pay to play" becomes the norm and, in turn, eliminates the poor and working classes. However, great strides have been made by nonprofit and public agencies to offer services to those who cannot afford them. Many agencies offer program scholarships, programs that are free to the public and supported by sponsors or tax dollars, or they seek local, state, and federal grants to pay for much needed programs. Although access to leisure is not equal, and probably never will be, continuous improvements are being made.

Summary

Major influences on recreation and leisure in contemporary society are the sociocultural factors of age, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. This chapter defines these terms and shows how they have affected recreational participation in the past and continue to do so today.

As people age, their leisure preferences and patterns change. Children experience a tremendous amount of growth and try different leisure activities. As people enter and move through adulthood, family has a major influence on leisure participation. In an individual's latter years, physical abilities and social elements are key factors in leisure.

As the chapter notes, women and girls have historically been denied many of the leisure opportunities open to men and boys. However, the feminist movement has succeeded in urging colleges, school systems, and community recreation agencies to provide more support to female participants in a wide range of sports and physical activities. This helps women to develop positive self-images and feelings of empowerment. In addition, many women have overcome barriers to professional advancement in various types of agencies in the leisure-service field. Women are also being admitted to business and social groups that had excluded females in the past.

The status of males with respect to recreation and leisure is also discussed. In the past, many men were pressured to adopt stereotypical "macho" roles in leisure activities. Today, they are being encouraged to play a more open, sensitive, and creative role in their recreational pursuits, as well as in domestic life and their relationships.

The issue of sexual orientation is dealt with as well. LGBT people are increasingly gaining acceptance in the United States and are considered a key demographic for leisure-services providers. Not only are they forming their own social and recreational groups, but commercial recreation agencies and tourism bureaus in particular are targeting this group.

There is rapid change going on in the United States in relation to race and ethnicity. Given that not all forms of discrimination have been erased, it is essential that organized recreation services contribute to positive intergroup relations in community life. To better include all groups, parks and recreation services need to be accessible, affordable, safe, culturally relevant, and welcoming. Involving different groups in the planning of programs is a step in the right direction.

Socioeconomic status plays a powerful role in what leisure opportunities are available to people. There is a major difference in the leisure lives of the poor versus the leisure lives of the upper class; as with most other things in society, the upper class has more access than the poor. However, the public and nonprofit sectors understand their responsibility in providing services to a group of people who have a great need for quality recreation near their homes and at a price they can afford.

Questions for Class Discussion or Essay Examination

1. Select one of the following age groups: children, teens, young adults, middle adults, or older adults. What are this group's special needs for recreation in modern society, and what barriers or problems does it face in the appropriate choice of satisfying leisure activity?

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2. Older adults make up a rapidly growing segment of the population. How has society traditionally considered the aging process and the role of older persons in community life? What new views have developed in recent years? What are the implications of these changes for recreation practitioners working with older persons?

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3. How have women's roles with respect to recreation and leisure differed from those of men, in terms of societal attitudes and constraints, throughout history? How have they changed from the past? As a class, have male and female students analyze and compare their gender-related patterns of leisure interests and involvement.

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4. Although there is still some resistance to considering LGBT people as a minority population, there has been major progress in terms of their legal standing and status in community life. What issues do you perceive as critical in terms of involving gays and lesbians as identifiable groups in community recreation programs? How has this group been targeted by tourism agencies?

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5. In terms of the general cultural scene, members of different racial and ethnic minorities have gained prominence in recent years in film, television, and other artistic or literary areas. What images are generally presented in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, and age?

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6. How do you think race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status interrelate? How is leisure affected by these sociocultural factors?

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7. Although LGBT people are increasingly gaining acceptance in the United States, there are still a large number of people who disagree with alternative sexual orientations. Should public agencies, which are supported with public tax dollars, provide programs for LGBT people? Should these same agencies provide programs specifically targeted at specific ethnic or religious groups such as Muslims?

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8. Define the three categories of leisure constraints. What constraints do LGBT people face? Men? Women?

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9. Differentiate between _race_ and _ethnicity_.

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10. Define social class. Compare and contrast the leisure of the classes.

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