STUDYING FAMILY LEISURE FROM A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

by

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ABSTRACT

Family leisure often occurs in ways that do not result in families accruing the suggested benefits of leisure. This study sought to examine the interactions that occur during family leisure and how such interactions might influence desired outcomes. Research was conducted from a systems perspective that looked at whole family interactions. Methods for this research included creating a literature review based model of family leisure, gathering interview data from three families, creating models for each family's leisure, and running simulations to examine how changes among elements might impact outcomes. This research found some support for interactions in the initial literature review model, but not for the entire model. Rather, results indicated that families may experience unique elements during their leisure, but that the need to negotiate constraints, increase focused interactions, and decrease fragmented interactions were constant among all families in this study. These findings resulted in a simplified model of family leisure. Finally, simulations provided some insight into the influence specific elements may have on family leisure. The study ended with a simplified model of family leisure, recommendations for practitioners, and suggestions for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE

Family leisure is an important component of American family life and is often considered vital to the growth and socialization of children and to overall family cohesion. It is also important for its promotion of healthy childhood development, strong parent-child relationships (Barnett, 1991, Shaw, 1999), cohesion, adaptability, communication (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001), overall family functioning (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003, 2004) and satisfaction with family life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). These benefits can occur during family leisure because, when done well, time spent interacting with family members can provide a means for building individual competence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), enhancing communication, bonding, and creating a sense of equity (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). In addition, many parents report an awareness of the importance of family interactions for socializing children to family values or teaching them about health and fitness (Kleiber, 1999; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Given the benefits of engaging in family leisure, it is unfortunate that many American families report a struggle to find time to participate in, or focus on, family leisure experiences (Gillis, 2001; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). When this happens, the potential for gaining the proposed benefits is likely lost. The problem of not engaging in quality family leisure appears to stem from multiple sources, including increased social

pressures regarding parenting, a lack of time for family leisure, and general multitasking and disengagement during leisure activities (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Such rushed or fragmented leisure may decrease the quality of leisure interactions or contribute to contradictory leisure experiences for family members, as parents and children put much effort into completing work, household chores, self-care, or other care while trying to fit family leisure into their harried lives. Oddly, however, Robinson and Godbey (1999) report that Americans actually have more leisure time than in previous generations, yet the common perception is that of time famine (Gillis, 2001) rather than time abundance.

The problem of a perceived lack of time and increase in perceptions of work among American families stems from several changes in American culture and family life. The nature and structure of American family life has shifted greatly in the past several decades with notable increases of single-parent or dual earner families (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). In either situation there is seldom someone at home to provide childcare, carry out domestic chores, or help in general. This sense of a lack of spousal support can lead to an increased perception of too much to do and not enough time to do it. A feeling of not enough time is especially pronounced for women whose rates of paid employment have increased dramatically, while they are still largely responsible for doing the bulk of household chores (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Lareau, 2003). Women, who tend do the hidden work of family leisure organization (Shaw, 1992), report frequently feeling overworked, stressed, sleep deprived, and unable to accomplish everything required of them (Schor, 1991).

Another reason for a perceived lack of quality family leisure comes from increased social expectations and pressure on both parents to be 'good' parents by being highly visible, active, and involved in their children's lives (Coakley, 2006). Further, families and social groups continue to invent domestic rituals and increase the perceived time required for participation in such rituals, such as family dinner time, bed time, or play time. Such acts serve, at face value, to increase family interactions, yet ironically they increase the perception of not having enough time to complete the acts (Grimes, 2000).

Other research suggests that family leisure time has been both "respaced" and "despaced." Respacialization means family time occurs in nonhousehold settings such as the car, vacation homes, or family friendly resorts. Despacialization means family time can occur digitally through cell phones or electronic communications (Daly, 1996), increasing access to family time, yet also changing the pace and nature of these interactions.

Attempts to create more leisure opportunities have actually led to the unintended consequences of less leisure time. Technology meant to increase leisure time more often serves to speed up interactions and expectations for change. Family members, including children, often feel rushed during their day (Gillis, 2001), and the ability to multitask only adds to a sense that life is speeding up rather than slowing down. Family leisure researchers have noted that in a busy society, "optimal contexts for family communication to regularly occur appear to be increasingly limited" (Smith, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2009, p. 81).

Overall, modern American families spend more time in paid employment, may experience less support at home, feel increased pressure to meet or exceed social expectations of 'good' parenting, and experience family time in respaced or despaced ways. These lifestyle changes have contributed to the perception of time famine and a decline in the quality of family time and interactions. Family leisure, once touted as "one of the few experiences that bring family members together for any significant amount of time," (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 287) often now occurs in ways or environments that feel rushed, fragmented, or distracted. Such experiences may not provide the quality interactions needed to realize the full benefits of family leisure.

A next step for research, then, could be to focus on understanding the overall picture of how and what occurs during family leisure interactions within the context of modern American family life. Such an understanding could then inform researchers, those who work with families, and families themselves, about the structure and function of a whole family system, and provide greater understanding of how patterns of behavior play out in that system.

To date, however, research questions and methods employed to study family leisure have focused on individuals in family settings and have rarely examined the family unit as a whole. This research approach has left gaps in the knowledge of family leisure interactions. Much research has focused on the experiences of one family member or on a dyad within the family. Few studies have examined whole family functioning, and this is not entirely surprising given the methodological difficulties of studying a complex system. Family time, writes Gillis (2001), is "notoriously difficult to measure … because it has a qualitative as well as quantitative dimension" (p. 24). For example, previous

research has focused on the relation between leisure and individual reports of family satisfaction (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003), perceptions of constraints and social support (Brown, Brown, Miller, & Hansen, 2001), and mothers' experiences in family leisure (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994), or has relied on individual census data or self-reports to gauge daily leisure time experiences (Schor, 1991; Robinson & Godbey, 1999). These methods have sought to measure or understand an individual's experiences, or a few isolated variables, rather than whole family functioning and the role leisure plays in such functioning.

In studies that focus on individual experiences of leisure within the family context, research has frequently been conducted using a definition of leisure as an individual experience. When viewed this way, leisure is understood as something a person participates in for individual reasons, and from which individual benefits are accrued. In traditional definitions, leisure occurs when an individual is free from obligation, is intrinsically motivated to participate, and finds the experience personally pleasing or satisfying for its own sake (Kelly, 1983; Neulinger, 1974).

In a family system, however, the traditional individual focused leisure constructs of intrinsic motivation, obligation, and personal pleasure or satisfaction may be influenced by one's roles or responsibilities within that system (Kelly, 1983). These roles and responsibilities are often played out in family leisure experiences, thus changing the nature of the experience. Leisure may no longer be participated in for individual reasons or benefits, but rather experienced as participation in the family system, and thus linked to whole family outcomes. Leisure is experienced relative to one's role in the family system and should not be studied as something separate (Rojek, 1995). Further, family

leisure often occurs in a social setting and is influenced by the context in which it occurs. Participant roles are also influenced by the context, and this can influence the family leisure experience. Thus, context and setting must be considered when trying to understand family leisure experiences. If such experiences involve the entire family as well as the context and setting, traditional methods that isolate experiences, outcomes, or variables are clearly not appropriate for understanding the complex whole.

A more holistic or all-encompassing lens or framework, one that focuses on the overall functioning of a family, including interactions, reciprocity, patterns, and feedback, is necessary for understanding the whole of family leisure. If such leisure is contextual, relational, and social, one way to examine it might be through the use of family systems theory. A derivative of general systems theory, family systems theory is often used by therapists and counselors to better understand the interactions, behaviors, or beliefs of all family members within the context of their family unit (O'Brien, 2005). General systems theory posits that a system is more than the sum of its individual parts and that to know anything about the system, the interactions among the parts must be understood rather than isolating each part for observation (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). Family systems theory also assumes that families are mutually influential and reciprocal in their interactions, and that there is circularity to family interactions rather than linear cause and effect relationships. In noting that families are mutually influential, family systems theorists suggest that each member is also responsible for his or her behaviors, thus removing blame or guilt (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). These reciprocal and interconnected influences shape the family system into a unique whole (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000; Mactavish & Schleien, 2004), and thus should be studied as such.

A systems approach to research is used in many disciplines when a linear approach limits understanding of whole system functioning. For family systems, studying family leisure interactions as a system is a logical extension of previous research. Rather than studying individual experiences of time, leisure, or dyadic or triadic family relationships, a systems perspective provides a way to model and understand the interactions of everyone in the unit. Studying a family as a unit means the interactions, influences, and patterns of behavior among members are examined, and the unit is studied relative to its context. For example, a family systems approach might look at communication, conflict, separateness, connectedness, and family cohesion, and how these interactions shape each member and how each member in turn shapes the unit (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). This research approach to understanding a system also entails multiple methods, such as interviews, questionnaires, and observations, in order to model the system.

Conducting family leisure research from a systems perspective, and incorporating setting, context, feedback, interactions, roles, and changes over time is a shift from previous family leisure research and would be a unique contribution. Past research has often been conducted within one of two frameworks. The first focused on social interactions among family members and the assumed benefits of family leisure, while the second, largely a reaction to the benefits framework, examined family leisure through dominant social structures, ideologies, and roles reproduced in the family, and sought to expose inequalities and oppression (Shaw, 1997). Both frameworks usually have employed one research method, such as questionnaires, time-diaries, or interviews.

Within the interaction or benefits framework, much research has been conducted through quantitative methods, such as examining relationships between leisure and marital satisfaction, (Holman & Jacquart, 1988), communication, (Orthner & Mancini, 1990), benefits to children (Barnett, 1991), and the link between family leisure involvement and family functioning (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003). Although research within this framework often considers the family as a system of social interaction, the research conducted is usually on family dyads rather than the family unit. This framework often assumes that all family members derive similar benefits from family leisure experiences (Daly, 2001). In making such assumptions, research from this paradigmatic perspective tends to ignore or mask the possible conflicts or dissatisfactions within family leisure. The benefits framework also assumes a balance of power, usually between parents, an idea which spawned the next research paradigmatic framework (Shaw, 1997).

Within the second research framework, family leisure has been studied as part of larger social and patriarchal systems, has focused on mothers' experiences of leisure, and has often been conducted employing qualitative methods. Research within this framework has explored the frequently hidden work in mothers' leisure experiences (Shaw, 1992), examined women's ethic of care (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw & Freysinger, 1996), and studied women's perceptions of entitlement and constraint to leisure (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991). Although work within this framework aimed to reveal masked aspects of the previous framework, it has also been critiqued for focusing too much on negative aspects of leisure as well as on women, and not on the experiences of men and children (Shaw, 1997). Either framework is useful for understanding certain

aspects of family leisure; however, each has weaknesses, such as hidden assumptions or masking important concepts.

This dissertation aimed to integrate and extend previous research and thinking by employing a systems approach to create a model of family leisure. Previous research has sought to analyze linear relationships or understand the nature of individual family member experiences. Earlier studies have also considered leisure as an individual experience, providing individual benefits. Using a systems approach, however, this research integrated current family leisure structures, drew on research from related disciplines, and linked families to the world in which they live, to create a visual and written interpretation of a system of family leisure. It was presumed by the researcher that a systems approach to modeling patterns of family behaviors could lead to improved thought processes about the system and improved questions for future research (Weinberg, 1975). Further, creating a model of organized complexity might offer a unique look at the dynamics and changes over time in family leisure.

Therefore, this dissertation addressed the limitations of previous ways of studying family leisure as well as the problem of families not realizing what are commonly hypothesized as the benefits of family leisure. This dissertation was focused on studying the interactions among the important elements that occur during family leisure and was carried out in three steps. First, guided by the literature, the researcher selected the most important elements that occur during family leisure. Second, the researcher created a literature based model of family leisure representing interactions among these elements. Family data were then gathered to amend the model. Finally, the researcher hypothesized and simulated changes that could be made to a system of family leisure in order to

improve the interactions of the elements and their influence on the outcomes. The study was based on the assumption that information learned could be used to suggest changes to family leisure programs or to aid families in therapy to improve their family system's functioning, limit dysfunctional behavior patterns, and improve their chances of achieving more beneficial outcomes from their leisure pursuits.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Population: Family

The purpose of the first section of this chapter is to review various ways families have been conceptualized and defined, and then to describe the definition of family employed in this dissertation.

Family, once conceived of as a standard, homogeneous unit, is anything but. As Broderick (1993) noted, "everyone knows what a family is, yet no one seems to be able to find a definition that is acceptable to everyone" (p. 52). Modern American families come in many sizes and combinations, and with a variety of emotional and social relationships. Most researchers agree there is no single, accurate definition of family, and instead usually construct a definition to suit the purpose of a given study.

Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2004) describe three common orientations to defining families, including structural, psychosocial, and transactional definitions. In a structural definition, families are described by number and as related by blood or legal relationship. The psychosocial or functional perspective of family emphasizes tasks achieved by the entire unit such as taking care of a household, raising children, or providing emotional or tangible support to one another. The third definition emphasizes the transactional nature of families, in which those with intimate emotional relationships create a common sense

of identity including emotional ties and a shared history and future (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2004). Each definition emphasizes one element of family and de-emphasizes another, providing varying views on family.

In a brief look at how family has been defined over the years, researchers have moved from structural to transactional definitions. Early researchers, both inside and outside the leisure field, often defined family based on a governmental definition such as "a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Many researchers then examined an individual or dyad within a family unit and called it 'family' research. For example, a 1964-1971 longitudinal study examining trends in family camping surveyed 'a camper' or a 'camper panel,' and did not indicate if the person surveyed was the head of household, a single-parent, or a family dyad (LaPage & Ragain, 1974). Another example is a 1970 study of family outdoor recreation, for which researchers chose participants by pulling registration cards at a campground and interviewing the mother, father, and oldest child over 12 years of age (West & Merriam, 1970). The researchers noted that this approach of interviewing three family members differed from previous methods that only sought to interview the head of household. As ideas of family continued to change and evolve, defining family became more difficult, as did applying theories or methods when studying families. Researchers eventually moved to definitions based on emotional relationships or the transactional nature of family.

Sociologist Ernest Burgess and psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner both conducted family research and suggested that families were best understood as people who interact with one another and are intertwined with their communities. Burgess (1926/1972) wrote

that a family is a "unity of interacting personalities" that changes, grows, and "has its existence not in any legal conception, nor in any formal contract, but in the interaction of its members" (p. 5). To Burgess, family was defined more by the relationships and interactions of its members, be they positive or negative, and less by structure or bloodlines. This definition of family as a unity of interacting personalities fits well with the ecological paradigm put forth by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in which individuals are embedded in families, families in neighborhoods, neighborhoods in communities, and on and on to include the social, political, and cultural systems in which a family lives. From these views, a family is best thought of as a system of interacting roles, meanings, and relationships, all of which develop and change within the family system, and the systems in which the family is embedded.

A definition emphasizing transactions among members and the family system over the individual is also evident in the leisure literature. Kelly and Kelly (1994) blended structural and transactional definitions in a study examining the intersecting domains of work, life, and family. The authors defined family as "close community – the people with whom you live and /or consider 'family' to encompass the variety in forms of intimate communities and relationships" (Kelly, & Kelly, 1994, p. 254). Orthner and Mancini (1990), in a study about parents, examined parental interaction, marital satisfaction, parental satisfaction with family, and barriers to parent directed leisure. Finally, Zabriskie, who has led the field in much family leisure research, wrote that families may include members who "influence and are influenced by the joint experiences, interrelationships, roles, rules and evolving meanings shared by the family

as a whole" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003, p.165). These authors also called for more research with family as the level of analysis, as opposed to parents or individuals.

Overall, definitions of family have evolved to include relationships among individuals, emotional connections, transactions, shared identity, and the family as embedded within its environment. From a systems perspective, a family is "distinguished by its parts together with their relationships, and it behaves as a whole, not as an aggregate," (Ackerman, 1984, p. 16) and any action of one family member must necessarily influence other members. This supports the notion of a family as a system, and the use of general systems theory for studying this whole.

Finally, other scholars suggest that family researchers should define family as best suits the needs of their research. Definitions for family should have a "sound, conceptual reason, for it will have methodological, statistical, and interpretive consequences" (Copeland & White, 1991, p. 4). This study created models of family leisure that are intended to increase the understanding of the interactions among family members during family leisure experiences. The research examined and gained insight into how people with intimate and emotional bonds who share a life space interact within their leisure experiences. Thus, this study took a transactional approach, and defined family as any unit of interacting people who have a shared history and life together, who share personal and emotional relationships, and who define themselves as a family.

Importance of Family Leisure

Family, as a basic sociological unit of society, is considered instrumental in "shaping the kind of person one becomes" (Davey & Paolucci, 1980, p.43), and leisure

within the family is considered vital to the quality of life for all members of a family unit (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Leisure activity can help build family and social relationships and foster individual growth (Beck & Arnold, 2009) as well as socialize children to many lifelong behaviors (Kleiber, 1999). In American culture and society, much emphasis is put on family leisure as a traditionally accepted and necessary means for guiding the growth and development of children and supporting healthy family functioning. Family leisure activities are often promoted by churches, school systems, the government, and even advertisers or tourism marketers as a fun and healthy way to spend time together. As a socially accepted or encouraged behavior, it is not surprising that among married couples, or among parents and children, the most common social context for spending leisure time is with the family (Kelly, 1983; Shaw, 1997).

Family leisure is important for both parents and children as a means to foster healthy development, strong parent child relationships (Barnett, 1991; Shaw, 1999) and to aid in the development of a social identity. Kelly (1993) noted that family leisure is a social space for parents and children to develop relationships, autonomy and independence. During parent child play in family leisure, Ginsburg (2007) noted that parents may gain an understanding of their child's interests and viewpoints, while children can experience "appropriate, affective relationships with loving and consistent caregivers" (p.183). Family leisure can also provide opportunities for parents to impart values, teach lessons, or model behaviors (Soubhi, Potvin, & Paradis, 2004).

Problems Associated with Family Leisure

However, family leisure often does not occur in the traditional or idealized ways parents think it could or should, and thus families may not experience opportunities for the hypothesized benefits. Parents often report an awareness that family leisure is important, and that adequate time and high quality interactions are necessary for proper child development (Bianchi, 2000; Daly, 1996; DeVault, 2000; Milkie et al., 2004). Parents also report an awareness of the importance of family interactions for socializing children to family values or teaching them about health and fitness (Kleiber, 1999; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). But many parents struggle to find time to engage in, or focus on, family leisure experiences (Gillis, 2001; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004).

What Constitutes Family Leisure

Exactly what constitutes family leisure, quality leisure interactions, or quality family time is subject to debate. For measurement purposes, several researchers have defined family leisure as an amount of time spent in leisure activities. In analyzing time use studies of Australian residents, Bittman and Wajcman (2004) defined 'pure' leisure as time during which only one leisure activity was engaged in and considered it the highest quality leisure. Lesser quality leisure was defined as leisure occurring while doing something else or while something else was going on in the background. These authors also considered interrupted or fragmented leisure episodes to be of a lower quality, noting that fragmented leisure was less relaxing than consistent leisure episodes. As an example, another study noted that when the television was on in a room in which parents and children were playing, parents had less verbal interaction with their children

and were less responsive to their children's requests for attention (Kirkorian, Pempek, Murphy, Schmidt, & Anderson, 2009).

Daly (2001) noted that 'family time,' as defined by researchers, often does not include the idiosyncratic ideas held by family members, and that the term is more descriptive and prescriptive, suggesting how people ought to behave. The term also suggests that everyone in the family experiences family time in the same way, is desirable to all members, and provides equal benefits for all. Instead, Daly found that when parents talked about family leisure benefits or experiences, they were referring to activities done largely for the sake of children, and as a means to create and share memories, share a positive experience, and that, overall, parents valued unscheduled and spontaneous time together. Children in this study talked about the "whole family having fun together" (Daly, 2001, p**.** 288) as what made up family time, whether through a specific activity or during free or down time. Many children talked about being together as of greater importance than an actual activity. Finally, in this study, parents spoke frequently about not having enough leisure or family time and feeling guilty for taking personal leisure over family time.

Time Compression

Perceptions of time famine are commonplace in American families, and often a source of daily stress. However, it is interesting to note that an actual decrease in leisure or discretionary time is not a common problem. Time-diary studies indicate that family members may have more leisure time than in previous generations (Robinson & Godbey, 1999), and are able to spend more time together (Bianchi, 2000), yet many families still

report a perception of time famine (Gillis, 2001) rather than time abundance. This perception may stem from several sources, such as feelings of social pressure about parenting, feelings of rushing through daily life, or obligations to complete many daily tasks.

Social Pressure

A sense of duty or obligation to be what society considers a 'good' parent has increased social pressure for both parents to be highly active and visible in childrearing (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). To achieve this status, parents invent new ways to be together and new domestic rituals to increase the quantity of family interactions and reach the status of 'good' parents. Ironically, when parents try to improve family leisure by adding more interactions, the unintended consequence is just the opposite; family members have increased time and activity demands, thus increasing the perception of time pressure or famine (Grimes, 2000).

A sense of a rushed or hurried pace of life among American families also adds to perceptions of time famine. One source of such rushing could be the increase of both dual-earner and single-parent households. An increase in dual-earner households is largely attributed to the number of women entering the workforce full time, while the increase in single parents is attributed to rising divorce rates (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). For either group, childcare, domestic chores, or general help are hard to carry out. For women, especially, their return to work has not been coupled with a decrease in household chores or childcare expectations, and this gendered distribution of unpaid labor generally increases women's sense of time pressure (Hochschild, 1989; Jacobs & Gerson,

2004). Such changes at home can create a constant sense of urgency to complete paid work, child care, and find time for family or personal leisure. To accomplish everything, many single and dual-earner parents report multitasking, rushing through chores or activities, considering chores as leisure, or engaging in group leisure, all of which leave parents with a general sense of disengagement from daily activities (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Children also report a sense of living at a hurried pace and feeling rushed throughout their day (Grimes, 2000), and report their time as intensified, full of adult intrusions, and with an exposure to adult culture (Arendell, 2001).

Also contributing to a sense of time pressure are advances in technology and parents' ability to complete more tasks in less time and complete multiple tasks at once. As Schor (1991) noted in *The Overworked American,* technological advances both decreased time spent on some chores yet increased time on others. For example, the advent of the home washing machine increased the speed with which housewives could do laundry, but also increased social standards for cleanliness, requiring women to do laundry more often (Schor, 1991). Women, especially, appear to experience time compression as they attempt to work what is called a 'second shift' and try to fit household chores, childcare, and personal time into a 24-hour day (Hochschild, 1989). In doing so, women often experience a fragmented and lower quality of leisure than do men, due to interruptions by children or housework (Wajcman, 2008). For both parents, a sense of time acceleration may occur as parents add more tasks to complete in a given day or try to schedule activities with multiple people (thus adding to time disorganization) or by multitasking and thus increasing the intensity of each moment (Southerton & Tomlinson,

2005). Further, new technology has enabled activity to be both respaced, occurring in areas other than home, and despaced, by occurring digitally (Daly, 1996). While such despacing increases family members' access to communication, it also changes the nature and pace of interactions. Family leisure researchers have noted that in a busy society "optimal contexts for family communication to regularly occur appear to be increasingly limited" (Smith, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2009, p. 81).

Overall, family members report a sense of obligation to engage in activities high in both quality and quantity, as well as a sense of time pressure to complete paid work, household chores, and find time for personal and family leisure activities. Family leisure that is rushed, fragmented, or not a quality interaction may not provide the opportunities for family members to realize the potential benefits of leisure interactions.

A good question for researchers, then, would be to inquire about the constructs underlying such family leisure experiences as they occur within the context of modern American family life. Such an exploration of the subsystems of family leisure experiences could then inform researchers, those who work with families, and families themselves, as to how people experience family leisure in their life contexts, and why certain outcomes may or may not be achieved. But before addressing this research topic more fully, a review of previous family leisure research findings is warranted.

Family Leisure Research

As Carisse (1975) noted, the concept of family leisure has often been defined by taking the definition of individual leisure and tacking on descriptors about the setting or group of people. Carisse wrote that, "If we add the qualification 'family' to the word

leisure we get the added connotation of 'doing things together'" (p. 191). In defining family leisure in terms of individual leisure, this suggests that the assumptions of individual leisure apply to family leisure – such as ideas of choice, freedom from obligation, intrinsic motivation, or leisure as nonwork time. However, as family leisure occurs in a social context in which free choice or freedom from obligation is relative, research based on ideas of individual experiences may not be an accurate portrayal of family leisure. Shaw (1997) also noted that, despite the frequency of the phrase 'family leisure' in research, scholars did not agree exactly as to the meaning of the term. Shaw notes two of the same problems addressed in this literature review; that of defining family, and that of defining leisure within the family. She questions whether using broad and traditional definitions of family and leisure may imply "not only that all family members are involved in the same activity, but also that they all experience the situation subjectively as leisure" (Shaw, 1997, p. 99). Further, Shaw asks if the term implies that all "family leisure activities are mutually enjoyable, valued and satisfying?" (p.99). Shaw notes that researchers often seem to work from this general assumption, which can influence the direction of research questions.

One way to more closely examine various conceptions of leisure, and how families have been integrated into earlier definitions, is to examine how previous researchers thought about the problem of applying individual definitions to all leisure groups. Early in leisure research, several prominent scholars created leisure typologies or paradigms to better describe leisure based on various social contexts in which leisure may occur. These typologies also provide more specific ideas about family leisure and thus warrant reviewing here.

Leisure Typologies

A more informative way to understand leisure in general and family leisure specifically is through the use of leisure typologies, which attempt to explain the differences among a variety of leisure experiences. These typologies help clarify types of leisure, the relation between leisure and social roles, and, specifically when thinking about family leisure, the paradoxical nature of obligation, loss of choice, and satisfaction with family leisure.

Kelly (1982) defined leisure as immediate experience, something unique for its existential properties of free choice or an activity chosen primarily for its own sake. He created a paradigm explaining how leisure may be experienced in several social contexts. His paradigm includes unconditional, recuperative, relational, and role-determined leisure. Of these, role-determined leisure is most like family leisure as it is characterized by feelings of obligation, and the possibility of negative consequences to the person or her or his relationships should the role not be fulfilled.

Overall, Kelly (1983) thought that family and leisure were paradoxical, as it is difficult to imagine how one could have leisure in the freest and purest sense of the term when involved with one of the most constraining roles in society. However, Kelly suggested that for parents, family leisure may be satisfying if the role of parent is freely chosen and intrinsically motivated. In other words, a parent perceives freedom in choosing to relinquish other freedoms and enters a role with constraints or social and behavioral norms. Thus, family leisure may be satisfying to the extent a parent believes he or she is fulfilling a chosen role. In this way, family leisure is also more satisfying for its outcomes than the activities themselves (Kelly, 1978).

Gunter and Gunter (1980) present another paradigm useful for understanding individual and family leisure. Their premise is that leisure is a state of mind and is more than just unobligated time. They suggest leisure occurs when a person has an opportunity for choice and freedom, a positive state of mind, a mental space for self-improvement or self-knowledge, the opportunity to express free will, or a state of relaxation. The Gunters separated leisure types into four quadrants, and located family leisure in the institutional quadrant along with work, religion, and social movements. Experiences in this quadrant are characterized by moderate to high engagement, decision-making abilities, and pleasure, but there is little choice regarding time and structure. Engagement might be high, but choices and freedom are constrained by role. Similar to Kelly, the Gunters note that experiences in this quadrant are somewhat paradoxical as it seems contradictory to have high engagement and low freedom. Yet also similar to Kelly, the Gunters note if someone chooses to participate in an institution and role with reduced choices, that person may also be more accepting of the loss of personal time, self-exploration, or free will (1980).

Finally, Neulinger's (1981) leisure paradigm includes as its primary dimension an element of perceived freedom in leisure, or a state in which a person participates in an activity by his or her own choosing. Neulinger reiterates that perceived freedom is the only condition for leisure, and that it can be measured on a continuum from high (total freedom) to low (constraints). For parents, Neulinger wrote that acceptance of the role of parent was the crux of experiencing leisure or not. He notes, "to the degree that a housewife accepts certain role obligations (which can be considered the equivalent of a job), it is meaningful to define some periods of her day as free time in relation to those

obligations" (Neulinger, 1981, p. 143). To Neulinger, leisure is subjective and relative to the person's state of mind, beliefs about an activity, and the activity in relation to what else the person does in life.

Overall, these typologies provide an explanation of how leisure experiences can differ in various social settings. Specifically for family leisure, these typologies indicate a loss of freedom of choice, and an increase in obligation when engaged in family leisure. The typologies also indicate that freedom in family leisure is relative to one's role as a family member. Freedom of choice is constrained, but the constraint is self-imposed as the adults choose to enter and participate in a role upon becoming a parent. Freedom in leisure is then relative to their life roles. For children, leisure choices may also be constrained, not by choice but by the child's life setting. These differences in parent and child experiences in family leisure are explored later in the literature review.

Family Leisure as Activity

In early family leisure research, another way to examine family leisure was by describing activities in which families engaged. For example, a 1959 study examined the leisure interests of more than 600 families, each with eight or more children, and grouped recreation interests into categories such as club participation and home activities. This study reported statistically significant correlations between club participation and number of magazines in the home, family member health, and religious practices (Amatora, 1959). Later studies examined family demographics and participation, such as the effect of family life cycle on leisure behaviors. Landon and Locander (1979) suggested that family life cycle was a useful independent variable for studying family leisure as it

provided a way to analyze potential recreation needs among what they considered to be a homogenous population.

Witt and Goodale (1981) studied family leisure and the relation of barriers to leisure in the family life cycle. The authors suggested that family leisure can provide a buffer during family life or relational changes, but that barriers such as time, money, lack of skills or motivation may prevent a family from engaging in leisure. Witt and Goodale suggested that the influence of leisure barriers changes during the family life cycle and that future research should examine families who successfully navigate life cycle changes and those who do not. Finally, Sessoms (1963) reviewed the literature and found generalizations such as ideas that having children limited travel to recreation but increased participation in family activities, especially those outdoors, near the family home, or those considered play. In summarizing his review, Sessoms called for an increase in large sample collection and use of leisure theory in research. Overall, most early studies used survey research methods to describe the habits of white, middle class respondents, offered findings based on correlations, and made recommendations for future research. Descriptive studies reported what family leisure activities were participated in, but not the underlying motivations, the expectations, or potential outcomes.

Family Leisure as Beneficial

The next phase of leisure research, and one still prevalent today, examined what researchers assumed to be the benefits of family leisure interactions. Carisse (1975) suggested that the assumption that family leisure provides benefits comes from a Western

ideology that family time is highly valued and that family interaction will necessarily bring more cohesion to the unit. Benefits, then, can be viewed as an output or product of family leisure. Studies in this vein examined correlations between family leisure and variables such as family functioning, bonding, cohesion, or relationship development. For example, West and Merriam (1970) surveyed families at a state park and found moderate support for a positive correlation between family recreation and family cohesion. Similarly, exploring the benefits of leisure for the family, Orthner (1975) studied communication and interaction and suggested these elements could reinforce family cohesion. Orthner and Mancini (1990) also noted that "shared leisure experiences and common leisure values can have positive consequences for family interaction and commitment" (1985, p. 133). For families, Shaw (2000) found that parents feel leisure provides many benefits, such as fun, enjoyment, improved communication, and an opportunity to teach morals or values. Mactavish and Schleien (1998) also found the benefits of family leisure could extend to the whole family more so than just the couple alone and that in families with a child with a disability, leisure could facilitate skill, interest, and self-development, and could serve as a long-term social outlet. Finally, in the psychology, child development, and therapeutic literature there is growing evidence that family leisure activities, when done together and when the child can choose the activity, are an important way to increase family attachment or bonding. The most effective activities to build love and trust are often novel leisure activities.

Focusing on family dyads, other researchers examined parent-child or marital rapport and found that leisure was instrumental in fostering healthy relationships. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that leisure between children and adults provides an

opportunity for children to experience involvement and care, which are important for healthy physiological, mental, emotional, social, and moral development. Many researchers have followed up on this idea, suggesting that leisure is a key component to promoting healthy marital or parent-child relationships (Couchman, 1982) and that leisure, overall, can promote healthy childhood development and strong relationships (Barnett, 1991; Shaw, 1999).

Other researchers focusing on marital satisfaction through family leisure have found a variety of results. Holman and Jacquart (1988) suggested that high perceived communication among couples offers "at best no association with, and at worst a negative association with, marital satisfaction," (p. 76). They also noted that highly stressed wives may find joint leisure as a better way to deal with stressful events than do husbands. Crawford and Godbey (1987) noted that "leisure is an important source of both family cohesion and conflict" (p.119), and suggested that benefits can stem from a variety of family leisure experiences. Finally, starting a long line of inquiry into family leisure and family functioning, Orthner and Mancini (1990) examined the level of overall perceived benefits in family leisure and found support for a positive relationship between family leisure and family functioning. This line of inquiry continues to be pursued today.

One of the most prolific researchers studying the benefits of family leisure is Zabriskie, who, along with his colleagues, has repeatedly found a positive relationship between family leisure involvement and family functioning (Zabriskie, 2000, 2001; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003), and between family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009). Further, Zabriskie and his colleagues have studied this relationship in a variety of

family types, and found support for the same relationship in families with a child with disabilities (Dodd, Zabriskie, Widmer, & Eggett, 2009), families with transracial adoptive children (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003), Mexican-American families (Christenson, Zabriskie, Eggett, & Freeman, 2006), and single-parent families (Smith, Taylor, Hill, & Zabriskie, 2004). Zabriskie and his colleagues also found that religiosity and core family leisure activities may contribute to family functioning (Agate, Zabriskie, and Eggett, 2007). Along similar lines, Aslan (2009) studied Turkish families and found a relationship between family leisure involvement and family satisfaction. She noted that in a rapidly changing society such as Turkey, leisure may aid families in on-going cultural and social transitions from a rural, patriarchal society to a more modern and urbanized society. Finally, Hornberger, Zabriskie, and Freeman (2010) found that family leisure in single-parent families was scarcer than in dual-parent families, but that overall, core and balance activities were related to family cohesion and adaptability.

Most of the aforementioned studies used and found support for Zabriskie's core and balance model of family functioning. This model is based on Olson's Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (1993), Kelly's (1999) idea of a need for core plus balance leisure activities, and Iso-Ahola's (1989) idea of the need for both stability and change in leisure activities. The core and balance model posits that including both core (everyday activities) and balance (novel activities) into the family leisure repertoire can help families gain skills needed to improve family functioning, cohesion, and adaptability, and that satisfaction with such family leisure can increase satisfaction with family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009). The quantitative measurement scales used for the majority of these studies include the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP)

and the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scales (FACES). The FLAP measures family involvement in core and balance activities and FACES measures perceptions of cohesion, adaptability, or functioning (Dodd, Zabriskie, Widmer, & Eggett, 2009). These scales are used to collect quantitative data from parents and children, and data are analyzed at the child, parent, and whole family level to draw inferences about family leisure and family functioning. While these studies provide useful information about the correlations between leisure involvement and family functioning, the studies quantify family leisure without much consideration for subjective experiences, and often aggregate individual scores into whole family scores and make inferences at the family level.

Family Leisure and the Feminist Paradigm

Shortly after the wave of studies that were focused largely on the benefits of family leisure, researchers (mostly female) began to explore women's experiences in family leisure within a feminist paradigm. They examined how dominant social structures, ideologies, or roles were reproduced through family leisure experiences. This approach sought to expose inequalities or oppression within the family system (Shaw, 1997). Research within this feminist paradigm was conducted from a qualitative perspective because of a desire to hear women's voices, and as a reaction to the male-dominated, quantitative studies of the past (Deem, 1986). This line of research provided concrete examples of Kelly's role-determined leisure and the Gunters' institutional leisure, in which participants, especially women, were bound by their role or social obligations to participate in family leisure. Researchers began to question the assumption

that leisure was experienced in a similar way or had similar meanings for all participants (Shaw, 1997). From these studies, it became evident that women did not always enjoy family leisure, but instead often experienced it as work (Shaw, 1992).

Studies in this feminist vein revolved around two themes: leisure constraints, and the differences between women's and men's experiences in family leisure. For example, several researchers examined various ways mothers may experience constraints to leisure because of their role in the family. Brown, Brown, Miller, and Hansen (2001) found that practical demands and ideologies of mothering influenced how mothers prioritized their time, often putting the needs of others first, thus constraining the mother's own leisure time. The women in this study often worked for others to the point of depleting their own energy and monetary resources, creating yet another constraint to personal leisure. One way women in this study negotiated leisure constraints was with partner support or greater socio-economic status. The authors suggest that perhaps women in paid employment have a greater sense of entitlement to leisure, as they negotiate household and childcare chores from a stronger economic base.

Bialeschki and Michener (1994) found several themes in their study of women's leisure and the transition within motherhood. They found that women often suspended personal leisure in order to focus on others and that women often mothered from socialized gender roles and thus were limited in the extent to which they could experience leisure. The women experienced a greater sense of obligation to others and less time for personal leisure. The authors also noted that many women talked about an ethic of care as both driving their need to serve others and their desire to care for themselves. In this way, an ethic of care was seen as both constraining and empowering.

Similarly, Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) examined perceptions of entitlement to leisure and found that while women saw personal leisure as important in their lives, they often did not make leisure a priority. While the women felt entitled to their own leisure, they were also committed to their role of spouse or mother. Such roles limited their choices, and confirmed for the authors what previous studies had noted; that freedom from role constraint is important to women's leisure, as is a personal or subjective definition or conceptualization of leisure.

Studies examining the differences between men's and women's experiences of leisure are also present in feminist leisure research. Miller and Brown (2005) noted that men more often had a sense of entitlement to leisure than women and that women were more likely to justify their personal leisure by noting the benefits their leisure provided to the whole family, rather than just themselves. This seemed to help women minimize feelings of guilt for taking personal leisure. Finally, this article suggested that "assuming that families experience leisure together with all members achieving equal levels of satisfaction may be a fallacy" (Miller & Brown, 2005, p. 416).

Freysinger (1994) examined sex differences in how mothers and fathers experience leisure with their children and suggested that mothers often do not perceive time caring for their children as leisure, whereas fathers often do. This could be attributed to a mother's expected role of caretaker, thus turning childcare into work, and then emphasizing the lack of choice mothers have about childcare, as it becomes an expectation, obligation, and duty. This supports the body of literature suggesting that women's leisure is more constrained than men's; in short, the freedom from or freedom to in leisure does not often apply to mothers. Freysinger's study also notes that while

some suggest leisure can be satisfying despite, or because of, constraints, women's "positive psychological outcomes" when engaged in leisure with children may be more limited than men's (Freysinger, 1994, p. 222).

Overall, many studies have noted the unequal roles mothers and fathers fulfill in family leisure. Mothers do more of the preparation, facilitation, and work in family leisure (Bella, 1990; Deem, 1986; Shaw, 1992) and often view family leisure as work, caretaking, or a chore instead of something fun or enjoyable (Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008, p. 40). These studies lend support to the idea of family leisure as contradictory, but do not state that such work-in-leisure experiences are unsatisfactory. In fact, some women may experience greater satisfaction in providing service to others, or by fulfilling an ethic of care to their family members and themselves (Schwab, 2010).

Another perspective on women's experiences in family leisure was suggested by Freeman, Palmer, and Baker (2006) who reported that women from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints felt very fulfilled by their mothering role, and also were able to call on their ethic of care to find a sense of entitlement to personal leisure. However, the authors note that these women may have had a different perspective of mothering or ethic of care due to their cultural conditioning and religious background. The women in the study also had educational and economic advantages that enabled them to have more choices and freedom, which may have contributed to a greater sense of entitlement to leisure. The authors first conclude that the assumption that everyone wants personal leisure may not be valid, as these women were very satisfied with providing for others and with their own often constrained leisure, and second, that examining a person's place in life and social context are important to understanding entitlement to leisure. Finally,

these authors challenge the notion that when people act in "accordance with the gendered norms of their culture, they are by default acting out of a position of oppression" (p. 219). Feelings of fulfillment for these women empowered them to later feel entitled to leisure rather than oppressed.

Overall, research from a feminist perspective shed light on the changing role of women in the family. It illustrated the power of cultural ideologies and perceptions of social expectations, as well as introduced the idea that family leisure cannot be assumed to be beneficial for everyone or satisfying for the same reasons. However, in taking a feminist viewpoint, this research often worked from an assumption of oppression. After a decade of feminist research, authors have suggested that perhaps a one-size-fits-all feminist approach to leisure was not appropriate and many types or approaches to feminism may be needed to understand women's experiences (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996). Similarly, Shaw (1997) urged researchers to "not fall prey to paradigmatic determinism" (p. 109) assuming there is one reality of family life, assuming positive interactions, or assuming oppression. Instead, Shaw encouraged a multi-paradigmatic approach, which would lead to diversity in research questions, methods, and a broader understanding of family leisure.

Family Leisure as Divergent, Purposive, and Fragmented

The next line of family leisure inquiry examined whether families have leisure at all in the traditionally conceived manner, that is, to what extent is family leisure intrinsically motivated and freely chosen. Research from this perspective indicates that in many families, members experience leisure in very different ways, and for parents,

leisure is more likely to be purpose-driven rather than intrinsically motivated (Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

An important study from this perspective was that of Larson, Gillman, and Richards (1997) who used an experience sampling method to study affect, freedom, and motivation of mothers, fathers, and one child at different times during the day. The authors concluded that each member of the triad had very different experiences during their shared family leisure, so different that at any moment together, researchers noted there was no correlation between their subjective states.

Later, Shaw and Dawson (2001) noted that family leisure was both made up of divergent experiences and divergent expectations or desired outcomes. These authors found that parents reported choosing family leisure for reasons of purposiveness, such as a desire to educate children, teach values, or provide opportunities for social bonding or development. Shaw (2008) also reported that parents spend more time planning and organizing family leisure specifically so that it has value for children. Researchers began to question whether family leisure was leisure at all, as in freely chosen and intrinsically motivated, or if family leisure was chosen for a specific outcome.

A related idea is that of a concerted cultivation approach to family leisure, in which parents carefully choose activities because of a perceived educational or developmental value for children, and leave less time for spontaneous or unsupervised play (Lareau, 2003). Children are often considered projects for which parents "energetically manage and structure their offsprings' time and activities" (Arendell, 2001, p. 166). If leisure is structured around children's needs, one wonders if family leisure –

activities in which everyone participates - even exists. Parents appear to be more often on the sidelines or in the background, rather than participating.

Also of interest regarding purposive leisure or divergent experience is how parents and children communicate meanings or leisure value. Studies indicate that there is a gap between the explicit and implicit messages parents send and the messages children receive. For example, parents in Shannon's (2006) study were perceived by their children as controlling resources or actively supporting structured activities and thus more clearly valuing such activities over unstructured time. The children, in turn, usually placed similar value on activities their parents valued, but also reported valuing free time more so than parents. In another study about communicating importance and purpose, Shannon and Shaw (2008) found that mothers explicitly supported their daughter's leisure activities with both behavioral and communication strategies. Mothers supported their daughter's development of skills in leisure pursuits, especially skills that could later be used for employment, as well as explained the perceived value of leisure activities, and the role of leisure in a fulfilling life. However, by supporting their daughters and not participating in their own leisure, mothers also sent the message that a mother's role was to support, not participate. For one family, then, the same activities can have different implicit and explicit meanings and value.

Overall, family leisure is often chosen for reasons parents believe will provide an educational or lifelong benefit for their children. Activities are chosen less often for the enjoyment or leisure of parents. Thus, family leisure is rarely leisure for the entire family.

Fragmented Leisure

Finally, amid the shrinking gender gap and increased instructional or purposive leisure, some researchers have gone back to the roots of studying family leisure to examine demography and descriptions of what families do in their spare time. Sociologists have suggested that more families report their daily lives as rushed, full of multitasking, (Wajcman, 2008) and rarely report times when all members are together at the same time. In one time-use study of California families, parents reported frequently feeling rushed or as though they rarely had enough time to complete paid employment, household chores, and childcare, let alone find time for personal or family leisure (Beck & Arnold, 2009). This study, measuring activity in 10-minute increments, noted regular occurrences of fragmented leisure, or short leisure episodes interrupted either by other activities, chores, or childcare responsibilities. This was observed more often for mothers than fathers.

Other studies have noted that parents report an increase in multitasking during family leisure, rushing through activities, or participation in group leisure, which may or may not contain family interactions (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). If parents hold on to an idea of leisure as unobligated or free time, in which they should enjoy activities, then much of their family time will not constitute leisure. This perception can perpetuate the feeling that leisure time is in short supply, and that the shortage is not going away. Parents may ask themselves if family leisure even exists.

However, other studies report that while parents may work more and spend less time at home, their quality of leisure interactions has increased. This may be due to either

more focused interactions when they do occur, or a decrease in time spent on household chores, personal care or leisure, resulting in more time with family. In one study, parents reported more positive and fewer negative interactions with children on days when the parent worked longer hours (Bass, Butler, Grzywacz, & Linney, 2009). The authors suggest this could be because parents and children missed one another and thus were happy to see each other on those days, and engaged in positive interaction. These same authors also reported, similar to Such's (2006) findings, that men considered their time with children to be leisure time whereas women construed it as childcare, and further, women's time spent in work was associated with more positive interactions for fathers.

New Fatherhood

While women have traditionally been considered children's primary caretakers, recent research indicates that fathers are beginning to spend more time than they used to involved in daily care or play with their children, largely due to an increase in women returning to paid employment (Eggebeen, 2002; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Delamere, & Havitz, 2008). Yet men's changing roles have not garnered much attention in the literature (Harrington, 2006). Recently, however, scholars have noted that by ignoring fathers, the implication is that the role they play, be it playmate or caretaker, is less important than that of mothers. This is odd, Kay (2006) wrote, as fathers likely spend more time in leisure and recreation activities with their children than do mothers. Studying fathers can provide a window into the contributions fathers make to their child's growth and development, often through purposive leisure, as well as the contributions fathers make to overall family functioning (Eggebeen, 2002; Kay, 2006).

The first significant effort to examine the role of fathers in family leisure was a 2006 edition of *Leisure Studies*. In reviewing relevant fatherhood literature, Kay (2006) wrote that fathers and fatherhood should be given due consideration in gender analyses of family leisure, just as a mother's role has been considered. In the *Leisure Studies* special issue, Such opened the 2006 dialogue about fatherhood with a look at fathers in dual-earner families and men's and women's differing experiences of child rearing. Such noted that men's time with children was often construed as leisure time, or 'being with' children, whereas women's time with children was considered caretaking, 'being there,' or as work. Men placed high value on time with children and considered it more leisure-like because it was often personally chosen and relatively 'free' from a sense of work or obligation. Coakley (2006) supported these ideas noting that a 'new fatherhood profile' is coming to light, in which fathers show an increase in participation in childrearing and household chores; however, the man's participation is still more often noted as 'fun' or a leisure-type activity.

Several studies have examined sport and leisure as a place for fathering to occur (Harrington, 2006), and social expectations surrounding parenting and youth sports (Coakley, 2006). While youth sport is more participatory for children, fathers seem to actively participate by coaching their children, practicing together, or watching and cheering. Fathers also report youth sport participation to be purposive leisure in that they are aware of the benefits of such participation for the child. Harrington (2006), studying fathers in Australia, noted that fathers felt sport was something they could do and talk about comfortably, and spoke of sport as a place for instilling values and social skills, and as a way to show support for their children. Fathers also noted their limited amount of

time with their children, sometimes due to work schedules, and a desire to communicate, share, teach values, and bond with their children when they could. Sport provided a means of sharing such experiences.

Overall, fathers are beginning to play a more prominent role in family leisure. While still not the same quality or quantity of experience as mothers, their role is changing. These shifts in fathering support the idea that all family members do not experience family time in the same way, that parents often perceive role obligations in parenting, and parents often make their personal leisure relational to others. These ideas of increased father participation also indicate the need to consider the whole family, and not just mothers and children or couples when examining the interactions, reciprocal influences, and outcomes of family leisure.

Up to this point, the literature review has served to review relevant family leisure literature and make the case that, while family leisure may have purported benefits and be intentional on the part of many parents, family leisure is often not experienced the same by all family members, in consistent increments, as equal in work or enjoyment, or provide benefits for everyone. Role inequality, differing expectations, and differing experiences in family leisure, plus the time-compressed pace of daily life all serve to influence family interaction and contribute to the inherently contradictory nature of what is called family leisure.

While previous research has sought to understand the reasons why family leisure may provide benefits, or how these benefits accrue, there are still more questions as to how this is accomplished in family leisure experiences, given the previous ideas of unequal, varied experiences, and time compression. Family units do not experience

leisure or accrue benefits the same way individuals do, and should not be assumed as such, or studied that way. Many family leisure studies have examined family leisure as an individual construct and have sought to understand individual or sometimes dyadic experiences. A shift in the framing of family leisure research questions could provide new ideas and explanations for what family leisure is, the various ways members may interact and experience family leisure, and help explain these influences on family leisure's hypothesized benefits.

Paradigm Limits

Paradigms are useful for helping to understand ideas, but they can also limit understanding. Shaw (1997) noted that in family leisure research, both the benefits and oppression paradigms may ignore certain aspects of family leisure. The benefits paradigm seems to assume that what is good for one person is good for all family members (Shaw, 1997). It assumes that benefits for the whole are applicable to the individual and vice versa. This approach often ignores any negative effects of family leisure, instead offering constructs such as 'family time' or 'quality time,' to "reflect a hegemonic view of family leisure and family time as highly beneficial to family functioning and parent-child relationships" (Hilbrecht et al., 2008, p. 543).

The oppression-based framework examines family leisure from a feminist perspective that women are oppressed in a patriarchal system. Feminist researchers support this framework, stating that this approach seeks to "set the study of leisure firmly in the context of women's oppression and gender relations and the concern to bring about a positive change in the social position of women" (Deem, 1986, p. 7). However,

assuming that mothers necessarily feel oppressed may not be an accurate assumption. Freeman, Palmer, and Baker (2006) found that several mothers felt satisfied with their personal leisure time and felt fulfilled in living out their self-definition of mother.

Shaw (1997) wrote that it might be best to accept the idea of family leisure as inherently contradictory. Paradigms are meant to offer one way of understanding the world, and in doing so, they necessarily leave out other views. In family leisure, no single paradigm or methodology will ever explain the experiences, motivations, perceived freedoms, participation levels, roles, power structures, benefits or outcomes experienced by each family member in the group. Family members are likely going to have differing experiences in the same leisure activity, so trying to understand a family unit's leisure experience as one concept may be pointless.

Shaw (1997) suggests that engaging in family leisure research from a multi-paradigmatic framework would be most beneficial for understanding such a complex and contradictory concept. For example, there might be a paradigm that is neither feminist nor patriarchal, or one that does not assume benefits or constraints.

As paradigms tend to guide research questions, the benefits and oppression paradigms have produced research that explores relationships, benefits, or feminist viewpoints in women's leisure. Using other viewpoints to explore a topic can lead to asking alternate questions and refocusing attention on ways in which the material is used (Dustin, 1992). Perhaps a more neutral framework for understanding family leisure may be one that does not assume power relations or beneficial outcomes, and does not attempt to use a personal leisure definition for family leisure. Further, as leisure is social and relational in nature, trying to study experiences as individual engagements or without

considering context does not make sense. Such (2001) writes that researchers could incorporate family life and leisure into one complete picture in order to better understand what constitutes life, and thus gain a "greater appreciation of the holistic nature of daily life" (p. 14). Thus, a different perspective for exploring family leisure could be to examine it as relational and as a system of interacting individuals and settings. A guiding theory for such an investigation is general systems theory.

General Systems Theory

General systems theory is useful for guiding research focusing on wholes. This theory suggests that a system is more than the sum of its individual parts and that to understand a system, the pieces should not be studied independent of one another. Instead, to know anything about the system, one must study the interactions among the parts, not just the functioning of each individual piece (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000). This theory is somewhat premised on Aristotle's idea of nonsummativity, or the idea that the whole of anything is greater than the sum of its parts. In nonsummativity, "there are things that emerge only together and therefore cannot be taken apart and put back together" (Hanson, 1995, p. 22). Centuries after Aristotle, biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy created a theory of general systems which was meant to help describe the functioning of any and all systems. A system, according to Bertalanffy (1968), is any "complexes of elements standing in interaction" (p. 33), and in which the interactions among the parts must be understood in order to understand the whole. Bertalanffy (1934) suggested that general systems theory was useful in understanding living organisms because, "the fundamental character of the living thing is its organization, the customary

investigation of the single parts and processes cannot provide a complete explanation of the vital phenomena. This investigation gives us no information about the coordination of parts and processes" (p. 26).

In extrapolating general systems theory from the biological sciences outward to any system, Bertalanffy (1968) provided a means to move away from linear or reductionist thinking and toward methods of study in which "we are forced to deal with complexities, with 'wholes' or 'systems'… this implies a basic re-orientation in scientific thinking" (p.5).

Paradigm Shifts

To some researchers, the move from traditional scientific methods to systems thinking was viewed as a paradigm shift because the paradigm of 'normal science' came under assault (Weinberg, 1975). Traditional science suggests that researchers approach the world as a chain of cause and effect sequences and examine the world in variables, pieces, or essential elements. Conducting research from a systems approach, however, requires viewing the world in wholes, as ongoing patterns of feedback, and as continually emerging processes or actions (Hanson, 1995). A systems approach to the world provides for a holistic perspective that aids researchers in "organizing and perhaps reorganizing our knowledge in terms of systems, systemic properties, and inter-system relationships" (Laszlo, 1996, p. 16). In this way, a systems approach challenges reductionist or atomistic ways of explaining the world, and instead suggests an approach that models the organized complexity of systems (Weinberg, 1975).

Applying General Systems Theory

General systems theory, often used in the hard sciences, has more recently been extended to studying human social systems. The whole then becomes the focus of analysis, whether it is two or more people in interaction or elements of two or more systems, often creating a multidisciplinary approach useful for academic combinations such as sociology, economics, and family therapy (Hanson, 1995). It is also appropriate to use in studying families because systems thinking helps researchers view families as a whole rather than as a collection of separate individuals. General systems theory posits that, in isolation, parts become meaningless, and to separate parts would result in unconnected, isolated artifacts. Instead, systems models pictorially represent interdependence among all variables, the demonstration of feedback loops, and the idea that cause and effect are on-going, back and forth processes among variables (Richmond, 2001). The systems view also helps researchers "view presenting problems as embedded in a larger context which shapes and maintains them" (Robards & Gillespie, 2000, p. 561). With something complex like family interactions, a systems approach helps make plain "the reciprocal interaction or feedback among many variables, as well as time delays in seeing the results" (Robards & Gillespie, 2000, p. 562), thus aiding researchers in viewing and understanding a complex whole. Finally, with the ability to model changes and on-going interactions, systems modeling is useful for simulating potential changes to a model.

When working from a general systems orientation, any phenomenon under investigation is analyzed in terms of wholes, interrelationships, and by looking at the qualities of the whole not present when examining individual parts. General systems

theory provides a new way of examining family interactions by moving beyond linear cause and effect models and instead examining family as a whole, and as changing over time (Hanson, 1995). This approach is often used in family therapy to assess the current functioning of families, to create a treatment plan for reducing dysfunction, and to improve system functioning (Olson, 2000).

Family Therapy and Family Systems Theory

Family therapy was developed in the 1950s as a reaction to what many practitioners considered the limiting ideas of traditional psychoanalytic individual therapy. Building on general systems theory, a family therapy approach was used to explain the interactions between, rather than the functioning of, individual members, and families were examined as an organized system. This method enabled therapists to better understand the wholeness of a family by analyzing the unit in terms of relationships, environments, and patterns at both the family and social system levels (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2002).

Since the 1950s, the family therapy approach has evolved into a theory for studying families, called family systems theory. Drawing from general systems theory, "families are a special subset of social systems and are structured by a unique set of intergender and intergenerational relationships" (Broderick, 1993, p. 51). It is widely used in counseling and therapy settings to understand the interactions, behaviors, or beliefs of all family members, and within the cultural context of their family unit (O'Brien, 2005). Counselors and family therapists moved toward this approach when it appeared that studying families as triads provided more useful information than dyads or

individuals. In therapeutic settings, the triad is considered a basic emotional unit and can provide more information about the functioning, relationships, and emotional bonds in the family than studying dyads. This broad level of analysis integrates more information about the family and the context for therapeutic interventions (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2002).

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory is one way to apply the principles of general systems theory to the study of families as social structures, and to better understand the guiding rules, organization, and regulation of the system. Like the idea of nonsummativity in general systems theory, family systems theory posits that the whole of the family is greater than the sum of its individual parts (Hanson, 1995). This means that from a systems perspective researchers cannot examine each family member individually and attempt to understand or make generalizations about the whole. Nor can a researcher try to understand the whole without knowing something about the parts. The main aim, instead, is to learn about the functioning of the whole, and understand the mutually influential and reciprocal interactions taking place within the system. The benefits of working from a systems perspective are twofold: Researchers can gain a better understanding of family interactions, and modeling change in the system can lead to new hypotheses or predictions about behaviors (Ackerman, 1984).

One of the main tenets of family systems theory is that, in order to understand the whole, researchers or therapists must grasp the circularity or mutual reciprocity taking place within the system. Researchers must understand how each member's behavior

influences others, and how the responses of others then influence the first person's behavior. This continues in an on-going cycle of transactions and change within the system (O'Brien, 2005). It is these reciprocal and interconnected influences that interact and shape the system into one unique whole (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000; Mactavish & Schleien, 2004). Such mutual and reciprocal influences are also important for defining each member within the system. Each person requires the existence of the other to define him or herself. For example, a parent is not a parent without the reciprocal role of children to give the parent feedback about the role. This indicates that one role alone cannot maintain itself; each role is reliant on the others for role reinforcement, development, and change (Becvar & Becvar, 1999).

As a family system is made up of interrelated and interacting parts, and relationships influence one another, it makes sense that a family system may develop its own paradigm, or underlying and deeply rooted beliefs, norms, behaviors, or rituals that everyone in the system shares and helps to shape (Fingerman & Berman, 2000). These beliefs are often reinforced unconsciously by behaviors in the family system and the members themselves may not be aware of their beliefs or views. Each member usually assumes the others share the same beliefs, and their beliefs guide actions within and outside the family system (Carisse, 1975). These underlying beliefs cannot be observed, but can be illustrated through the behaviors of the system (Mactavish & Schleien, 2004).

In family systems theory, in addition to understanding the beliefs or paradigm from which the family operates, there are also general assumptions about the structure and function of a family system. Families, like all systems, are assumed to have basic constructs that give the system its structure. The constructs that make up the system are

those of boundaries, open or closedness, self-direction or goal-seeking, equifinality, cybernetic or self-correcting abilities, homeostasis, and positive and negative feedback (Becvar & Becvar, 1999; Broderick, 1993).

Briefly, these constructs can be described the following way. Boundaries help determine the extent to which information from the outside is allowed in the system, or that information from within can go out. This depends on the next construct, the openness or closedness of a system. The family system is generally considered to have a degree of openness. As an open system, it can take in information or be influenced by other systems or the environment in which it acts. The information coming in can create pressure on the system to change, which may or may not be for the benefit of the system. The system can rely on its self-monitoring properties and react to the change appropriately. When studying open systems, researchers can examine and model the process and influence of openness, interactions with the environment, and changes over time (Broderick, 1993).

As goal-seeking or self-directed, families select and share common goals that each member wants to achieve, and can find support for and work toward those goals by monitoring progress, identifying needs, adapting to change, and changing as needed. There can also be a range of goal-directedness among families; some may have goals, others may not, or families may vary in their motivation to achieve goals (Broderick, 1993). Equifinality is the idea that no matter where a system started, or how it gets there, all systems will end up arriving at the same point. In relationships, this could mean that family members may argue about different topics, but the way they arrive at the end of the argument will always be the same. Equifinality is about the repeating processes that

systems go through to arrive at a final state (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). As self-monitoring systems, families can assess if they are on a trajectory to meet their goals or not (Broderick, 1993). To the extent that their current course is not in line with the course needed for goal attainment, families can self-correct. If the family is working toward its goals, the family will seek to maintain homeostasis, or a steady state. Usually, when change occurs in one part of the system, it triggers a self-correcting response or change in another part of the system so that whole system can maintain its steady state (Ackerman, 1984).

Family systems also use positive and negative feedback to communicate the extent to which a steady state has been achieved or requires change. Negative feedback indicates that the desired state is achieved and no more change is necessary. Positive feedback is information that change needs to occur in order to achieve a steady state. In a family relationship, for example, one person may feel another has exceeded the limits of the relationship and may indicate positive feedback to return to the steady state of the relationship. The mutual influence of feedback continues in repeating patterns in the family system (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). Overall, using a family system theory framework can be useful for understanding the whole of reciprocal interactions and behaviors among family members.

There are a variety of types of interactions, functions, or dynamics that occur within a family system that can be modeled using a systems approach. Some researchers have suggested observing "family dynamics, which include power, relations, structures, boundaries, communication patterns, and roles" (Rothbaum, Rosen, Ujiie, & Uchida, 2002), while others have suggested observing more specific interactions such as

"communication, transaction patterns, conflict, separateness, and connectedness, cohesion , and adaptation to stress" (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000, p. 13), and how these interactions shape each member and each member in turn shapes the unit. In observing any of these interactions, the key focus becomes the influence of constructs on one another and on overall family functioning.

In the family therapy literature, the purpose of studying families from a systems perspective is to better understand problematic patterns that may lead to unhappy or dysfunctional families, and then try to change patterns in the hopes of moving the system toward reduced problems, and improved functioning over time (Olson, 2000). Thus, several family system models focus on understanding the patterns that create discord, chaos, or unbalanced relationships within a family system. Factors that add to a problem are also those that maintain the problem and "need to be understood in terms of their interaction, not as isolated parts" (Robards & Gillespie, 2000, p. 562).

In the family therapy literature, one frequently cited model is Olson's Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (2000). This model was created to bridge the gap between research, theory, and practice, and is often used to diagnose, assess, or treat families (Olson, 2000) The circumplex model focuses on cohesion, flexibility, and communication, all of which have been central to various family systems models during the past several decades (Olson, 2000). For example, Beavers and Hampton (2000) built a model based on the constructs of family interaction style, adaptability, and affect, while other models have focused on coordination and closure. In Olson's model, cohesion is the emotional bonding of family members, flexibility is the amount of change in family leadership, role relationships, or rules, and communication is considered a facilitating

dimension that aids in movement on the other two dimensions (2000). Olson has suggested that his model, along with the FACES diagnostic tool, is helpful in assessing families who enter counseling or understanding parent and teenager communication (Olson, 1985).

In family leisure research, Olson's model is the basis for Zabriskie's core and balance model, which in turn is often used to assess the relationship between family leisure and family functioning. Zabriskie's (2000) model illustrates the correlation between family leisure participation and family cohesion, flexibility, and adaptability (Zabriskie, 2000, Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Examples of this model were discussed previously in this literature review. Overall, Zabriskie and his colleagues consider family leisure to be a "valuable, practical, and cost effective behavioral approach to help foster increased family cohesion and adaptability" (Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004, p. 75).

Proposed Concepts

Bringing together leisure constructs and a family systems approach can provide new understandings of what goes on in family leisure, and pose new questions for research. A family systems approach focuses on analyzing interactions at the family and social systems levels, as well as seeking to understand individual member psychology within a larger context (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2002). A family systems approach also emphasizes the reciprocal influences among members. For leisure studies, this means that the traditional, individual-focused leisure constructs of intrinsic motivation, obligation,

and personal pleasure or satisfaction all become relative to the roles or responsibilities within that system.

If family leisure experiences involve the family system as a whole, as well as the context and setting, traditional methods that isolate experiences, outcomes, or variables are clearly not appropriate for understanding the complex whole. As Shaw (1997) suggested family leisure research could be expanded by examining the multiple, and often contradictory aspects of family leisure, as well as incorporating multiple viewpoints or paradigms.

Research Problem

This literature review has described how family research has largely used the definition of leisure as an individual construct to examine the social unit of family. Much family leisure research has examined the family in dyads rather than the whole family system. However, since the family is a social unit, or a system in which interactions and the whole family are greater than the sum of individual parts, individual definitions are not appropriate. Further, family is a very specific context, in which specific roles and relationships make concepts such as freedom or choice relative to the family context. Thus, rather than question how family members can have leisure in one of the most constraining social units in society (Kelly, 1983), the question to ask is how do the interactions that go on in this context influence the family leisure experience and outcomes? Overall, then, as the family is a system of interacting individuals, this dissertation reasons that it must be understood as a whole and not as its parts, and that

one way to gain a more complete understanding of family leisure is through a systems approach.

The problem addressed in this research was twofold. First, previous family leisure research worked from certain assumptions, such as the benefits or oppression experienced, and provided only selected views of family leisure. Further, previous research considered leisure as an individual construct. Research was conducted through a reductionist lens, which sought to isolate variables and examine them within a defined population or family dyad. Only occasionally did researchers, usually those working from a qualitative paradigm, consider multiple aspects of family life and family members in order to gain a larger picture of family leisure. General systems theory provides a more holistic lens through which to view family leisure. While a systems view still has limits, this perspective provides an extension and expansion of previous research. A systems approach can combine previous quantitative and qualitative research with behavioral observations and semi structured interviews to create an organized and comprehensive view of family leisure experiences. While each method has limitations, using a new method can lead to new understandings, questions, and insights into family leisure.

The second problem addressed relates to behaviors within family leisure, specifically the fact that family leisure experiences often do not occur in a manner that provides the hypothesized benefits of family leisure interactions. Rather, family leisure occurs in ways that can create varying experiences for members and experiences that are fragmented rather than quality interactions. This is a problem because such disjointed leisure experiences may not provide the hypothesized benefits of family leisure. However, as Olson (2000) noted, one way to examine problems in families is to use a

systems perspective to gain insight into problematic behaviors and patterns. Understanding the inner workings of the system can provide a way to then suggest changes to the system that will move the family toward reduced problems and improved functioning over time.

This dissertation explored these problems by taking a systems approach to studying family leisure. The research was accomplished in three steps. First, guided by a literature review, the researcher selected the most important elements that occur during family leisure experiences. Second, the researcher created a proposed model of family leisure that represents interactions of these elements. Family data were then gathered to amend the proposed model. Finally, the researcher hypothesized and simulated changes that could be made to a system of family leisure in order to improve the interactions of the elements and their influence on the outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the interactions among the important elements that occur during family leisure and then to hypothesize and simulate changes to a proposed model to examine the effect on desired outcomes. The methods for conducting this research were carried out in three steps. The first step in the modeling process was to choose, based on a literature review, the most important elements that occur during family leisure experiences, and then to create a proposed literature-review based model of family leisure. Second, family data were collected to use in confirming or amending the model. The third step involved running model simulations to examine how potential changes to the system might influence desired outcomes.

Model Building

The first step in examining family leisure as a system was to create a proposed literature-based model of family leisure in order to graphically represent the important elements in family leisure, as well as the interactions and feedback loops among these elements. Based on the previous literature review, the researcher considered many important constructs often suggested as antecedents, experiences, and outcomes of family

leisure. As models are meant to simplify complex ideas, the researcher carefully chose what to include and exclude in the proposed model. If too much information was included, the model could become overly complex and not help explain, illustrate, or simplify. If not enough was included, important interactions could be missing. Broderick (1993) wrote that in model building the goal is to find an "economical set of interrelated assumptions and principles that can account for both the patterned behavior of family members and the variations in these patterns across and within families over time" (p. 59). Finally, a model can illustrate the elements and interactions commonly experienced during family leisure.

After a thorough literature review, three categories were chosen as most relevant and were included in the family leisure model: 1) antecedents, which include motivation, freedom (from constraints, obligation), social roles, and support; 2) the experience subsystem, which includes communication and adaptability; and 3) outcomes, which include education, sharing values, family cohesion, and identity salience.

Antecedent Constructs to Family Leisure

Motivation

Motivation is considered a driving force behind much human behavior and is often considered a key element to understanding leisure behavior, such as family leisure. Broken into parts, motivation includes an arousal phase, organizational phase, and then sustaining the behavior. The arousal phase is when interest in a behavior or the outcome of a behavior is piqued, or a person experiences a discrepancy between a current state and a desired state. The organizational phase is when a person adopts relevant behaviors

needed to direct oneself to a desired behavior or outcome. The sustention phase is persistence in maintaining the direction of behavior (Hebb, 1949). Motives are also linked to expected outcomes of a behavior and understanding motives can help researchers predict and plan for behaviors (Kleiber, 1999).

Most classical definitions of leisure include the specific idea of intrinsic motivation, as leisure was traditionally an act conducted as pleasing for its own sake (Neulinger, 1974), and not for external rewards. This description of intrinsic motivation is usually appropriate for individual acts of leisure, and thus can describe individual motivation to leisure. The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is that intrinsic motivation is self-authored action and extrinsic motivation is usually externally coerced or rewarded behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsically motivated behaviors are "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 256) as well as a "natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). Extrinsically motivated behaviors are usually directed by the promise of rewards.

While many classical definitions of leisure include intrinsic motivation as essential to the construct, leisure is not always engaged in for intrinsically motivated reasons. When leisure is part of a social or cultural setting, or participated in as a social role or obligation, the motivation to participate is then relative to that context, situation, or social role (Iso-Ahola, 1989). In many cases, motivation to engage in leisure stems from the thought or promise of external rewards or avoiding negative consequences for self or others rather than intrinsic motives. For example, participation in family leisure

might be motivated by an internal desire to be with one's family or by an external pressure to enact the role of active and caring parent.

Within the family, motivation to initiate or participate in leisure activities may range on a continuum from intrinsic to extrinsic. Family leisure participants may be motivated by internally compelling forces, such as love (Goodale & Godbey, 1988), or from external forces, such as social expectations, norms, or the promise of benefits or rewards. For many parents, motivation may stem from both internal and external sources, or be a form of internalized motivation. Internalized motivation, according to Ryan (1995) is the act of taking an extrinsic motivator and making it something personally valuable or meaningful, such that it becomes a source of intrinsic motivation. Further, Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest a continuum of motivation moving from external motivation, to introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. Introjected regulation is a partial internalization of extrinsic forces, identified regulation is an individual doing something because it is personally valuable and meaningful, and integrated regulation occurs when the act becomes entirely internalized and autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In family leisure, motivation type may fall anywhere along the continuum. Parents may not always be intrinsically motivated by family leisure activities. In fact, they may not enjoy them at all, but rather may value the expected outcomes. For example, in Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study, parents did not choose leisure activities simply to be together or have fun but rather for the outcome of teaching children about values and lifestyles. In addition, motivation can be fed by satisfaction with the outcomes of family leisure experiences. Typically, when individuals have positive experiences with

an activity or experience competence or pleasure in their relatedness to others, intrinsic motivation increases (Boggiano & Pittman, 1992). Overall, motivation to engage in leisure is an important construct in family leisure experiences as it helps researchers explain and predict behaviors and desired outcomes.

Freedom

Freedom is a construct that has been part of leisure definitions since classical thinkers. Neulinger (1974) wrote that Aristotle thought of leisure as a state of being characterized by meaningful and nonutiliatiran activity when one was free from being occupied and engaged in an activity for its own sake. Similarly, De Grazia (1964) noted that leisure referred to "something personal, a state of mind or a quality of feeling," and "freedom from the necessity of being occupied" (p.14).

In general, no one is entirely free. Freedom is most often relative rather than absolute; we are all governed and bound by laws, restrictions, or ethics, which control and help regulate actions. Humans are also somewhat controlled by unwritten social or cultural rules or norms that can inhibit freedom. Godbey and Goodale (1988) explain this idea as pulls on our freedom that move us to do things we feel socially or culturally compelled to do or that pulls us to react against a social compulsion or norm (and reacting to norms is also a norm which controls freedom).

In studying the family and family roles, researchers have noted there is limited freedom in family leisure. Family activities are often not "freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, or even necessarily enjoyable" (Shaw & Dawson, 2001, p. 218). Kelly (1983) wrote that family and leisure create quite a paradoxical relationship as it is difficult to

have leisure in the freest and purest sense of the term when participating in one of the most constraining roles in society. Family members, instead, are relatively free. For example, the role of parent may have been freely chosen, but the activities one may engage in as a parent are not always freely chosen. Freedom is relative to the context in which it is experienced. However, as freedom in family leisure is relative, many early ideas of pure leisure do not fit. For example, if leisure is seen as free time or a freely chosen activity, parents rarely experience such free time or free choice. If leisure is seen as freedom from utilitarian activities, parents rarely experience this during a typical day full of household or childcare chores. Instead, parents and children may experience family leisure as a relative freedom in which members are not free from roles or social norms, but may have freedom to make choices within their roles or family bounds.

Kelly suggested that, for parents, family leisure may be satisfying if the role of parent was freely chosen and intrinsically motivated. In other words, leisure may be satisfying if the parent perceived freedom in choosing to relinquish some freedoms and enter into a role with constraints, or social and behavioral norms. Thus, family leisure may be satisfying to the extent the parent believes he or she is fulfilling the role of parent. In this way, family leisure may also be more satisfying for its outcomes than the activities themselves (Kelly, 1978). Freedom in family leisure can further be understood by examining both freedom to choose and freedom from obligation.

Freedom from Constraints

Choice in leisure activities is a fundamental part of the construct of freedom. Freedom is both freedom from obligation and freedom to choose. Having freedom of

choice indicates a person is free from constraints and has some measure of autonomy to choose what he or she desires. Choices are also influenced by constraints. According to the leisure constraints model, there are three types of constraints one may experience; structural, interpersonal, or intrapersonal (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). To the extent that any of these constraints are experienced, a participant will likely perceive less freedom to choose a leisure activity (Brown, Brown, Miller & Hansen, 2001; Siegenthaler & O'Dell, 2000).

In family leisure, all three types of constraints may be experienced. Of these, however, the most applicable is that of interpersonal constraints, or those surrounding interactions with others, such as spouse, a family dyad, or family issues such as decision-making, conflict management, and power (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). In the family, many activities are not freely chosen by each individual but rather are chosen by someone else in the family or chosen for an outcome related to others (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). This loss of freedom can influence a participant's motivation or level of engagement, as having at least a perception of choice in leisure activities can influence the frequency of participation and depth of involvement. Within a family, choices are often limited.

Roles within the family can also limit choices. Parents may limit children out of a sense of responsibility, and children may similarly limit parents' freedoms. In Shannon's (2006) study, for example, teenagers viewed their parents as controlling access to resources and choices of how teens could use their free time. Choices are limited by roles, and freedom and choices are relative to one's role and relationship to other people.

Although family members may experience leisure constraints, people can often find a way to negotiate constraints rather than not participate at all. Constraints can be

negotiated with increased effort, finding ways to access resources, or through social support from other people. Negotiating constraints can enable participation, but doing so takes increased effort and perseverance to work.

Freedom from Obligation, or Relative Freedom

Leisure is often thought of as freedom to do something, or freedom from obligation (Kelly, 1983) or necessity to work. However, within the family, and especially for parents, roles and responsibilities necessarily create obligations, or relative freedom. There can be survival obligations, such as having to feed the family, or certain emotional, social, or psychological obligations, such as the need to teach morals or build a social network. Parents also have an obligation to care for themselves, their household, jobs, and friendships. Parenting becomes a role replete with obligation to engage in utilitarian work.

In Kelly's leisure typology, family leisure is in the quadrant of role-determined leisure, as the meaning in the leisure is social and low in freedom. Kelly also specifies that the decision to participate in role-determined leisure is characterized by both feelings of obligation and the thought of negative consequences. Similarly, the Gunters (1980) viewed family leisure as institutional leisure, in which participants were bound by their roles or social obligations to participate, yet still often found satisfaction in fulfilling their role. For example, for many parents, increasing pressures to be an ideal, or 'good parent' in today's society, dictate an obligatory set of highly active and engaged parenting behaviors (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Fear that something bad might befall a child if parents do not engage in such behaviors acts to heighten this sense of obligation, and

most parents do not want to be seen as negligent or socially deviant. For example, social expectations for fathers are increasing such that fathers who do not "actively advocate the interests of their children are seen by many people today as not meeting standards for good parenting" (Coakley, 2006, p. 154).

Obligation can also be considered relative in the family to the extent that one accepts the role of parent, the obligation was chosen, and it is still within the realm of freedom to choose. In accepting the role and having a sense of choice, a parent may be more likely to experience a leisure state of mind. Neulinger (1981) noted that, "to the degree that a housewife accepts certain role obligations (which can be considered the equivalent of a job), it is meaningful to define some periods of her day as free time in relation to those obligations" (p. 143). Finally, as De Grazia (1964) wrote, obligations to one's family can be framed in a positive light, such as viewing responsibility as the joys of parenting, or terming childcare as playing with children. Like constraints, obligation both restricts freedom but also provides an opportunity for satisfaction within the relative space.

Social Roles

A social identity is the knowledge that one belongs to a certain social group made up of members who share similar characteristics suggesting certain social requirements. This identity is usually formed through a process of self-categorization, in which the self is reflexive and can classify its parts in relation to other social categories. An identity is also formed through social comparisons, by which the person engages in choosing to accentuate parts of the self "that will result in self-enhancing outcomes for the self" (Stets

& Burke, 2000, p. 225). Such categories exist in a structured society, and are used to classify the world and give people a role in society.

In the family, researchers suggest that each person has a role that comes with behaviors defined by others in the relationship much like a job description, and feedback from others about that role can influence an individual's self-appraisals and communication styles (Eckstein, Clemmer, & Fierro, 2006). In addition, each family member can have multiple roles. For example, a mother may adopt the roles of woman, mother, wife, employee, daughter, sister, or friend. Within those roles, there can then be multiple assigned duties; for example, a mother may be expected to be a cook, cleaner, chauffeur, social planner, and educator. In addition, most roles have gendered definitions and duties according to prevailing social norms.

In the family role literature, researchers have noted that multiple commitments to various roles or parts within a role can create role strain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Suchet & Barling, 1986). This role strain or inter-role conflict can influence a person's ability to enact any of the roles well. For example, in a paper on spousal support for running, the authors noted that work-family role conflict could drain a person's energy and result in stress, fatigue, and irritability (Goff, Fick, & Oppliger, 1997).

Family roles, with categories of behaviors dictated by social norms, can influence behavior. In the family leisure literature, there are numerous examples of how roles influence behavior and leisure experiences. Shannon (2006) noted that roles can be limiting by restricting behaviors or actions. For teenagers, their role as child (and thus under the rule of their parents) influenced the amount of freedom experienced. Larson, Gilman, and Richards (1997) found that when fathers had an authority role in the family,

they often had more positive affect in family leisure experiences. Perhaps this was because of their place of authority, or perhaps the fathers felt less of an obligation to care for others, or placed less value on the outcomes of family leisure and were able to have more positive affect in family leisure experiences. In this same study, the authors suggested that teens may experience more role conflict than their parents as teens have perhaps more leisure needs, such as escaping boredom, being with friends, or developing a social identity. Teens then may experience more intense role conflict between being a child at home and being a developing teen with friends. Any role conflict can add to conflict among family members, adding more stress and overall conflict to family interactions. As roles clearly influence one's place in the family and interactions with others, roles or social identity should be considered in a systems view of family leisure.

Support

Social support has been linked to having an impact on human psychological and physical well-being. The construct of support includes social support behaviors, knowing how to best offer support, and satisfaction with support. In the family psychology literature, intimacy and closeness with one's partner are seen as key to a couples' psychological health. Further, family behavior exchange theory suggests that social support from one's partner contributes to intimacy because the helping and closeness engendered by supportive behaviors have a reciprocal effect within the dyad (Johnson, Hobfalt, & Zalcberg-Linetzy, 1993). This theory could be extended to all family members, because support in any dyadic or triadic relationship can increase intimacy, and feelings of intimacy feed back into increased supportive behaviors. Support is an

important precursor, experience, and outcome for successful interactions and psychological well-being within the family system.

Support in the family is often expressed through both verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. In one study, support was communicated to wives by their husbands through listening, expressing concerns, helping recognize frustrations, and discussing alternatives to a problem. In the same study, however, wives also reported a lack of supportive communication when their husbands avoided or minimized the importance of a topic (Edwards, 2007). Other researchers found that spouses who received more support from their partner reported greater positive marital relationships than did spouses who felt unsupported (Verhofstadt, Buysee, & Ickes, 2007). In relationships, support offered can also indicate the value a person places on something. In a study on teenagers and messages parents send about unstructured leisure time, Shannon (2006) found that if parents perceived an activity as having value, they were more likely to support it for their teenager by paying for it or providing transportation. Teens interpreted such behaviors as support and understood the activity's implied value.

Support from others is also instrumental in satisfactory leisure time for couples (Dyck & Daly, 2006). In studying mothers, for example, lack of socio-economic or ideological support (also seen as a constraint) was found to limit a mother's ability to engage in personal leisure, while social support was found to increase her ability to engage in personal leisure. This study also suggested that one way to reduce women's work, and thus increase the ability to have personal leisure, was to increase support from family and partners (Brown, Brown, Miller, & Hansen, 2001). In another study relating leisure and support, Shannon and Shaw (2008) examined how mothers teach their

daughters, implicitly or explicitly, about leisure. An important finding in this study was that support, offered in the form of registering and paying for their daughters' activities, communicated the value mothers placed on those activities. While these mothers implied support for their daughter's leisure, the children picked up on subtle messages about how the mothers felt about their own leisure; specifically, that many mothers did not take advantage of their own leisure time, but rather sacrificed personal time for their children. This study found that when the daughters reached adulthood they repeated this pattern and continued to reproduce traditional gender roles. While support was important for their children's participation, implied messages also shaped their thinking about personal leisure. On the whole, support from a variety of sources can have a strong influence on individual or dyadic leisure. It also influences the relationships among those in the family system, as well as influencing perceptions of value, constraint, and freedom, which is also influenced by communication. Support, then, is a relevant construct to consider in a systems view of family leisure.

Experience Constructs of Family Leisure

Communication

Communication is a critical element for the proper functioning of any social system. Families, as defined from a systems view, are goal seeking, self-directed, self-regulating, self-aware, and independent (Broderick, 1993). But for members to come together as a system, they have to share a common meaning. Shared meanings can be communicated through shared symbolic messages and direct communications, and such messages are often multilayered and complex with meaning (Broderick, 1993).

As defined by Olson and Gorall (2003), communication is how people make information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings known to one another. When two people are together, communication exists, even if in silence. As Broderick (1993) noted, humans cannot not communicate. Thus, during family leisure experiences, communication must occur.

In family studies, communication is an integral part in two of the major models of family functioning. In Olson's Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems, communication is the facilitating dimension that helps move couples and families along the other two dimensions of adaptability and cohesion. Positive communication skills such as empathy, reflective listening, and supportive comments help a family with adaptability as each member explains needs and shares concerns. Negative communication, such as double messages, double binds, or criticism, inhibit a family member's ability to communicate needs or feelings and thus stalls an ability to adapt or work toward cohesion. Family systems with poor communication practices tend to be lower functioning than family systems with higher functioning communication practices (Olson, 1983).

Communication has not been examined extensively in leisure studies. However it has been suggested that family leisure provides a medium for working on or developing communication skills, and that communication while in a leisure context is often "less threatening and demanding and more open and relaxed" (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, p. 282). In one study researchers asked if communication could be a mediator between types of family leisure involvement and family functioning (Smith, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2009). These authors found support for communication's mediating influence

in family leisure involvement and family flexibility, and in mediating the balance between family leisure activities and family cohesion among a youth convenience sample. These authors also called for additional research examining the importance of the relationship between communication and family leisure for healthy functioning families.

Adaptability

In order to remain stable, all systems must adapt to change. As a family is an open system, receiving feedback internally as well as from its environment, adapting to change is essential for family functioning and achievement of desired outcomes. Adaptability has been applied to several models of family relationships, and it has been found to be an essential component to successful family functioning.

In general systems theory, a system works through a "dynamic interaction of its components," (Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 150) and processes of feedback regulation, cybernetics, and homeostasis are critical for self-regulation to either maintain a steady state or work toward desired goals. While these types of interactions are more common in closed systems, they are also part of open systems. Open systems can include both internal mechanisms for self-regulation as well as receiving information from the external environment. A family, as an open system, adapts and self-regulates when faced with changing situations or interactions, and takes in information from the environment as needed to maintain stability or achieve goals. Homeostasis, an idea sometimes applied to family systems, is the concept of changing to remain the same. However, in a family system seeking change, growth, or goal achievement, homeostasis is not always a desired or appropriate outcome.

What is more useful for understanding change, adaptability, and family systems are the ideas of morphostasis, or remaining stable in the context of change, and morphogenesis, or a "system-enhancing behavior that allows for growth, creativity, innovation and change" (Becvar & Becvar, 1999, p. 22). Both ideas point to stability amid change and change amid stability, and both morphostasis and morphogenesis are necessary for healthy, functioning family systems (Becvar & Becvar, 1999; Olson et al., 1983). Morphogensis, or the process of growing and changing, can occur through positive feedback, or feedback that tells the family to change from how it is currently functioning. Morphostasis, or staying the same amid change, occurs through negative feedback, or feedback telling the system to maintain the status quo and not change (Olson et al., 1983).

In the family therapy and family systems literature, morphostasis and morphogenesis are called adaptability. Many models of family functioning include adaptability as a necessary component of functioning. Beavers (1977) included negotiation in his family model, and Epstein, Bishop and Levin (1978) labeled the idea of adaptability as behavior control and problem solving. Whatever the name, the concept of adaptability in a system appears to be crucial for system maintenance, change, and overall functioning. For the family, adaptability may be characterized by the "ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 62). Adaptability is crucial for maintaining stability amid change and change even when stable.

In the leisure literature, adaptability is frequently mentioned as a key component to family stability. Leisure also provides many opportunities for a family to work towards adaptability, practice roles, adapt to new roles, or adapt to change in the family system or environment. Adaptability is frequently discussed by Zabriskie and his colleagues, and they base much of their work off the Olson Circumplex model, which includes a section for adaptability. For example, in applying the core and balance model to an undergraduate student sample, Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) found that both core and balance patterns of family leisure influenced perceptions of family adaptability. Other researchers also found that core leisure involvement for families with a child with a disability was a significant predictor of family cohesion and adaptability from youth, parent, and family perspectives (Dodd, Zabriskie, Widmer, & Eggett, 2009).

Outcomes Constructs of Family Leisure

Systems are often goal-directed (Broderick, 1993), and as a family is a system, it makes sense the unit would be directed toward desired goals. The most common desired outcomes reported by family members and family leisure researchers stem from the hypothesized benefits of family leisure. As discussed earlier in the literature review, there are two general themes surrounding benefits. First, benefits often relate to long-term goals parents have for their children, such as educational benefits, learning values, socialization to certain behaviors or habits, general social skills, or healthy lifestyles (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). A second desired beneficial outcome of family leisure includes family-related benefits, such as family cohesion, improved family functioning, stability,

or decreased conflict. As these have already been discussed in detail in the literature review, they will not be further reviewed here.

Identity Salience

In research examining parents' experiences in family leisure, one reason for such participation and activity choice is related to parents' sense of responsibility, duty, or commitment to their family and role as parent (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Researchers and parents have indicated that parents' efforts toward family leisure are worthwhile for the value placed on outcomes rather than the activities themselves (Kelly, 1978; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). It is reasonable to expect that if leisure is seen as an obligation or duty, then successfully completing family leisure activities would give parents a sense of fulfillment in enacting the role of parent. This is different from experiences of individual leisure in which leisure is chosen for personal and intrinsically motivated reasons or through freedom of choice. But in a chosen role as parent, with inherent constraints and opportunities, enacting this role could bring with it the possibilities of both stress and satisfaction. A similar argument could be made for children. One way to explain stress or satisfaction from enacting a role is through social identity theories such as identity salience.

Identity salience can be understood as either the activation of an identity in order to influence one's membership in a group (Stets & Burke, 2000) or as the probability that an identity will be activated (Stryker, 1980). The activation of an identity can occur when social requirements in a situation call for the identity and when such activation enables the person to achieve both personal and social goals. Later identity theorists introduced

the idea of identity commitment, which relates to the number of people one is tied to through an identity and the strength of that tie. When both the quantity and quality of ties are strong, there is a greater likelihood that the identity will be activated (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Finally, Stryker (1980) suggests that people will seek out opportunities to enact a "highly salient identity," and create a situation that can serve as self-verification of the identity.

From this basic understanding of identity, and the earlier discussion of social identity or roles, family members can be thought to have specific roles outlined for them by society, and they are likely to have a commitment to that role due to the people and relationships tied to them. Family members also are surrounded by situational cues that may activate an identity, or members may want to create situations in which they can enact this identity to serve as verification of themselves in a role. Finally, family members are more likely to enact a family-related identity if they have personal or social goals tied to it.

In family leisure, family members may strive to participate in activities for the opportunity to enact their role, achieve certain goals, and influence their position in their social group. For example, a father's commitment in a parent-role identity is key to determining how much he might be involved in parenting (Rane & McBride, 2000). Thus, when family leisure experiences are successful, members may experience a desired outcome of identity salience. If satisfied with this experience, family members may continue to seek out family leisure to continue to experience identity salience, and thus, identity salience becomes an outcome of successful family leisure.

System Boundaries

A final conceptual piece for creating any model is setting boundaries and deciding what to include and exclude. The researcher must create a model that is neither too complex so that it is not useful across phenomena, nor too general so that it lacks meaning. For the original model, each subsystem's outcomes and the relationships among them were carefully chosen based on a review of the family leisure literature. The researcher also used systems-thinking checks to ensure that the proposed literature review elements were present and arranged in such a way so that the system could realistically function. In the case of all models, no model is ever correct. Models are a researcher's most educated attempt at creating a picture of reality. However, with additional information, expert opinions, comparing the model to reality, and by running simulations, the model can be refined and amended so that it may more accurately represent how the system under investigation operates.

This section has reviewed elements that commonly occur in family leisure experiences. The next section reviews how this information was turned into a graphic representation of the interactions among these elements (or the internal structure of family leisure), and then explains the purpose and process of model simulations.

Computer-Aided Model Design

For the proposed model of family leisure, once important model elements were chosen and relationships outlined, the next step was to create a graphical representation with the aid of a computer software program. This program, called Stella™ software, allows the researcher to draw, move, and connect elements in various ways, as well as to

simulate the influences of elements on one another. Stella aids the researcher in creating a dynamic system that better models the 'real world' (Richmond, 2001). The basic steps for creating the graphical representation of the model are explained here.

Stella offers several building blocks for creating a visual representation of a mental model of a system, namely, stocks, flows, converters, and connectors (Richmond, 2001). These are the internal pieces that enable the system to operate. Stocks, also called reservoirs, are collections of resources, and are represented by a square. In this study, one stock was the motivation to engage in leisure. Like a reservoir, stocks can fill up or drain down depending on how much of something flows into or out of it. The flow is the process of resources moving in or out of a stock, and is represented by a valve-looking piece on a line running into the stock. An example in this study is the flow controlling how social role obligation flows through motivation. Another piece, a converter, is used to regulate the flow of something into the reservoir, thus causing the level in that reservoir to increase or decrease, such as the line between social role obligation and motivation. Finally, connectors represent links among all the elements of a system (Wells, Ruddell, & Paisley, 2006). For example, support might flow through a cohesion converter, which results in an increase in the stock of family cohesion.

The literature review based model (see Figure 1) is a proposed 'mental map' of family leisure based on ideas found in the family leisure literature. It is one way to think about how the important elements that occur during family leisure interact with one another and influence the desired outcomes of family leisure experiences.

Literature Review Model Narrative

With the simplification a graphic model provides, the proposed system of family leisure should be more readily understandable. The following is a brief explanation (drawn from the previous literature review) to accompany the visual representation of the literature review model of family leisure.

Antecedent Subsystem

The social and relational role of being a family member creates obligations and pressures brought on by the needs and demands of others. This role is also influenced by social or institutional pressures to act in certain ways in fulfilling a social role and to provide for the long-term needs of those involved in the relationship. Knowledge of such social pressures often acts as a motivator for family members, especially parents, because they want to fulfill the immediate and long term expectations dictated by that social role. This is the link between social role obligations and motivation.

Social role constraints, on the other side, are things that impede progress toward desired outcomes, and can include structural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal constraints. Negotiating constraints can create more work, or effort, required for participation in family leisure. The literature suggests that families do not immediately foreclose options to participate in family leisure because of constraints, but rather parents make an effort to negotiate constraints so they can participate. This negotiation often requires considerable effort, which is indicated in the model as having a gradual decrease on motivation. The link among these three variables (constraint, effort, and decreased motivation) is suggested to be a slow decline over time as family members ‘wear down’ in efforts to

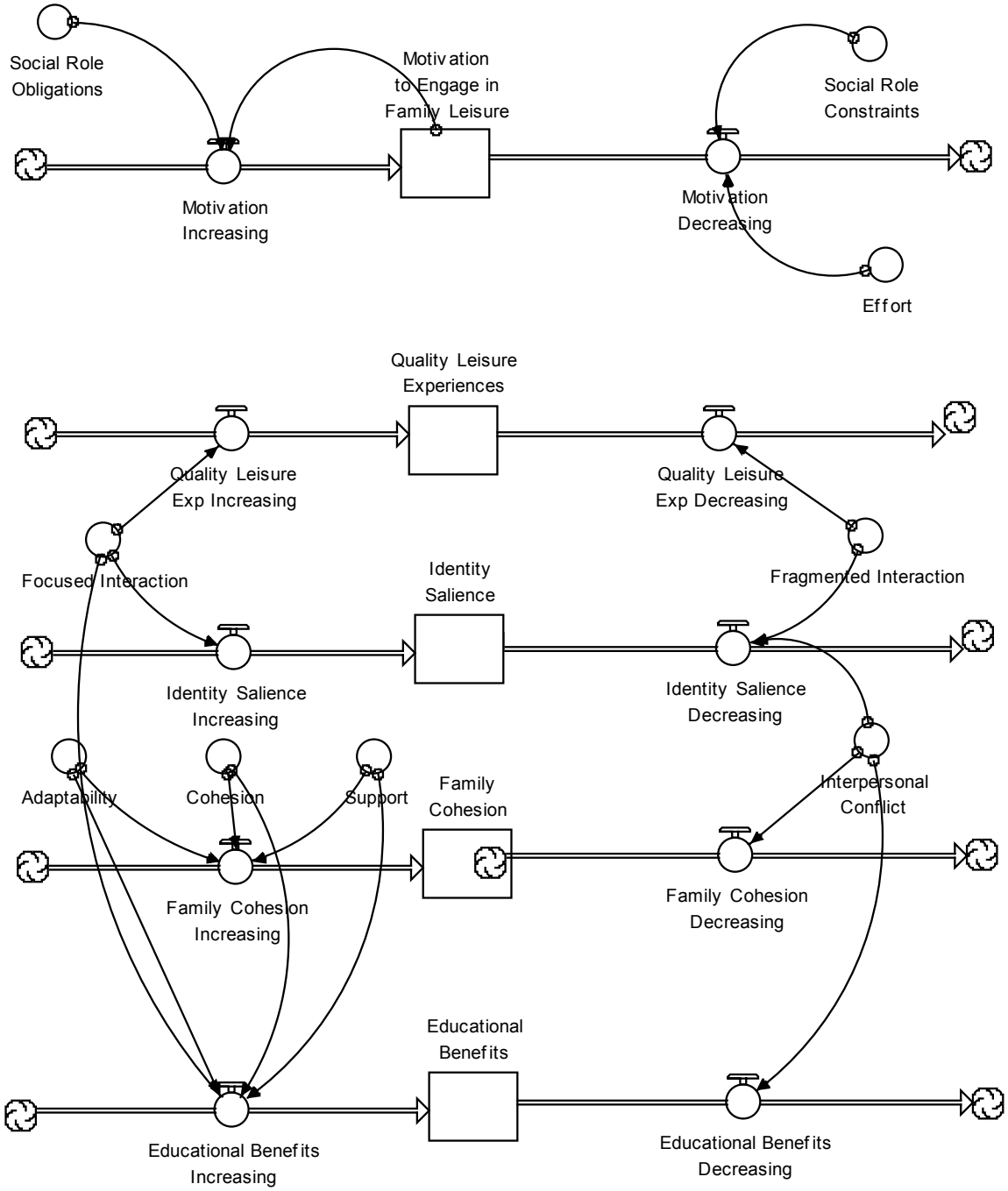

Figure 1. Literature review based model of a family leisure system

negotiate constraints. As with all the converters in the model, the converter regulates the flow of a resource into a stock. In this first subsystem, the flow of obligation increases the amount of motivation in the reservoir, and the flows of constraint and effort decrease motivation. Finally, as the stock of motivation fills, it has an immediate feedback loop on itself, with motivation increasing motivation.

Experience Subsystem

This subsystem is the leisure experience itself and is quantified by quality of leisure experiences. Elements feeding into this system include focused interactions and fragmented interactions. In the literature, focused interactions are suggested as being important for increasing the quality of family leisure experiences and as having positive benefits for the family (Orthner & Mancini, 1991). Fragmented leisure experiences, however, may not be as satisfying or restful as focused leisure, yet occur quite often in modern American families. Studies on parents' leisure time have suggested that, especially for women, fragmented leisure is not as satisfying or relaxing as focused leisure. Fragmented leisure is characterized by multiple activities occurring at once, by children voicing needs during adult leisure time, or leisure time 'snatched' in between work or home chores (Bittman & Wajcman, 1999, 2000). In the leisure literature, research on leisure fragments has focused on its effects on women's leisure. Little research exists on the effects of fragmented leisure on the family system, or on children's experiences of leisure, but for this study, it is assumed that if leisure fragments are less satisfying for parents, such episodes are also less satisfying or restful for the family as a

whole. In the literature review based model of family leisure, such fragmented experiences serve to deplete the stock of leisure experience quality.

Outcome Subsystems

The next subsystem is identity salience. This is an outcome of family leisure, because family members build an identity around a role, and that role is often reaffirmed through feedback from others that reinforces or diminishes one's beliefs about themselves in that role. Identity salience becomes an important outcome of family leisure. In this subsystem, the stock of identity salience is filled by focused leisure interactions, because such interactions provide specific and direct feedback about the self in a family role. However, fragmented leisure, as well as conflict in family leisure, can serve to decrease identity salience. Fragmented leisure does not provide direct, specific feedback, but rather disjointed, confusing feedback regarding the self in a family role. Similarly, conflict may provide feedback that one is doing something incongruent with his or her family role, and thus conflict depletes the stock of identity salience.

Cohesion Subsystem

The next subsystem is cohesion, which is frequently noted as an important on-going and long-term goal of family leisure experiences. Two of the elements, adaptability and communication, are taken from Olson's Circumplex Model of family functioning. Support is also indicated in the literature as necessary for relationship cohesion. These three elements may or may not occur at the same time or with the same strength during family leisure experiences, however, all are necessary ingredients for increasing family

cohesion. In the proposed model, these three elements also flow into the stock of identity salience because each is part of one's relational family role. When family members indicate importance about, and put effort into adaptability, communication, and support, they are likely increasing their family member identity salience.

Also influencing the stock of cohesion is family interpersonal conflict. Conflict is illustrated as having a direct and negative impact on family cohesion and identity salience, and serves to increase the amount of effort required for family leisure experiences, thus linking it to the subsystem of motivation. Conflict also increases the perception of fragmented leisure interactions, thus playing a role in reducing quality experiences. It should be noted that not all conflict is bad, and that at times, conflict can strengthen a family by improving ability to communicate or adapt. However, in this model, conflict is an element that serves largely to decrease identity salience and cohesion.

Educational Benefits Subsystem

The final subsystem is educational benefits. While nothing can make people learn, family members can create environments best suited for learning. For the family system, this model suggests that an environment with focused interactions in which members demonstrate support, communication, and high adaptability behaviors, can create an environment more conducive to learning. However, interpersonal conflict can create a stressful, disjointed environment in which learning may not occur.

Summary

After creating a literature review based model of family leisure, the next step was gathering information from families to provide insight into the elements and interactions suggested in the proposed model. This information was gathered through semi structured interviews with family members, analyzed for information to create unique models of family leisure, and used to run simulations of potential scenarios that could occur within each family and impact their family leisure outcomes.

Data Collection

Participants

Three families were solicited through purposive sampling to participate in this phase of the study. The researcher asked friends and colleagues for suggestions of potential interviewees. For this study, the researcher was interested in hearing about family leisure experiences from a heterogeneous sample, and to look for similarities and dissimilarities among families. The families interviewed were of different socio-economic status, age, and educational backgrounds. Fictitious names are reported in this research.

The sample was bounded as two-parent families with at least one child between the ages of 10 and 17. Families were asked to participate in one video-taped family interview and one leisure activity with the researcher present. For context, each family is described briefly.

The Reynolds family is an affluent family with two children ages 10 and 13, and the parents are in their late 40s. The family lives in a large home in a mountain town,

with access to many natural resources, as well as the time and money to purchase equipment to recreate together. The Perrys are a poor family who live in a small townhouse in the downtown area of the city. The parents are 28 and 29 years old and their daughter is 11 years old. Neither parent finished high school, nor has a job. The third family is an unmarried couple raising the father's son from a previous marriage. The parents are in their mid-30s and their son is 11 years old. The parents both have college degrees and work as artists, careers they said bring in varying amounts of income each month.

The researcher made contact with the mother from each family to set up the interview time and told the mother that the study was about family leisure, and they would also be asked to discuss and participate in a family leisure experience. Each family chose an interview time convenient for them, and each agreed to meet in their home. The interviews lasted about three hours, and each family was compensated for its time.

Interviews

Semistructured interviews were conducted with each family in their homes, and were videotaped. The interview questions were designed to explore family members' ideas about antecedents, activities, and outcomes of family leisure experiences.

In each interview, family members were asked to discuss leisure activities they participated in most often, and to describe one activity they had completed recently. As the family talked, the researcher asked follow-up questions to probe further into each topic, such as asking why the family chose an activity, what they hoped to gain from it, and what went into planning the activity.

Next, each family was asked to choose and plan a leisure activity they could complete during the interview. The researcher recorded their conversation, and once they decided on an activity, the researcher asked follow up questions about this choice. The questions were intended to explore the family's antecedent motivations and expected outcomes of their leisure activity. Questions included asking why the family chose the activity, what they hoped to gain from it, and how they would prepare for it. After this antecedent portion of the interview, the family did the activity and then talked about it afterwards. Interview questions during this portion were intended to explore the family's actual experience as well as their reflections on their experiences and desired outcomes. Questions included asking the family to describe how others influenced their participation during the activity, why the activity 'worked' or did not 'work' for them, and any positive or negative outcomes. While the family members likely would not discuss their leisure to this level of detail, such contrived conversations were necessary for this research. During each interview, the researcher provided clarification on questions as needed, and at times asked for additional information. The researcher asked probing questions such as, "You mentioned ____, can you explain what you mean?" The entire interview schedule is in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the data, and identify themes, patterns, and insights within the data (Patton, 2002). This method consists of developing a coding scheme, coding and classifying data into themes while looking for convergence and divergence, organizing themes into a useful framework, and interpreting themes. Patton

(2002) also suggests that in practice, qualitative inquiry might move back and forth between induction and deduction, using both opened-ended and hypothetico-deductive approaches to examine hypotheses or solidify ideas that emerged, sometimes even manipulating elements. This study followed that approach, moving between deduction and induction as the coders used a coding scheme based on existing literature, as well as codes that emerged from the data.

Coding Scheme

Prior to data analysis, the researcher created an *a priori* coding scheme (see Appendix B). This coding scheme provided a way to label and categorize themes present and note which themes were most important for each family, and which themes should be included in later analyses and model building. The *a priori* codes were based on the literature model of family leisure, as well as themes often present in the family leisure literature.

Coding data. To prepare for coding, the researcher watched all the videos and divided each into 2- to 3-minute segments, befitting the flow of conversation. Two coders were selected for their experience working with families in social work settings, and their knowledge of family dynamics, interaction patterns, and parenting styles. One coder has a Master of Social Work degree and has worked with parents in an educational and social services setting and with teens in a youth recreation program. The second coder completed a drug and alcohol abuse training program and has 10 years experience working with parents in a family services agency. Both women have spent time working with low-income families, providing parenting education such as discipline strategies,

communication techniques, and problem-solving skills, as well as basic health and safety information. To code the data, coders were given a coding sheet that listed all the codes and a brief definition of each. The coders and researcher reviewed all the codes and definitions, discussing and clarifying differences among codes. The researching group then watched, coded, and discussed five short practice videos to make sure everyone understood what the codes looked like in reality. During and after watching each practice clip, the trio discussed why they had chosen certain codes, and why some codes were more appropriate than others in each sample.

To code the family interviews and activities, the researcher and coders watched them in predetermined 2-or 3-minute intervals and coded and discussed each segment. As each coder watched, she completed a chart noting what codes were present, and indicated a level (high, medium, or low), for each code, as appropriate. Not all instances of a code were assigned a value. After each segment, the coders and researcher discussed the codes they had chosen and, if necessary, reached an agreement on the three to five codes that best fit the interactions seen in the video. New codes were added and defined (such as bonding, shared memories, happiness, and variety), while other codes were relabeled to more accurately describe what was expressed by the family (intensive parenting became concerted cultivation; effort was clarified as constraint negotiations). When new codes were added, the coders and researcher discussed what it looked like in the video, what it meant, and how it differed from an existing code. In total, the coders added 10 codes, indicating that perhaps some aspects of family leisure experiences are not well-represented in the family leisure literature. This systematic observation of behavior and coding was an effective way to identify and label the themes and relationships present for

each family, and that were important to the study. Finally, coders were asked to draw lines connecting any codes that appeared to influence one another. For example, if they noted that support helped increase focused interactions, they were asked to link those two.

Data management. After each family interview was coded, the codes were entered into QSR International's NVivo 9 software for easier data management. NVivo provides a platform for viewing videos, transcription, and codes. For this study, the software was useful for creating a visual depiction of the codes assigned to each video segment. These depictions, which illustrated the themes as colored bars along a timeline of when they occurred, provided a way to easily see major themes present for each family. The software was also helpful for linking codes to sections of video to later pull out quotations to illustrate each theme.

Categorizing data. Categorizing the data was necessary to organize it into a framework that could later be used to describe themes found in the interviews. To better organize and work with the categories and quotations representing each, the researcher created data summary tables for each family and each portion--antecedent, experience, or outcome. These tables listed each major category across the top with columns for quotations beneath. The researcher went back to the videos to transcribe quotations representing each theme into the appropriate column.

Next, the researcher looked for convergence and divergence among the categories. Convergence refers to looking for what fits together in the data, or what regularities or patterns occur. The researcher also looked for internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity, which reflect the extent to which data hold together in a category

and the extent to which differences among categories are clear (Patton, 2002). During the process of looking for internal homogeneity, the researcher recognized quotations that could fit into more than one category. These quotations were examined for similarities, and, if found, the researcher would collapse two categories into one. In other instances, multiple quotations had been coded as a certain theme, but later the researcher recognized subtle differences among ideas, and separated the category into two. For example, education was defined as learning knowledge, skills, or about one another, but when creating the data summary tables, this category was broken into education, shared learning, and learning about one another as three distinct categories.

The next step in content analysis was to look for divergence, or to look for ways to extend or connect the data to other ideas, or propose new ideas. In this study, the process of looking for divergence was done during the later model building stage of analysis. Overall, the categorization process resulted in reduced and organized data that could be used in the results and interpretation section.

While conducting the data analysis, the researcher wrote down any biases or opinions that surfaced so as to be aware of preconceived ideas that could enter into the interviews or analysis. As a White female with no children and a background in education and recreation, the researcher needed to be aware of personal opinions or ideas that could have influenced the research process or outcomes. This was done by documenting biases and opinions that arose at any point during the research. The researcher also kept reflective notes about anything of interest that occurred during the interviews, or ideas that came up while coding or writing. These notes were any idea

related to the research problem, family interviews, or themes, or were pieces of explanations or information that could be used in the discussion or for future research.

Narratives

Using the data summary tables as a guide to the major themes found for each family, the researcher wrote a narrative for each family. The narratives provided an overview of each family's demographics, and described what went on during their interview. Each narrative included quotations used by family members that illustrated the major themes discussed during the interview and evidenced during the activity. The family narratives are presented in the results section.

Model Building

While writing the narrative, the researcher drew causal fragments (Miles & Huberman, 1984) of the antecedent, experience, and outcome subsystems for each family. The fragments include the major themes from the data summary tables, and look similar to the individual subsystems presented in the literature review-based model. The pieces illustrated are drawn from proposed relationships among themes. The fragments were the beginning of the eventual models created to illustrate each family leisure system. The researcher created many causal fragments, trying out many combinations of elements, stocks, and flows before finally combining fragments into one systems model for each family. This process was iterative, and, like categorizing and writing the narrative, went through many revisions. Many models were sketched before the final

models were created. These final models illustrate the major themes present, and the connections among them, for each family. They are presented in Chapter 4.

When building a model to represent a system, there are several important guidelines for making sure the model is well built. These considerations included asking if the system has all its parts present, and in the order that works best, or could there be other elements or ways to organize the pieces that might work as well, or work better. Again, the researcher went through many iterations before completing the proposed individual family models. Considerations in model building also included thinking about the system as having a purpose in a greater system, checking if the system could maintain stability through fluctuations and change, and determining if the system has feedback loops (Anderson & Johnson, 1997). These considerations were carried out during the simulation process. No model is ever perfect or final, as new information and ideas can always lead to change in the model. These models represent the researcher's best judgment based on the data and analysis.

Ultimately, the researcher created a narrative and leisure model for each family, both of which are presented in the next chapter. Overall, the process of spending additional time with the interview data, videos, codes, quotations, and model drafts helped the researcher gain deeper insight into the most important themes for each family, and the connections among them.

Simulations

Running simulations of the family systems models was important for two reasons. First, running simulations provided a check to see if the model was well-built or made

sense. This was done by simulating scenarios to see if what could reasonably be expected to happen did happen. This helped examine the models' usefulness for making inferences for each family. Second, simulations enabled the researcher to examine the dynamic nature and complexity of the system, to observe interactions among parts, how a change in one part may impact the whole, and to see how the system changed over time. This was done by posing 'what if' questions to then watch the interactions among elements, how changes influenced outcomes, and where additional changes might be leveraged in the system.

Once models were created for each family, the next step was to run simulations. As described, each family model included stocks, flows, connectors, and elements, all similar in form to the literature-review based model. Before running simulations, each element received a weight or strength (see Table 1). In systems modeling, numbers are used not to indicate measurement, but to indicate relationships. Each element was quantified with a value that indicated its weight relative to other elements in the model. These values (high, medium, low) were discussed with the coders during initial video coding, and relative weights were solidified by the researcher when writing the final narratives.

Weights were assigned to each element by the researcher based on a Likert-type scale. The researcher created a scale of 1-10 with one representing the lowest display of an element and 10 being the highest. For an element to receive a weight of 1, the element was present in the family leisure experience but had almost no effect on other elements. A weight of 5 indicated that the element was present only some of the time in the family leisure experience and had only a moderate effect on other elements. A weight of 10

Table 1

Element Weights for Model Simulations

Reynolds Family	Perry Family	Greg, Emma, Abe
Negotiating Constraints: 5	Negotiating Constraints: 5	Negotiating Constraints: 5
Shared Memories: 8	Education: 7	Being Together: 6
Concerted Cultivation: 7	Role Obligations: 6	Constraints: 7
Bonding: 8	Constraints: 5	Focused Interactions: 4
Challenge: 7	Fragmented Interactions: 5	Fragmented Interactions: 8
Constraints: 5	Variety: 8	Conflict: 6
Shared learning: 6	Bonding: 5	Chaotic Structure: 7
Support: 7	Transmitting Values: 6	Learning About One Another: 6
Education: 7	Communication: 5	Growing Into Roles: 5
Fun: 8		Shared Memories: 5
Valuing the Outdoors: 8		

meant that the element was present all the time in the family leisure experience and thus had a strong and constant influence on other elements. Numbers in between 1, 5, and 10 were used to indicate a graduate increase in presence and strength of elements as noted during data analysis, and reviewing the videos and data summary tables.

Once weights were assigned to each element, the researcher ran a behavior over time graph, or simulation, of each initial family leisure model. This provided a baseline for later model comparison. Stella, the systems modeling computer program used in this study, computed behavior over time graphs by running a series of differential equations that included the weight of each element, its effect on other elements, and the final impact on each stock, or outcome. Stella ran these equations iteratively, adjusting for

ongoing changes to each stock. This series of changing values were used to create the behavior over time graph.

The next phase of the research was to create scenarios that could be run as simulations to provide insight into how particular changes to each family's leisure behaviors might influence their stocks. This method was chosen as part of the research problem and purpose, which were to understand why families might not accrue the suggested benefits of family leisure, and suggest ways to address this problem. To create scenarios using elements present in each family model, the researcher considered the family's life context, personalities, strengths, challenges, and problems, and then reviewed the family leisure literature for ideas of what might create change for a family in that general situation, with regard to improving the outcomes of their family leisure. The researcher also considered what could realistically change for the family, as viewed during the family interviews. Each scenario was crafted as a 'what if' statement and justified with an example of realistic possible life changes for each family.

Each scenario was run as a behavior over time graph, and each compared to the initial model for each family. The results of the qualitative data analysis and simulations are discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to review the qualitative interview data and describe each family's leisure experience and the main themes that were reflected in those experiences. The chapter then discuses how those themes were used to construct individual leisure models for each family, which differed from the initial model. Finally, the chapter describes how simulations were run on various scenarios for each family model and what was learned about how changes to elements might impact stocks.

The Reynolds Family

The Reynolds family consists of four members: Maria, the mother, John, the father, and two children, Ashley, age 10, and David, age 13. The family lives in a large house in an affluent neighborhood with access to many nearby recreational activities, such as hiking and biking trails, ski resorts, and local parks. Both parents have college degrees and the father works full-time operating a successful small business. The mother assists with her husband's business and cares for their children, who attend a nearby public school. The family was interviewed on a Sunday afternoon during the Fall.

Antecedents

The Reynolds family was very motivated to participate in family leisure. During our initial conversation, all members expressed several reasons why they liked family leisure, specific activities they had enjoyed in the past, and expressed excitement or interest in trying activities again. As the family talked about and chose their leisure activity for that day, they went through their leisure repertoire, reviewing various activities for which they had stronger or weaker skills, challenges related to certain activities, and how much they liked or disliked activities.

For the leisure activity that day, the Reynolds family decided to play Frisbee in a nearby park. This choice built on experiences they had before (walking to the local park and playing together) but was also an activity new to them, and that they all agreed was not one of their strengths. There was a strong sense of family throughout their conversation, as each member always considered or included the others in their memories or ideas about family leisure.

What emerged from this conversation was a dominant theme of the family engaging in leisure for the long-term outcome of building and reinforcing their family and individual identities. This idea came up again in their conversation after the activity. In looking at specific antecedents to leisure, their conversation touched on several motivators to family leisure, specifically having and creating shared memories, concerted cultivation, challenge, bonding, and, as a de-motivator, constraints to leisure.

Shared memories. Shared memories was not originally in the coding scheme, but was added as it was prevalent for 2 of the families interviewed. Remembering and sharing can help family members create a feeling of connectedness and group identity.

The Reynolds family began their conversation by reminiscing about previous experiences, both positive and negative, and then drew from those experiences and memories to guide their activity choice and roles in the activity they were to complete while the researcher was there. The family talked at length about a recent trip to a nearby mountain range and how difficult the hike was. They also reminisced about fun aspects of that trip. As they talked, they laughed and reminded each other of funny and challenging moments on their trip.

Both parents expressed pride in their children completing the very challenging hike. Maria said, "I felt like it was really fun and I was excited they had done that," while John said he was "really surprised at how well they both did."

The daughter and mother remembered specific fun activities they had shared with another person.

> Ashley: Well, remember David and I would like to go down to the lake and skip rocks. And then one day, I went to the beach and David got a leach on his finger. And we had like this little blow up raft that we had and we would go around exploring.
> Maria: (cutting in)…. and we sat in the sun and skipped rocks and tried to hit a log – remember that (pointing to John) and we were the worst throwers in the world (laughing). We can't throw, as it turns out.

A desire to create new memories was also important to the family. When talking about what they hoped to get out of the activity that day, Maria said;

> I hope that they look around and see how beautiful it is during the day, and I hope they have a little memory that they build up and that they remember about fall in (our) city and being together as a family.

Engaging in shared leisure helped the family have memories to draw on and motivated them to do family leisure activities again. And, as the quote above illustrates,

memories were also important in shaping the values the parents wanted to express, share, and create with their children.

Concerted cultivation. Another theme expressed by this family, mostly by Maria, was that of concerted cultivation, which is effortful parenting, such as signing children up for a variety of activities or lessons, arranging activities with certain social groups, and modeling and coaching children on how to talk, assert themselves, and behave in social settings. Concerted cultivation is more common among middle and upper class families (Lareau, 2003).

In the Reynolds family, the parents did most of the teaching or lesson giving as they are both skilled enough in the outdoor sports they value being able to teach their children. This turned many family leisure activities into lessons or skill-building sessions, with Maria being the more verbal coach. The children both told their mother they sometimes do not like to ride bikes with her because she provides too much feedback.

> David: You talk.
> Ashley: You're like; "Go go"!
> Maria: I do not say "Go, go"! I never said that to you, young lady! What did I say to you? I was like "good job, good job – now make sure you're looking ahead.

Later in the interview, just before the family prepared to play Frisbee, the mother indicated feeling a little upset about being told she talked too much.

> Maria: I would normally be really supportive verbally, but now I'm re-thinking my plan, cause apparently Mom is always driving you crazy.
> Ashley: She's driving us crazy when she's like, "yeah, you do like this it's so easy."
> Maria: Ok…. (laughing) Mom's getting a little slap in the head here. Poor Mom. Moms always get the brunt.

Even though the children seemed to tire of their mother providing feedback, they talked about still participating in many activities together, and enjoying one-on-one time with her. Her concerted cultivation was more a motivator to leisure as she provided the organization, planning, and follow-through to make activities happen.

Challenge. Another motivator for this family was challenge, as all members talked about liking to improve their skills or try new activities. For example, the parents are competitive mountain bike racers and train all summer. Both children ski, and during the off season, Ashley practices ski jumps at a nearby resort. The family talked about an ice skating outing, which none of them knew how to do, and how it was fun to try something new and difficult. They also talked about how much they enjoyed a challenging hike in a nearby mountain range, during which their strength was tested, and they ended up turning back before reaching the top.

> Maria: We hiked 3,000 feet up, though. It was a little hard - 9.5 miles round trip (laughing) and we were at the base of the Grand Tetons. We were going to Secret Lake, but we didn't make it…'cause I thought we were getting into a life or death situation (laughing). Ashley was really hungry and they really wanted their milkshakes.
> David: But I thought I could have gone father...to see the lake.

For their activity during the interview, they chose to play Frisbee, and one reason Ashley said she wanted to do it was because of the challenge to learn something new. She explained, "I'm not good at it, but I like being able to learn to catch it, and it's really fun to catch it and chase it and stuff."

Bonding. One motivator for this family to do leisure activities together was the idea of, as they stated it, bonding, or simply spending time together. Each family talked about bonding and it was defined during the coding process as interactions in which

family members had a shared sense of emotional closeness. It differed from cohesion in that cohesion is usually defined as a more global style of family adaptability, whereas most families talked about bonding as something specific or occurring in moments of togetherness, with high levels of trust and emotional closeness. For the Reynolds family, John described bonding as when "we can kind of have a cohesiveness and that no one feels left out, and that we enjoy it (the activity)." The family chose to play Frisbee as their leisure activity and John said he thought bonding in this particular activity could happen through;

> …a lot of positive reinforcement, realistic expectations, you know, we're all …we don't do a lot of ball sports, and stuff like that, so it's kind of something that none of us are great at, so we can learn to do it together.

Maria echoed these same ideas about bonding when she talked about her reasons for wanting to do the activity. Frisbee was not one of her stronger activities and she felt, "It's important for us to get outside and play together," and she was interested in Frisbee, but, "I'm more interested in being with them."

After the activity, members also talked about the bonding that occurred during their family leisure. Bonding, for this family, played a similar role as shared memories in that the expectation of bonding and creating memories both motivated participation, and were outcomes of participation. Ashley expressed it as;

> It is always important to have good bonding time with the family because when we get older we need to have times to remember about our family, good things not bad things. So it's good to have good fun memories.

These reinforcing feedback loops (leisure creates memories and bonding, bonding and shared memories motivate more leisure) are an important part of continuing motivation for family leisure for the Reynolds.

Negotiating constraints. For many families, leisure and recreational activities can be a lot of work – usually to overcome time, money, and resource barriers. For this family, an affluent, educated family in a safe neighborhood, they had very few constraints to leisure. For example, there was no struggle to find equipment or clothing for their activities. Each person had multiple pairs of shoes to choose from, various jackets, water bottles, and Frisbees available for use. In their neighborhood, they all knew which streets and trails to take, and walked the quiet streets to the park without much concern for their safety. Finally, as they recreate together so often, each person knew his or her role and responsibilities in preparing for the activity. When they talked about previous leisure experiences, they mentioned that John always carried guidebooks and maps, Maria made sure they had sunscreen, and the children were responsible for water and appropriate shoes. When they prepared for this activity, each knew what to get and where all the items were located.

There were still a few interpersonal constraints for this family – mostly their various skill levels. For example, when deciding which activity to do that day, the family discussed going for a bike ride, but Maria pointed out that David had outgrown his bike and given it to Ashley, so not everyone had a bike. Maria also talked about when they do go on bike rides, she and Ashley go together so, "it's just me and Ashley, that way she wasn't being rushed by her brother, who's definitely a different skill level on the bike." When talking about why they had chosen Frisbee for the activity, John said, "We have a

big age and skill split, so it's hard to find activities that we can all do together," but he said Frisbee was a "good thing that we can all do," with regard to skill level. The Reynolds family members were well aware of their minimal constraints and able to easily negotiate around these constraints in order to do a fun activity together. The next phase of the interview consisted of the family members doing their chosen family leisure activity.

Activity

The primary antecedents that motivated the Reynolds family leisure included shared memories, concerted cultivation, challenge, bonding, and minimal constraints. The main themes found during the family activity included a high level of focused interactions, which were fueled by shared learning experiences and support. Focused interactions are simply those that take place without any distractions, when the primary activity is the only activity going on. The two themes noted during these focused interactions included shared learning experiences and support.

Shared learning. Before going into this activity, the family members had talked about how none of them were particularly good at Frisbee and felt this activity would be challenging for all of them equally. But they had also talked about how much they valued challenge, enjoyed learning and being together, and were intentional about their activity choices.

During their Frisbee activity, the family members offered suggestions to one another regarding throwing and catching techniques, and made suggestions for ways to play games. Initially, this was coded as educational setting, but in reviewing the data, the

family interactions were less about the setting and more about their interest in creating shared learning experiences with one another.

Maria was interested in trying out various ways to throw the Frisbee. She asked David, "Have you ever tried doing those catches where you curl it when it comes down on you?" and then tried to throw it that way. Ashley tried to teach her father a unique way to throw, and reminded him to, "make sure you aim up, not down, but perfect, or else it will go (she makes a going down motion with her arm)."

After working on throwing techniques, the members paired off and created games together. Maria suggested, "Okay, my game, David, is going to be wherever you catch it, is where you have to stay." The creation of this game was followed by lots of errant throwing, running, and laughing. Later, after tiring of playing in pairs, the family decided to try to play Ultimate Frisbee together. David and Ashley explained the rules and set boundaries for play. Both parents asked questions and listened to David's directions. David showed them his favorite moment in the game, which is to spike the Frisbee after scoring a point. The family played Ultimate Frisbee for about 10 minutes until everyone agreed they were tired.

Support. Maria took on the role of cheerleader during the family activity. She provided verbal support, encouragement, and suggestions for improvement. Her support was usually phrased as a lot of encouragement, followed by suggestions for a better way to play, or a comment related to safety. When playing with David, she kept suggesting he, "Back up, go long. Go get it, go get it, go get it, go get it! Yay! Ok, don't go in the bushes." Or, when playing with her daughter she said, "I'm open! Sock it to me. Get it! Aw…you gave it the old college try."

During Ultimate Frisbee, Maria again provided verbal feedback about how they were playing, and encouraged the family to continue playing.

Maria: I love the way you jump and squat David. That was awesome.
David: It's like Sasquatch.
Maria: Can we just do a couple more rounds of that?

Ashley became tired and thirsty, and was distracted by a puppy running across the field. Shortly after this conversation, the family decided they were tired and began to walk home.

As seen in the previous section, this family values time together, is able to negotiate constraints, and enjoys a challenge. The family's interest in working on a new activity, while also supporting one another helped make this experience into one almost entirely of focused interactions. The only event detracting from focused interactions was the occasional distraction of a puppy on the field, as well as Ashley becoming tired and thirsty. They took care of these distractions by changing the location of their play on the field, and by stopping at a water fountain on their way out of the park.

Outcomes

After playing Frisbee, the family returned home and talked about their experience. They were asked to review what they did, what interactions they had with one another, what they learned about one another, and their overall reactions to the activity.

Each theme expressed in this final interview was related to teaching and sharing values. The themes that helped support the transmission of values included bonding, having fun, education, and being outdoors. During this portion of the interview, the

family also talked in general terms about their leisure, rather than about specific activities.

Bonding. Bonding was also a theme present in the Reynolds' conversation before the activity took place, and, as noted, is both a motivator and a desired outcome. Bonding for the Reynolds family works in a strong reinforcing loop, with leisure promoting bonding, and bonding motivating more leisure. In this final conversation, bonding was also used to help members share family values.

For this family, bonding occurred when members enjoyed something fun together or when they could be together in a pleasant way. When asked to talk about what they did during their family activity, Ashley said, "we had good family fun. We got to do activities as a family. We got to be together, and you know, bond."

Maria also felt the activity encouraged bonding. She felt that the activity was an experience in which they could be together, learn from one another, and foster emotional closeness. Maria said, "I really value the time we can do things equally. It's just fun to play on an even level, where I'm not better, he's not better. We're all pretty lame actually. But it was fun, it's really fun." Maria also noted how the members were all good at encouraging one another, and able to forget their usual interest in competition. She said, "Yeah, we are a competitive family. But I think we showed we're positive. We reinforce for each other. We're really positive for each other when we do well."

In speaking about their family leisure in general, Ashley explained why it was important to their relationships. She said;

> I think if we didn't do sports and stuff, then maybe, if we didn't go outside and play as much, David and I might not be as good of friends cause we wouldn't really have a fun way to connect.

John noted that their family leisure activities helped the family bond because all members could work together to accomplish something.

> "I think that, I mean, even though things aren't structured, I still think they're team building – teaching us how to interact with each other, have more respect for each other, and less tension. It's more just through the experience, we're not super structured."

Finally, Maria and John noticed the reinforcing nature of their activities and family bonding. Maria said that, "the more time we spend together, the more we see how much we get along, and how there's always somebody who makes somebody laugh." Similarly, John said that family leisure was a way to increase bonding and closeness as the setting and activities created a safe space for communication, and communication could reinforce emotional closeness as the children aged.

> I think since we do a lot of stuff together, when we have to have the hard conversations, talking about drugs and lifestyle choices and stuff like that… it's not like we're like….'uh we have to have a talk…' it's more natural. It's not like we're having a big come-to Jesus meeting, or something, it's just something we can integrate into the flow of activity. I mean, it's like some of the stuff we talk about on the chair lift. We talk about what the kids are doing, we get to know them."

Education. Education in this study was defined as learning skills or learning about people. As noted in the antecedents, the Reynolds family enjoys challenge, and places value on learning. Education is one of their desired outcomes of family leisure.

The family members talked both about wanting to learn new skills, and to learn to meet or exceed challenges. John mentioned that during Frisbee, it was "good seeing the kids learn some skills and get better, and us get better." Maria added that she wanted the children to learn that "you can do things that are difficult, you can overcome obstacles, you know, and just have a healthy outlook on life."

Ashley also brought up that during family leisure, members could share ideas and teach and learn together.

> I think it really helps us connect when we play because, um, we all have different things to teach each other and everybody can learn and it's fun to learn other people's ways and to teach other people your ways.

Ashley was also aware of social skills she could learn through family leisure activities.

> I think it's also important that we go out and play cause it teaches us teamwork skills and how to play with other people so we aren't like this rude person that doesn't know how to work with other people.

For this family, learning was important to them throughout their family leisure experience. But more than just skill building, the family also considered people or social skills as part of the education.

Fun. Fun was also an important outcome for a successful family leisure experience, and was important both to facilitate other outcomes and as an end goal in itself. By maintaining positive affect in everything they did, the family was able to create a safe environment for learning, sharing, and increasing emotional closeness. Their focus on fun was evident during the Frisbee game, through the amount of laughter and smiling. They also talked about previous activities with laughter, and joked with one another about both their positive and negative memories. The family members talked about trying to maintain a level of fun in everything they do.

When John talked about their Frisbee activity, he said one reason it worked well was that, "we didn't take it too seriously, we didn't like, set standards, like, you need to catch it…it wasn't all about, you know, throwing and catching. It was mostly interactive, joking around." Maria agreed, and added that they "don't have fun when one of us is

taking something too seriously. We all feel it." Ashley also agreed and said that Maria often tries to make challenging activities fun. She said, "She tries to introduce the experience to us as good and fun, and not as a chore."

Valuing the outdoors. Finally, while all of the themes in the outcome section were related to sharing values, John and Maria specifically wanted to share their love for the outdoors. Both parents talked about enjoying a lot of outdoor activities when they were young, and wanted to share that love with their children. The family chose to live in the city they do, because, John explained, "we value outdoor time a lot, and I just feel like I'm sharing our values with them and passing them down. I get really frustrated when we don't get out of the house and enjoy what we have." Maria went on to express her belief in the importance of the outdoors by saying;

> I think what's important is being outside. It's kind of our church, it's our religion. You know, and I think there's always that fear, even with religion, if you force your children to go to church, they're going to hate it. Well, for us, I try not to force them to go outside, although there comes a point when I'll look at David on the couch, in his pajamas, and be like, get up! You've got to get outside, and I actually kick him out."

In general, each member of the Reynolds family appeared to enjoy family leisure activities. The family worked well together, sharing stories, ideas, and learning together. Family members were supportive of one another, even when frustrated. The parents put much time and effort into their family leisure, and the children seemed to appreciate their opportunities. Their family leisure appeared to most often consist of easy, positive focused interactions that increased their shared family values.

Reynolds Family Model

Based on the interview data and themes described in the vignettes, the Reynolds family's themes were organized into a basic model. The model is a simplified picture of what went on during the family's leisure and how the elements interact to influence outcomes, or stocks. Each model followed the structure of the initial family leisure model, with an antecedent, experience, and outcome subsystem. Each subsystem consisted of elements that flow in or out of the three main stocks, filling up or draining that resource. The resulting model for the Reynolds family can be seen in Figure 2.

Model Explanation

The Reynolds family indicated many reasons why they were motivated to participate in family leisure together. These reasons are part of the antecedent subsystem flowing into and building up their stock of motivation to leisure. Elements flowing into that stock include challenge, shared memories, concerted cultivation, bonding, and negotiating constraints. The only elements flowing out of the stock were interpersonal constraints (which was in the experience subsystem on the initial model), and for this family were problems such as recreating on a different skill level from one another. In this subsystem, elements flowing into motivation were all weighted higher than the stock flowing out as the family placed more emphasis on their reasons to recreate together rather than why they could not. The only draining stock, interpersonal constraints, also linked to negotiating constraints on the left side of this system, indicating that the family realized their constraints, and could usually find strategies to successfully negotiate

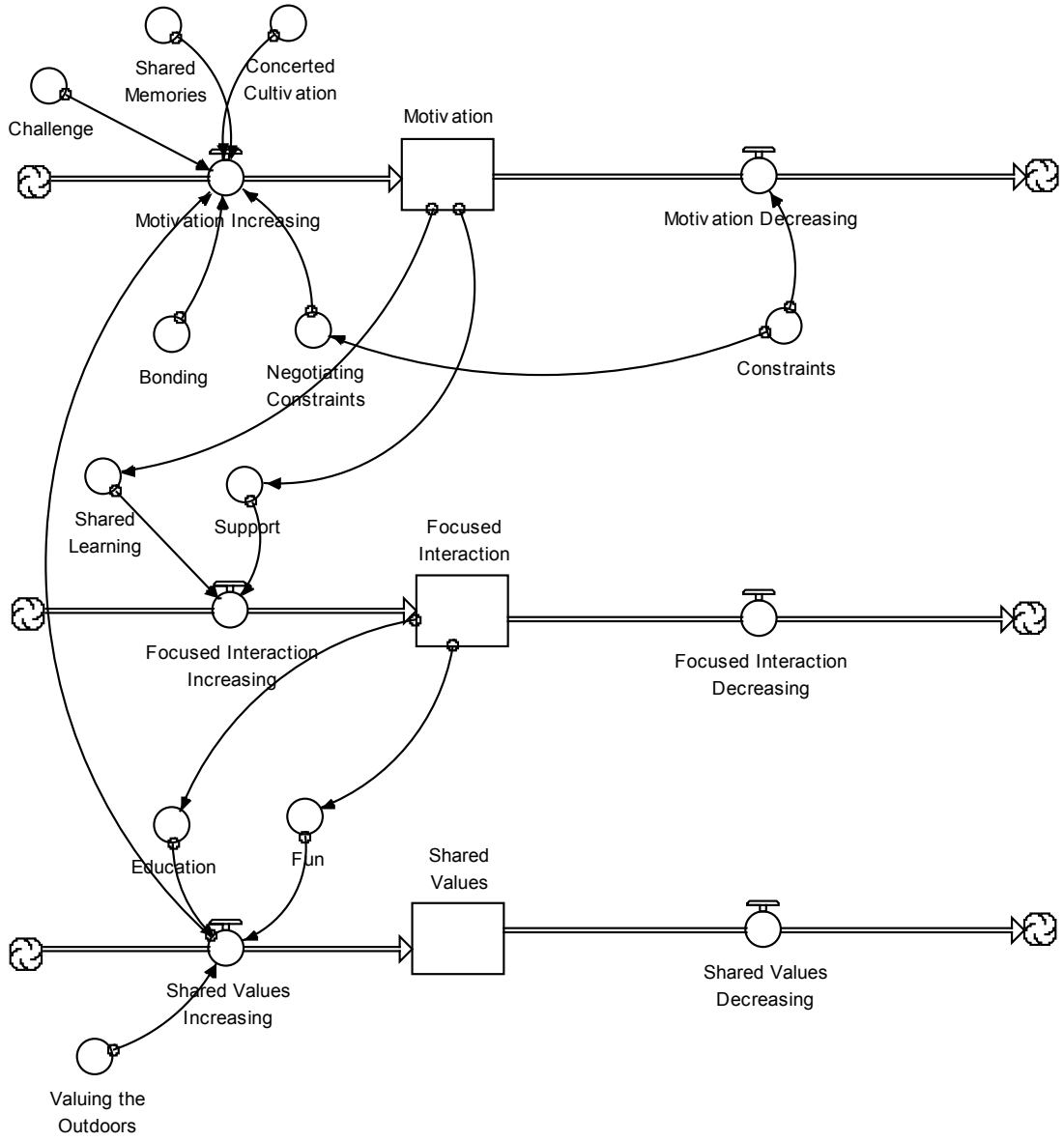

Figure 2. Reynolds family leisure model.

around them. Overall, this first subsystem has many elements increasing the stock of motivation.

In the experience subsystem, shared learning and support flowed into the stock of focused interactions, while nothing flowed out of it. The stock of motivation also flowed into support and shared learning, helping to increase focused interactions. It is clear this family has many more elements flowing into their subsystems than out of them. In their interview data, the family talked more about their reasons for participating and their positive experiences in family leisure than they did about anything taking away from their experiences. This is reflected in the model.

Finally, the stock of focused interactions flowed into the elements of education and fun, both of which, along with valuing the outdoors, flowed into the stock of shared values. Nothing flowed out of it. Shared values increasing also flowed back up to motivation increasing, creating a feedback loop for the entire system. The links between subsystems support elements flowing into more than stock, helping to increase each stock at a greater rate. Coupled with the few elements flowing out of each stock, it should be expected that each stock in this model would fill up quickly.

Reynolds Family Model Analysis

Before running simulations, or behavior over time graphs for the Reynolds family, weights were added to each element. Weights assisted the computer simulation program in running differential equations to calculate how each element interacts with others and how that in turn influences stocks. In systems modeling, numbers are used not necessarily to indicate measurement of something but to indicate relations. Each element

was quantified by being assigned a value that indicated its weight relative to other elements in the model. For example, in this model, constraints were given a weight of 4 on a scale of 1 to 10, because constraints for this family were relatively low. Negotiating constraints was assigned a value of 6 because the family found ways to participate in activities despite potential limitations. In another example, support in the experience subsystem was weighted at an 8 because during the interview, the family expressed providing a lot of support for one another, both physically and emotionally, while shared learning was given a weight of 5 because the family enjoyed learning together, but this was not emphasized as much as support, as indicated by the interview. These examples illustrate how element weights are relative and based on researcher judgment and interview data rather than absolute or based on a specific measurement. Once weights were assigned, a behavior over time graph for the initial model was run. This baseline was used as a comparison for subsequent models.

The next phase of the modeling process included asking questions about the system to further investigate the interactions of elements for each family and observe changes to outcomes when scenarios were simulated. To start, the initial model was simulated, and behavior over time graphs for each stock were created. This allowed for a comparison to subsequent simulations. Next, the researcher created scenarios or 'what if' questions that could be demonstrated in the system by manipulating elements and observing subsequent changes to stocks. Scenarios were generated by reflecting on the family data used to inform the model, the family leisure literature, and the research problem. Each scenario was considered for its utility in gaining insight about the family system. Once a scenario was created, usually involving only one or two elements, the

weights were changed to reflect the scenario, and a behavior over time graph was simulated.

Reynolds Family Simulations

All models were simulated over a 2-hour period, chosen because that was the approximate amount of time the family said they typically spent on their family leisure experiences. Simulations provided a look at how a change in one part of the system could impact the whole. In the simulation of the initial model for the Reynolds family, each stock increased (see Figure 3).This is not surprising given their emphasis on family leisure, ability to negotiate constraints, and the positive and supportive behaviors during and after the experiences.

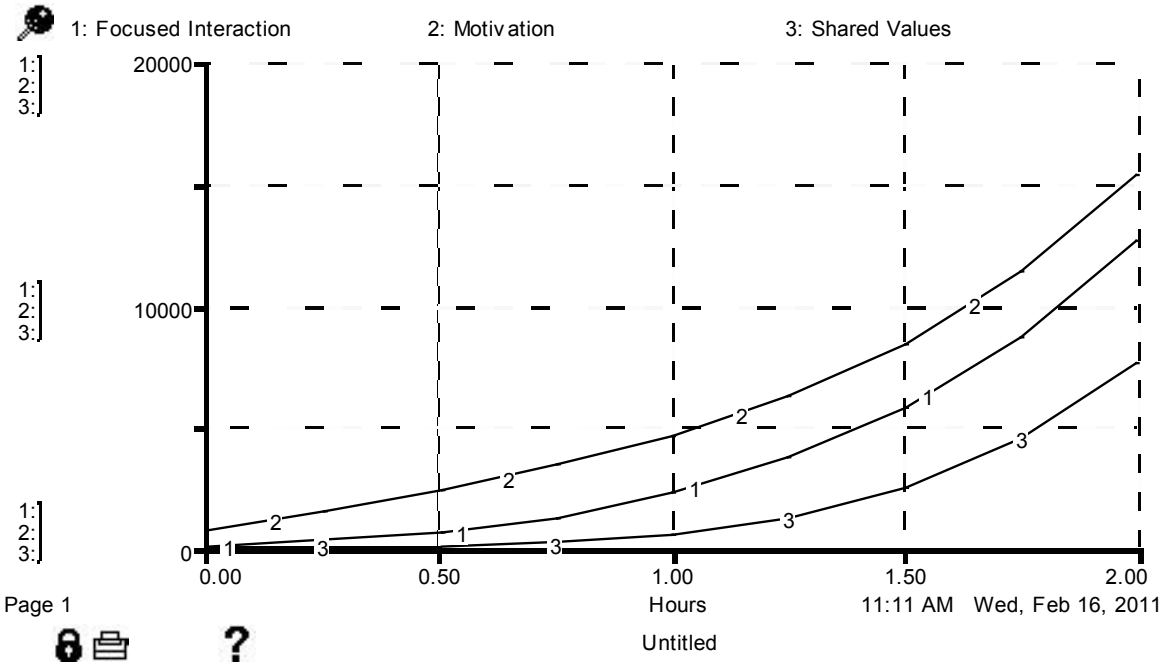

Figure 3. Reynolds family initial model

Next, the researcher considered potential scenarios that could influence the elements and stocks in the Reynolds family's leisure. Each scenario was chosen based on the qualitative results outlined in the vignette, along with ideas from the family leisure literature. This first scenario asked what would happen if concerted cultivation decreased (see Figure 4). In the initial model, concerted cultivation flowed into motivation to family leisure. Concerted cultivation refers to upper and middle class parents' efforts to stimulate their child's development and foster their cognitive and social growth (Lareau, 2003). In the Reynolds family, the parents prioritized structured opportunities to participate in family leisure, and their belief in the importance of such activities provided motivation to engage in family leisure. Concerted cultivation was selected for simulation as it is a variable that could reasonably change for this family. For example, the parents could reduce their efforts to structure, plan, and carry out family leisure activities, or

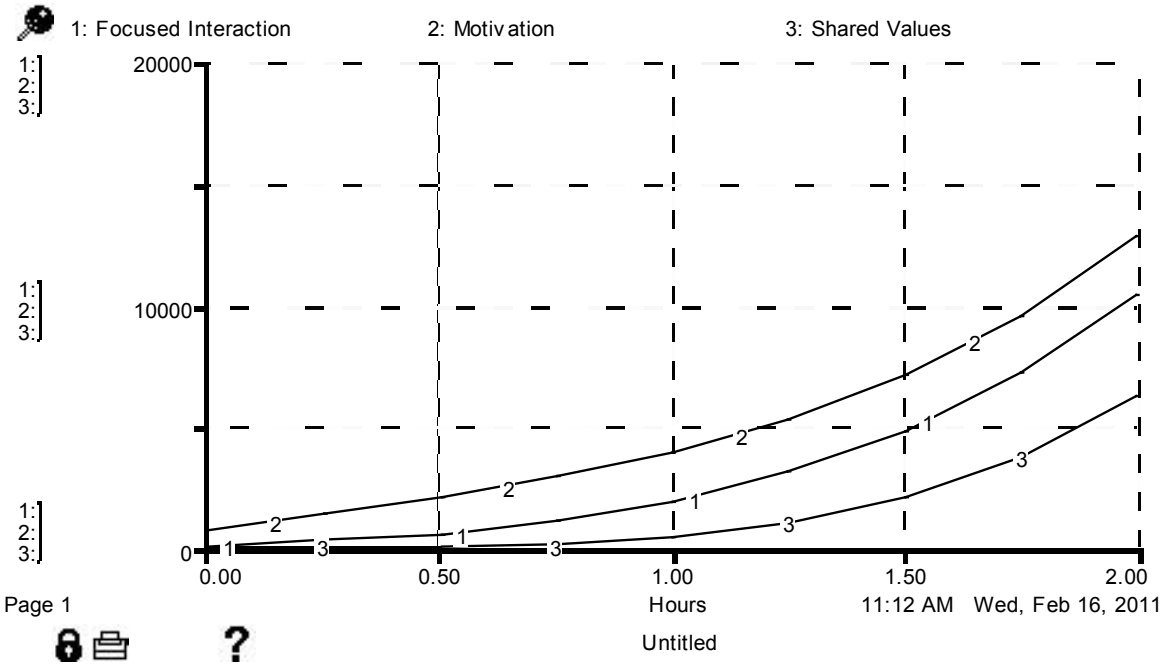

Figure 4. Concerted cultivation decreased.

lessen their encouragement or teaching during family leisure activities.

When the model was run with a decreased level of concerted cultivation, the behavior over time graph indicated only a slight decrease in levels for each outcome, as compared to the initial model. This is likely because concerted cultivation was one of five variables flowing into motivation to leisure, and may not have had that strong of an influence on each outcome.

The second simulation considered what might happen if constraints increased and negotiation of constraints decreased (see Figure 5). This scenario could happen to the Reynolds family if they were to encounter job loss or financial changes, or if the family circumstances changed such that their constraint negotiation skills were no longer applicable. Again in this simulation, the outcomes decreased only slightly from levels in the initial model.

Shared values took slightly longer to begin to increase, and this could be because more effort had to be put into negotiating constraints, thus slightly delaying the flow into motivation and focused interaction, and delaying shared values. In this model, motivation is still high, indicating that even with increased constraints, enough elements flow into motivation to keep it high.

The third simulation asked what would happen if constraints increased and support decreased (see Figure 6). This scenario was chosen because the family provided ample support for one another in their family leisure experience during the interview, and this support seemed to be an important element for their success at challenging leisure activities. This simulation considered the possibility that their resources decreased,

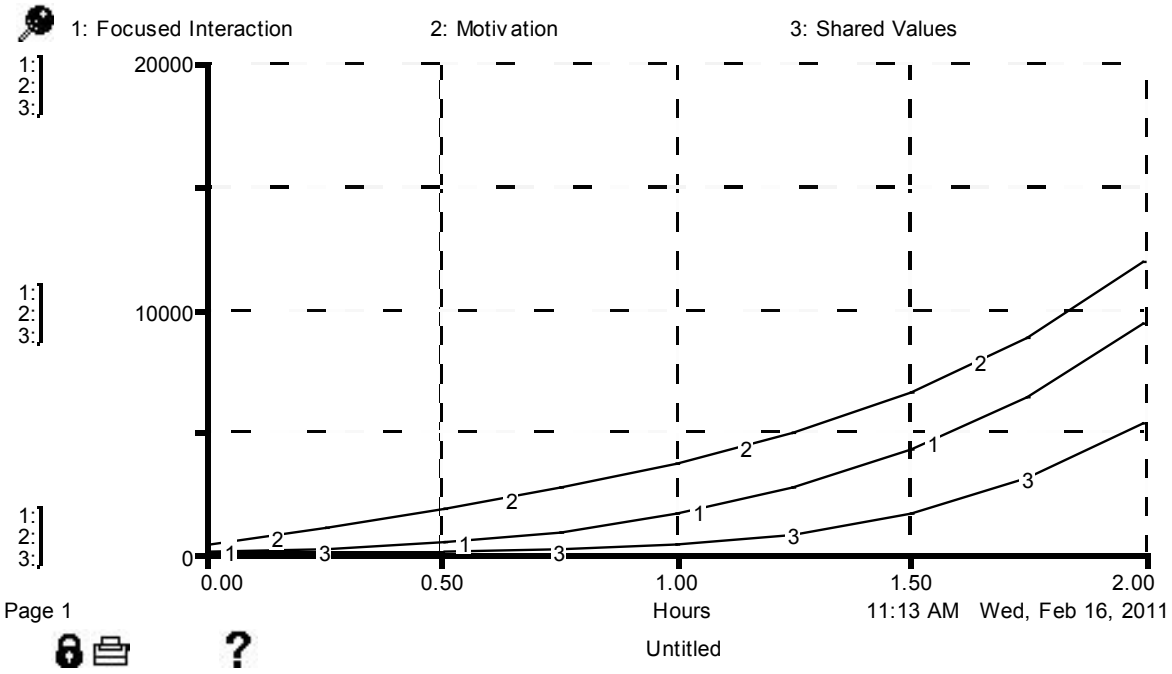

Figure 5. Constraints increased and negotiation of constraints decreased.

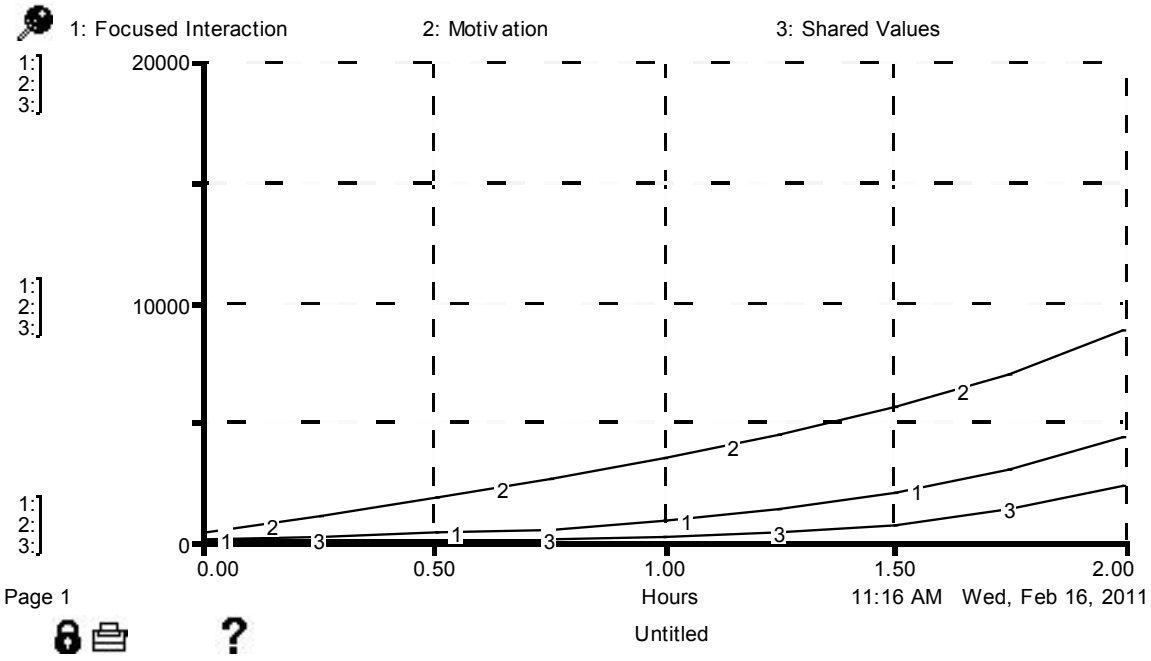

Figure 6. Constraints increased and support decreased.

perhaps due to financial changes, and their supportive behaviors decreased, perhaps due to increased stress. In their initial family model, constraints and support are not directly linked, but rather constraints can decrease the stock of motivation, which can then influence the level of support flowing into focused interactions, and then influence fun, to then impact the stock of shared values.

When this scenario was simulated, shared values decreased the most, followed by focused interactions, while motivation still remained high, although much lower than the initial model. What is most notable in this scenario is that shared values remain almost flat until three-quarters of the way through the experience, while motivation begins to increase almost right away. This is the only model in which shared values remain flat for so long.

Also of note in this scenario is that, while motivation remained high, focused interactions increased at a much slower rate than other models. This could be a direct result of the decreases in both support and motivation (as draining faster when constraints increase), and the cumulative effect could have a powerful impact on focused interactions. The lower level of focused interactions also impacted shared values, which, as stated, was flat for almost three-quarters of the way into the simulation.

The last scenario asked what would happen if challenge increased and constraints decreased (see Figure 7). This scenario was plausible because this family enjoyed challenge and could likely find new activities or ways to challenge themselves in their leisure. Constraints decreasing could happen for this family as the children age, and the entire family could participate in recreation activities at the same skill level. When this

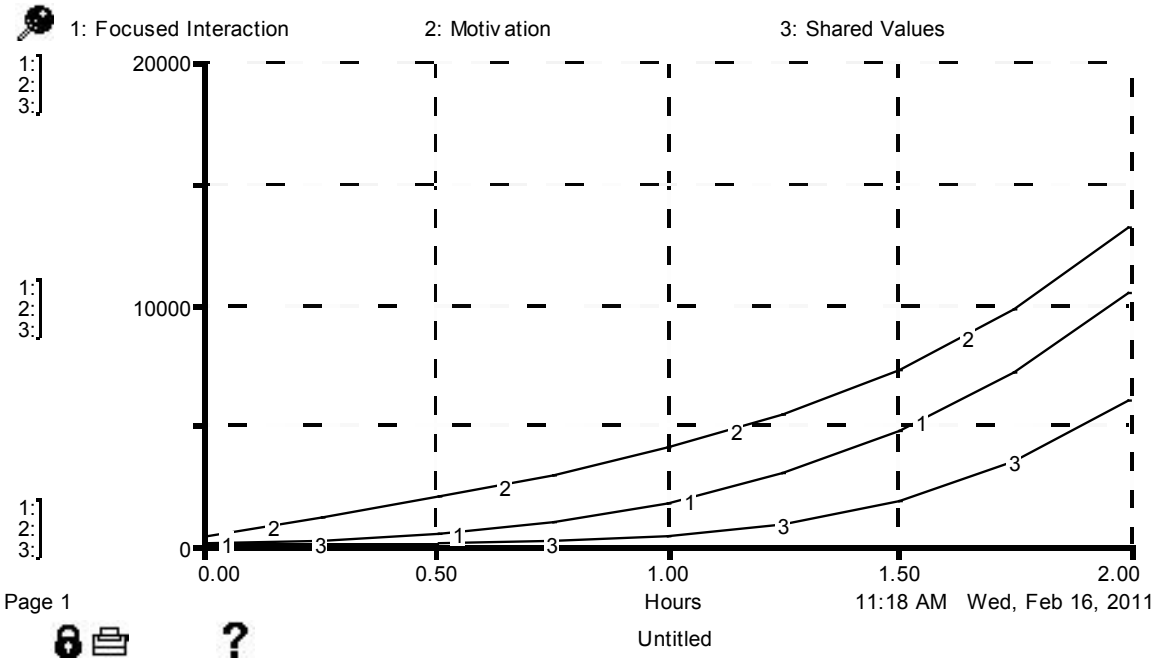

Figure 7. Challenge increased and constraints decreased.

scenario was run, motivation again increased the most, with focused interactions next, and shared values last. Each stock increased at a rate slightly slower than the initial model. This is interesting because this scenario would seem to be an opportunity for each stock to spike, because without constraints, it would seem that motivation and then each subsequent stock could increase. By adding challenge to a family that enjoyed challenge, motivation might be expected to increase as well. This was not the case. Perhaps the initial model had just the right amount of challenge and constraints to create an optimum leisure experience for this family.

Summary

Running simulations provides a check into a model's utility. If behavior over time graphs do not indicate much movement, no matter how elements are changed, the model might not be useful for examining the system. In this model, each simulation created a

change in stocks, and each change was one that could reasonably be expected to happen. Further, the system appeared appropriately sensitive to changes. For example, in the third simulation when constraints increased (antecedent) and support decreased (experience), shared values (outcome) became a flat line. This could indicate that all the elements and stocks were adequately linked so as to be sensitive to changes in the system.

Many scenarios could be simulated for this family's leisure model, but the ones presented here were chosen because they seemed most plausible in light of the family's current life situations. For the Reynolds family, they have many elements flowing into their family leisure stocks. In the experience system, this almost ensured that their motivation remained high because they had so many sources of motivation. The stocks of focused interactions and shared values fluctuated more often than did motivation, likely because they were influenced by what happened in the motivation stock, and because each had fewer elements flowing in. Constraints increasing and support decreasing created the greatest change in the stocks. Constraints causing change is found in the next family models, as well. The greatest benefit for this family is that they had many positive elements flowing into stocks and could withstand a decrease in other elements.

The Perry Family

The Perry family consists of three members: Paula, the mother; Steven, the father; and Abby, their daughter. Abby is 11 years old, and Paula and Steven are in their late 20s. The family lives in a townhouse in a low-income government housing unit in the downtown area of a midsized city. Their townhouse is one of four in a row, with another row of four directly behind them. Each unit has a small patio, which opens to a narrow common backyard area.

The family is very poor and Paula and Steven attribute that to their lack of education and poor choices as teenagers. They both dropped out of high school and neither returned to complete a degree. Paula gave birth to Abby when she was 16, and has since spent most of her life caring for Abby, and occasionally for Steven's mother, who has a mental disability. Steven was employed full-time as a construction worker, but lost his job about 6 months prior to the interview. He now spends much of his time at home with Paula, or working odd jobs. The family members described themselves as poor, and said they do not have a phone, car, or bank account. The family was interviewed in their home on a Saturday afternoon during the Fall. The Perry family was asked to talk about their general family leisure experiences, to choose an activity they could participate in that day, and then to plan for, complete, and discuss that activity.

Antecedents

When asked about their family leisure experiences, the first thing Paula and Steven talked about was their lack of income and how that often dictated what they could and could not do. They also said that because they are unemployed, they have ample free

time to participate in family leisure, but little income or resources with which to do so. They talked about trying to provide as many educational leisure experiences for Abby as they could, because they wanted her to have more opportunities and a better life than they had experienced. From the first portion of the interview, the major antecedents to their family leisure included constraints to leisure, free choice, constraints negotiation, and educational opportunities, all of which led to or took away from their motivation to engage in family leisure pursuits.

Constraints and negotiations. Because neither parent in the Perry family is employed, Paula and Steven expressed their family leisure time as characterized by both a high degree of financial constraints and a high degree of free or unobligated time. As both parents were unemployed, a lack of money prevented them from doing many leisure activities they wanted to do. A lack of transportation also limited their activities. For example, the family talked about previous family summer camping and boating trips, but said they had not participated in those activities this summer because, as Steven explained, he had been recently laid off and they did not have much money.

Money and time were a constant theme during the interview, and seemed almost to be mutually exclusive – if the family had money for recreation activities, they did not have time to do them together. And if they had time to be together, it was because Steven was not working, so they had no money to do certain leisure activities.

Steven talked about having income versus free time as both a constraint and facilitator to leisure.

> I do want to start making more money, you know, 'cause of course we need money. It's a necessity in life, but you know, I've enjoyed having time to spend with my kid. Before it was just work, home, sleep, work,

> home, sleep. On the weekend I'd be so dead, cause I worked construction, I wouldn't get to be with my family.

Constraints are often considered to limit free choice, and for this family, constraints limited their ability to purchase certain leisure experiences. But constraints may also be limiting only to the extent that the family is unable to negotiate them. The Perry family found that they were often only constrained by their creativity and motivation, and that their free time enabled them to create and participate in many activities they desired. For the most part, the family negotiated their leisure constraints by creating home-based, low-cost activities or seeking out nearby, free activities. Paula and Abby said they frequently did home-based leisure together, and had to stay near their home because Paula did not have a driver's license. While deciding what to do for the family interview, they listed many home-based, low or no-cost activities they all enjoyed, such as playing with sidewalk chalk, gardening, Frisbee, playing with the neighbors, chasing one another around the house, or going to the park or library. They also mentioned wanting to attend a free concert that night in the park. Finally, they decided to play in the backyard.

Paula summed up their attitude about family leisure, especially what they realized after Steven lost his job and their income declined. She said, "You know, you don't have to go too far to have fun, you can just go outside and there's just a whole world right in your backyard."

Educational opportunities. A major motivator for this family to participate in family leisure was the desire to provide educational opportunities for Abby. Paula and Steven did not finish high school and talked about their lack of education as hindering

their job opportunities and income level later in life. They wanted Abby to finish high school, continue on to college, and not repeat the mistakes they had made. They talked about choosing family leisure activities that could provide Abby with additional educational opportunities. The family lives near a public library, and talked about walking there on a weekly basis in order to check out books for Abby. Library books and programs are free, so taking advantage of this opportunity was part of negotiating their financial constraints. Abby said she enjoyed going to the library with the family because "there are different kinds of books, like the school library just has one kind of books, but there's a whole bunch of different books, and at the library you can get all the books you want."

The family's amount of free choice in their activities, coupled with a desire to provide educational activities for Abby, seemed to foster the family's creativity in coming up with leisure activities. Paula talked about her and Abby making arts and crafts projects together, and about Abby's ability to invent games and activities for herself and her friends. Paula explained it this way, "There's so much, just so much right around here, just anything, just, um, she'll find something to do with anything." She gave an example of a recent activity Abby and her friends made up, "They like to play in the dirt and they'll make little villages and these little canals, and holes and she likes to do … a snail hotel." For the Perry family, while their financial constraints prevented them from doing some leisure activities, their negotiation strategies, coupled with their free time and desire for educational outcomes resulted in high motivation to engage in home-based leisure activities.

Experience. For the interview, the Perry family decided to play ball and Frisbee in their backyard. In the first interview segment, Paula and Abby had talked with more excitement about their family activities, with Steven adding that he participated with interest most of the time, but not always. Steven also talked about his previous work experiences and his wish to make more money for the family. This conversation hinted at the parent's sense of role obligation noted in the activity portion of the interview. The second theme present during the activity was that of fragmented interaction. Before the activity, the family talked about wanting to share quality leisure time, but during the actual activity, their interactions were often fragmented due to distractions around the yard.

Role obligation. During the first portion of the interview, Paula and Steven talked about their roles in the family in terms of traditional gender lines, with Paula staying home to care for Abby, and Steven going to work. Paula also talked more about their family leisure options and activities, such as going to the library or park. These same roles held accurate for their family activity as well. Paula did most of the planning and motivating, and Steven made little effort to participate unless directly asked.

Knowing from the previous portion of the interview that Paula felt a strong sense of duty to care for Abby, her behavior during the activity was interpreted as her sense of role obligation. For example, when preparing to go outside, Paula made sure Abby had proper shoes on, and then they looked for a Frisbee together. Once outside, Paula kept a running commentary about their games and encouraged the family to try new activities. She frequently made comments like, "Alright, what are we going to do? Should we play that one game? The one where we're close to each other?" Or, she was often heard asking

the others, “Ok, what are we going to do, instead of just standing?” Paula also frequently asked Abby what she wanted to do, who she wanted to play with, and if she wanted to change games. After 20 minutes of playing several variations of Frisbee and soccer, they decided to play with chalk, and Paula went inside to find it.

Later, Paula incorporated their young neighbors into the games, tried to teach them all a version of kickball, and helped Abby up when she fell. Based on Paula’s comments about her role as mother and caretaker, her motivation and actions during the activity were considered examples of her sense of role obligation. Steven did not seem to have a sense of obligation to play with his family, and spent most of his time moving in and out of the activity. His behavior seemed to represent the next theme of fragmented interactions.

Fragmented interactions The family activity outside was also characterized by fragmented interactions, which seemed to detract from the quality of their leisure. A quality interaction is when one activity, in this case the family leisure activity, is the only activity going on at one time. Fragmented interactions are those that are interrupted by other people or objects, and then detract from the quality of the main interaction. For the Perry family’s activity, most of their interactions were brief, and were quickly and frequently interrupted by another person, object, or simply by a short attention span directing the person to something else.

Paula and Abby were only involved in a game for a few minutes before one or both of them would find something else to do or look at, such as a bird feeder, their garden, a rock or stick, or a toy left out in the yard. They were also both distracted by the neighbors who came over to play with them. Paula tried to create games everyone could

play, but not everyone would agree, or focus on the activity. Abby rotated among playing ball with the neighbors, playing bubbles alone, and wandering under a tree.

Steven did not engage much with the family. He came outside after Paula and Abby, and stood to the side while they played. They asked him to play monkey in the middle, which he did for a few minutes, but then they changed games. He kicked the soccer ball occasionally, but would then wander around the yard by himself, talk to the neighbors, or watch from the sidelines.

The Perry family exhibited role obligation and fragmented interactions during their family leisure activity. Based on their previous conversation, the parents seemed to want to create quality leisure interactions for their daughter, but were not quite able to make that happen during this activity.

Outcomes

During the final portion of the interview, the family talked specifically about the leisure activity they had completed, and also spoke generally about what they experienced during, or as outcomes from, family activities in general. A theme throughout the interview was that Paula and Steven wanted Abby to have a better life than they had, and wanted to create a better family life than they had experienced. They wanted their family to be happy, safe, have ongoing educational opportunities, and understand their shared family values and choices. They spoke about sharing their values with Abby through direct conversations and by modeling behaviors, both of which they noted could happen during family leisure activities. From this final portion of the interview, the main themes found were the importance of leisure for providing variety or

a change in routine, for facilitating communication to share values, and for bonding. These themes seemed to lead to their final desired outcome of family leisure, happiness.

Variety. After the Perry family played outside, the family went back inside to talk about their experience. One of the main themes that emerged when analyzing this conversation, and that had not been on the original code sheet, was that of a need for variety or change of routine. The Perry family did not have a traditional work-home routine, but rather had a life of mostly free time, with the only scheduled events being to walk Abby to and from school, and to make meals. Steven said that since he lost his job, his routine consisted mostly of watching television, while Paula talked about her need to stay busy during the day, so she would often clean, watch television, or play with their pets. Engaging in different family leisure activities provided a break from their usual routine.

Steven talked about going outside as a good option to relieve boredom. He said, "We can get cabin fever real quick if we're inside too long on any given day. It's been like that the last few days cause it's been so rainy out."

Abby said that going outside provided her a variety of activities and people to be around.

> We got to play with a whole bunch of different things, and I got to play with all the other kids, and usually it's just me and her or me and him or something, and it was all of us together.

Paula also suggested that going outside and playing would have a lasting effect on their whole day.

> Yeah, well, 'cause it makes us now in that 'ah' kind of place, cause instead, if we wouldn't have went outside, there could have been anything from us getting frustrated to um, just sitting around doing nothing, and

> you're just kind of 'ugh' with the day, and now you feel all, well, I feel all uppity and fun, and yeah, so that's what made it for me, the difference.

Another example of variety in their family life is when they are able to go out for dinner. Going out to eat does not happen often, Steven said, but when it does, they all enjoy the opportunity for a change. Abby said she likes going out because,

> …when we go to the store and get food, I already know what kind of food we're going to get. But when we go to a different restaurant, we don't go to the same restaurant, so I don't know what the menu is, so it's different varieties.

Paula and Steven placed a lot of value in being happy and in trying to foster different life outcomes for their daughter than they had. The break from routine that family leisure activities provided them may have helped the parents feel they were providing different opportunities for their daughter and themselves.

Communication and sharing values. Another outcome of this family's leisure was communication, and specifically communication as a way to share values. Although they did not communicate much during their family activity, they gave examples of how leisure activities in general help their ability to communicate with one another, and to share their values with Abby.

Paula and Steven, as noted, did not want Abby to have the struggles growing up that they endured. They spoke many times about how they wanted to be better parents than their parents were, and how they worked to foster a close relationship with Abby. It was clear that despite their lack of formal education, Paula and Steven had put a lot of thought into how they could better Abby's life. Open communication with Abby was one of the ways. Paula described family leisure as a way to foster trust and communication.

> If you actually do a little effort to do something with them, like playing with their toys or doing a board game that she wants, going on to her level makes it stimulate her mind to where she wants to come to us more, and come to us with other problems, too, and that whole bonding will make everything just bloom.

Paula and Steven also took a direct approach to addressing problems that arose during or from their family leisure experiences, and used those experiences to teach values to Abby. One activity Paula and Abby enjoyed each day was walking to and from Abby's school. Paula said she sometimes used the walk time to explain family values or choices to Abby. One such conversation was about the walk itself. Paula and Steven had concerns about their neighborhood safety, and insisted on walking Abby to school. But Abby was made fun of by other children, which made her feel bad, Paula said, "so I gave her leniency, ok 'I can meet you a block away' at the end of the field. So that little thing isn't saying, 'you get out,' or 'my daughter, I can't let you go.'" Paula explained how this compromise was an effort to teach Abby their beliefs about safety and responsibility.

> … we're doing our best to make her happy and make her be everything she can be and wants to be, instead of us pushing so much on her that it makes her feel like she doesn't want to be around us. Yeah, so far, it's working.

Both parents also had concerns about Abby's safety when she played outside alone. Paula and Steven said they grew up in 'rough' neighborhoods, and did not trust all of their current neighbors. Paula and Steven felt it was important to explain this to Abby so she could understand their reasons for restricting her outdoor play. Paula explained it this way:

> With her, if I say no, and she doesn't know the exact reason, (she'll ask) 'why?' 'because, if you go outside a block away, someone could get you, you can get hurt,' all these other things, and I put it to her understanding to where she does understand it, and she's looking at it the way she should

> and half the time, her mind changes, about it, 'Yeah, actually you're right, if I were to go that far, someone could take me.'

Paula said that as Abby grew older, and as the family became more familiar with their neighbors, they allowed her to play farther away from home. During the interview, Steven asked Abby if she felt like she had enough freedom. Abby said she did because, "If I want to be somewhere alone, I can go over to the little playground over there, and I have a lot of kids over here, and two neighbors over here. I don't really have to go anywhere." For this family, how they structured their leisure activities was important for sharing and explaining family values, which was expected to be a step toward greater happiness for all members.

Bonding. Along with variety and communication, the Perry family talked about bonding as an outcome of their family leisure activities. Steven described bonding as "just doing something with your kids that makes them happy, makes them feel good… in that result, it makes you feel good as a parent." The family talked about bonding activities such as walking to the library, playing in a fountain, playing in leaves, or laughing at something one of them did. Paula said Abby often thought up fun and simple games for them to play and that everyone usually enjoyed.

For their activity during the interview, Steven said it helped them bond because, "it was fun and happy. The attitude of happiness was nice. Nobody got hurt, nobody got upset." Paula also said the activity helped them bond because everyone spent time together and each person participated.

The family members also talked about bonding on a daily basis, around simple, home-based activities. The family lives in a very small home, and said they spend a lot of

time together in their living room. Rather than view this as a constraint to personal or family leisure, they embraced the space to help them bond over shared moments or activities. The family pointed out arts and crafts projects hanging in the living room, and to their pet bunny running across the room. They considered both as shared experiences that made them laugh and feel a sense of bonding. Paula described one such moment as:

> Whenever we see the bunny doing something cute, all we have to do is say 'Mommy look, Abby look, Daddy look'…and we're just 'oh look at it' and we're just right on top of each other, and so animals really make us bond with each other a lot more, cause they're just so cute and we love all animals.

Abby also suggested that their family playtime might help her feel more bonded to her parents.

> I see lots of kids that, at school, that they just talk like 'I hate my mom and she won't give me an iPod' and, um, and they say that their mom doesn't even play with them, so it makes them feel they don't love them so much.

All of the outcome themes seemed to contribute to the final outcome this family desired, and that was for their family to be happy. Paula and Steven knew they had limited resources, but they did what they could do to ensure they all had various educational opportunities, support, and strong values. Near the end of our conversation, Paula said she wanted Abby to have, "a fun life, a good life, and an educational life." A minute later, to sum up her thoughts about why their family leisure activities were important, she added,

> I see a lot of kids already, (who) look so sad, and it's like, 'just come over, let's do some crafts, come on kids, I'll make you happy, I'm sorry.' So I see it with those kids, and I just could not imagine her going through this sad depression of a life. And it's like, life is so meaningful and there is so much with life, and if you can live life and live it to your fullest, you can have so much joy, and that's what

> I want to show them. So every little thing about our family is so important.

Overall, the Perry family did their best to find free leisure activities that provided education and a sense of variety in their daily life. While their leisure interactions were often fragmented, they continued to put much effort into seeking out opportunities for family leisure.

Perry Family Model

Based on the Perry family narrative, the themes presented were organized into a model of family leisure (see Figure 8). This model is a simplified picture of the important interactions that occurred during their family leisure and that influenced their desired outcomes. The Perry family had a simple life, restrained by lack of income, yet with ample free time. The family also placed great value on education. This simplicity is reflected in their model of family leisure and its stocks of motivation, quality interactions, and happiness.

Model Explanation

In the antecedent subsystem, education and constraint negotiation flowed into and increased the stock of motivation, while constraints decreased motivation. The family made it clear that education as a desired outcome was a strong motivator for their family leisure activities. A desire for choosing educational and free activities increased their motivation to leisure and was part of their constraint negotiation process. Both constraint negotiation and education are indicated in their model of family leisure as flowing into

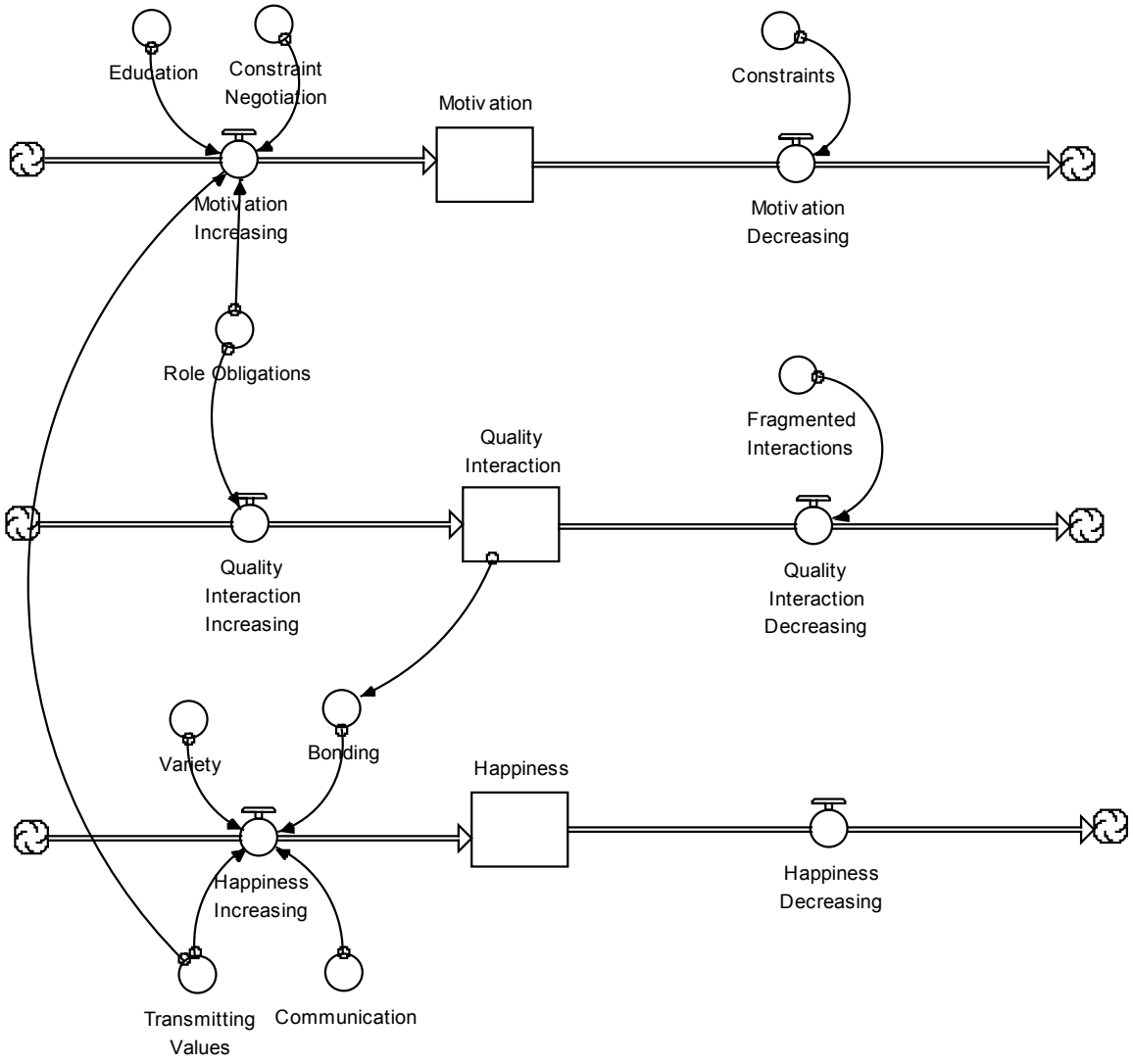

Figure 8. Perry family leisure model.

motivation. However, the family could not always find free or nearby activities, and these constraints seemed to drain their motivation.

Somewhat disconnected from their antecedent subsystem and stock of motivation was their experience subsystem. Their desired experience stock was quality interaction, which was fed by the parent's sense of role obligation and nothing else.

Fragmented interactions drained their quality leisure experience and were prevalent during the leisure activity. Because they were so prevalent, they were weighted much higher in the model than role obligation. Overall, the family's experience was choppy and their interactions did not link very much to their expressed desired outcomes. The activity seemed to stand alone during the interview with little connection to the antecedents or outcomes they had talked about. Looking at these two systems together, there is not a strong connection between motivation and experience. While the family had high motivation to do activities, and was able to participate in free leisure on a regular basis, their motivation did not translate to focused or quality interactions. Motivation to leisure moved them to action, but did not help with the quality of their leisure.

The outcome subsystem contained the stock of happiness. During their interview, the parents said they wanted a happy life with positive outcomes for themselves. The daughter also talked about wanting to have fun with her family. The family drew from their quality leisure interactions to support elements they thought would create more happiness. These elements included variety of leisure activities, communication, transmitting values, and bonding. Each element had a specific way it could add to its stock of happiness. Variety provided a needed change in routine, communication allowed the parents to teach their daughter life lessons, and the parents felt teaching values would

improve chances of lifelong happiness. Bonding flowed directly from quality interactions, as these experiences could help the family increase their sense of emotional closeness. Transmitting values was discussed as an outcome and a motivator for their family leisure and linked the outcome subsystem to the antecedent subsystem.

Perry Family Model Analysis

Similar to the previous family, analysis consisted of adding weights to each model element and running simulations to create behavior over time graphs. These graphs were then analyzed for the influence changes in elements had on stocks. Weights indicate element strength relative to one another within that family's model and are based on the researcher's judgment. The weights are needed for the systems modeling program to run equations calculating how each element influences other elements and the final stocks in the model. For example, in the Perry family, fragmented interactions were given a weight of 5 because the family was so fragmented during their leisure activity. Role obligation was a 4 because this seemed only moderately influential on the family's leisure choices and activities. Transmitting values was high, with a weight at a 6 because this was a priority for the family. Before running each simulation, the weight of the elements under consideration was changed to the extreme end of the scale, either a 10 or a 1. After the initial model was simulated to create a baseline, simulations were crafted. Each scenario was created by the researcher and considered situations that might reasonably cause change in one or two elements in the model. Once created, model weights were changed and a behavior over time graph was run for each scenario.

Perry Family Simulations

The first simulation run was of the initial model (see Figure 9). In this scenario, quality interactions barely decreased over time, while motivation and happiness increased. Given the extent of their fragmented interactions, it is surprising that quality interactions did not decrease more over time. Based on the effort put into their family leisure, it makes sense that motivation and happiness increased. If left alone, this family could continue to have adequate quality interactions, and happiness could increase, which was an important goal for their family.

Next, simulations were created for this family based on the researcher's ideas of what could reasonably change in their lives that might influence their leisure outcomes. The first scenario examined what would happen if constraints decreased (see Figure 10).

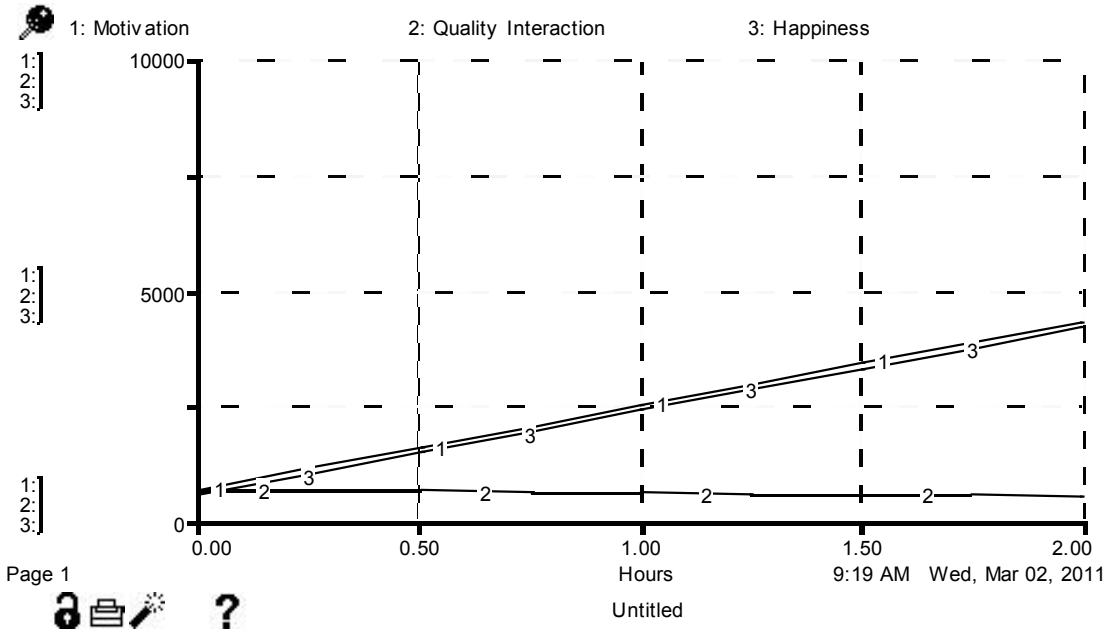

Figure 9. Perry family initial model of family leisure.

This could happen if, for example, the father found a job and money was less of a constraint, or if they were able to purchase a car, and transportation was no longer a constraint. In this simulation, quality interactions stayed about the same as the initial model, perhaps not changing because the level of fragmented interactions was still present. But, motivation to leisure increased greatly, while happiness stayed at about the same level. This seemed plausible given that if constraints decreased, new possibilities for leisure might open up, thus increasing motivation to seek out family activities.

In the second simulation, constraint negotiation increased (see Figure 11). This scenario was plausible if the family found additional ways to negotiate cost or transportation, by, for example, using public transportation or participating in free activities at the nearby recreation center. The simulation looks almost identical to the

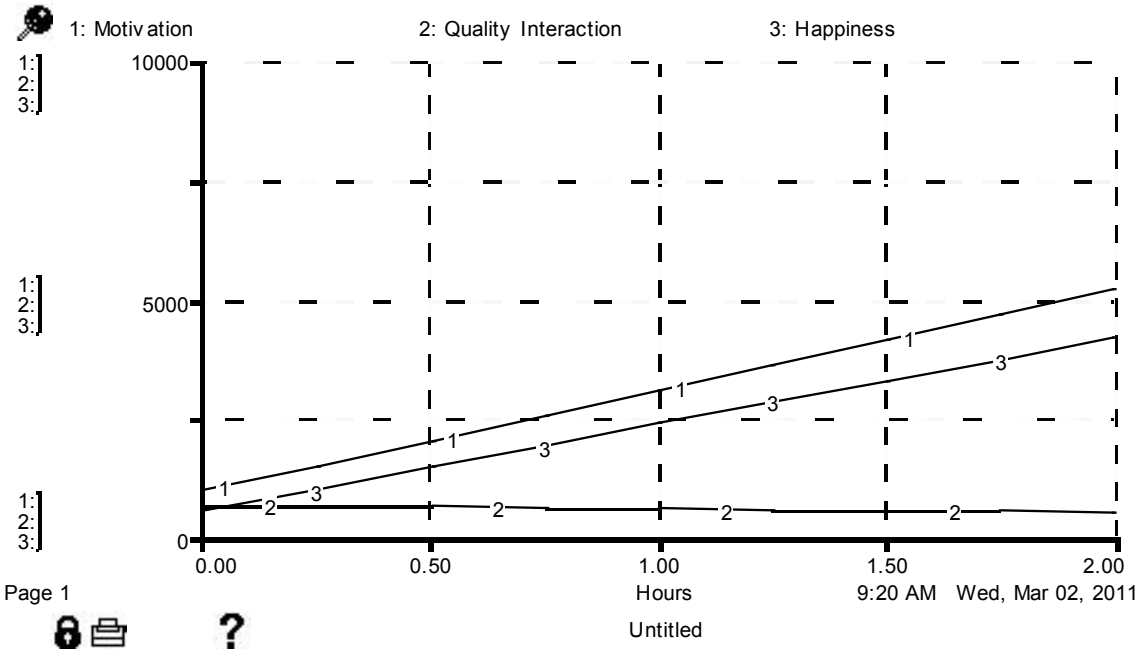

Figure 10. Constraints decreased.

previous, that of constraints decreasing, but in this simulation, motivation did increase slightly more. This suggests that their ability to negotiate constraints might have more impact on their motivation than simply waiting for constraints to change.

In examining what might happen if life became more challenging for this family, the next simulation asked what would happen if variety went down and constraints went up (see Figure 12). This could happen if additional constraints, such as health problems, bad weather, or danger in their neighborhood further constrained them from nearby, free activities. When simulated, happiness and motivation decreased in slope, but still increased over time. Quality interactions stayed about the same as previous models. Given the scenario, it is understandable that happiness and motivation would decline.

The next scenario asked what would happen if fragmented interactions increased (see Figure 13). The family already had trouble focusing during leisure activities, but additional distractions could cause even more fragmentation. When simulated, quality interaction declined to a flat line, while motivation and happiness increased at about the same rate as in other simulations.

The final simulation asked what would happen if fragmented interactions decreased (see Figure 14). When fragmented interactions decreased, the stock of quality interactions began at a higher level and increased very slightly through the simulation. Again, because the subsystems were not very well connected, this could be a reason why quality interaction did not increase more in any simulation.

Figure 11. Constraint negotiation increased.

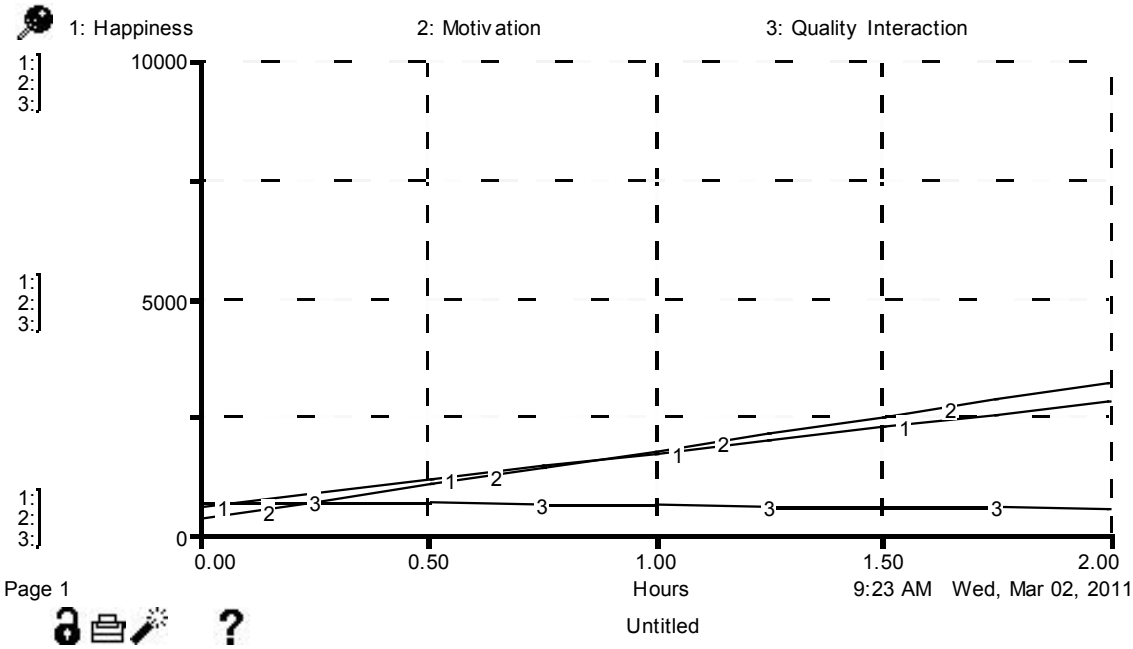

Figure 12. Variety decreased and constraints increased. *numbers representing each stock changed.

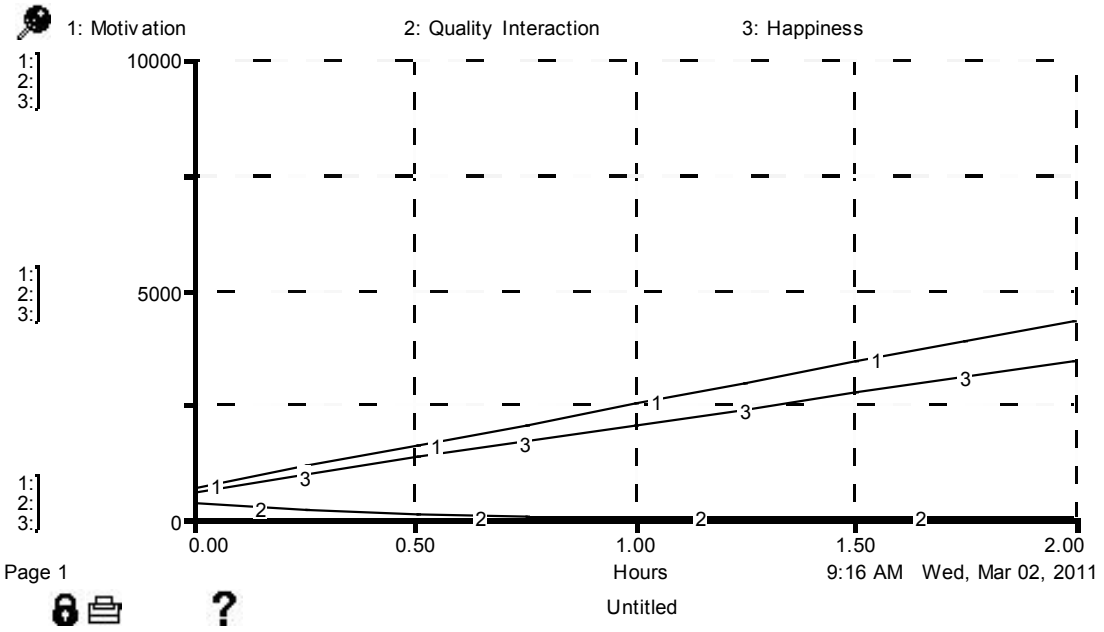

Figure 13. Fragmented interactions increased.

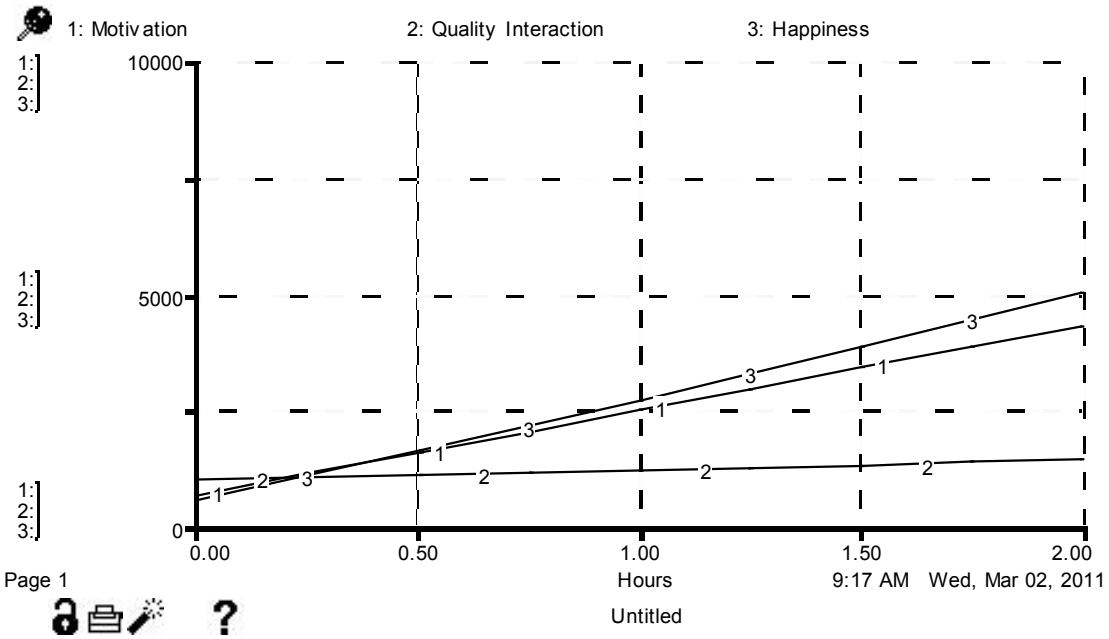

Figure 14. Fragmented interactions decreased.

Summary

Overall, the subsystems not being well connected limits the extent to which changing weights on elements will influence the stocks. A change in one or two elements appears to have little effect elsewhere in the system. In these simulations, constraints decreasing and constraint negotiation increasing had the greatest impact on stock levels. and this was still a very small change. This could have been due the subsystems not linking very well. These subsystems not linking is consistent with themes presented during the family interview. The family seemed to know what they wanted to get out of their leisure, and know that they were limited in what they could do, and tried to put forth their best effort at linking antecedents with outcomes. However, as their interactions were so fragmented, this impacted their stock of quality leisure. The low stock of quality leisure could have prevented much change from occurring in their happiness stock, but because so many other elements flowed into happiness, it continued to rise. These simulations indicated that if the family continued in their same patterns of family leisure, their motivation and happiness would continue to increase, while leisure quality would stay the same.

Greg, Emma, and Abe

Greg, Emma, and Abe are a blended family of three. Abe is Greg's 11-year-old son from a first marriage. Greg and Emma have been dating for about 4 years and the three have lived together for about 3 of those years.

The dominant theme from this interview was about the process of becoming a family, and the role family leisure could play in that process. Throughout the interview,

Greg, Emma, and Abe talked about family leisure as a potential way to help them learn about one another, adapt to living together, and as something that helped them bond overall. They also talked about the challenges in their family leisure as they went through this process of becoming a family.

During the first part of the interview, they were asked about typical family leisure activities, to choose and plan an activity they could complete during the interview, to do the activity, and then talk more about it. The interview took place in their home on an evening after work and school.

The main themes articulated during their interview included their motivation to do family leisure as influenced by their desire to be together, but also influenced by their constraints and constraint negotiations. The quality of their family leisure experiences were also influenced by constraints and the ability to negotiate them, as well as by their focused and fragmented interactions. Finally, their desired outcome for family leisure had to do with increasing their overall family bonding, which was influenced by their desire to learn, grow, and create shared memories, as well as by conflict and their chaotic family structure. Each will be discussed in the appropriate section.

Antecedents

The major theme evident during the antecedent portion of the evening surrounded their motivation to engage in activities together. They talked about constraints and their ability to negotiate constraints as impacting their motivation, and their desire to simply be together as increasing their motivation.

Constraints. The first question asked of the family seemed challenging for them to answer. When asked what activities they liked to do together as a family, the parents both hesitated while they thought about it. They were able to list a few recent activities, such as taking a walk, going to movies, playing games, and listening to Abe present a lecture on a science topic. They said they did not do many things together as a whole family, because, Emma explained, "we actually all have very different interests, and, um, so, it is kind of challenging to find something that we all three like doing." After she said this, Abe looked up at her and seemed to make a new connection about their interests. He said, "We do have different interests, you like art and I like sciences."

Their divergent interests influenced their motivation to do family leisure activities because they knew the process of finding an activity they could all enjoy might be tedious, and because they knew someone would have to compromise and likely not be interested in or fully enjoy the final activity. The extent of their interpersonal constraints was evident when they spoke about their leisure and realized they had not done much together in a while. Greg started to explain their activities as if they did them all the time – such as go for a walk, to a movie, or listen to science night – when Abe quickly corrected him. "I like science night, but we haven't done that in forever. And we usually don't go for walks, and I really don't remember the last time we saw a movie." Abe pointed out they had not done science night since the first week of school, which was 6 weeks prior. Greg and Emma looked surprised that it had been so long since they had done any of those activities, and began to talk about ways they work together to find activities they can all enjoy.

Negotiations. The second theme related to this family's motivation to leisure was their ability to negotiate constraints. As part of their process of learning to live and work together as a family, they had tried to figure out constraint negotiation skills, such as how to compromise on activities or choose one-on-one activities instead, which also helped create more focused interactions during their activities.

Emma talked about the family trying one another's activities even when each member was not fully interested.

> Typically, we, um, make little compromises, or just do our own things. And, I actually like to be out and about a lot, and um, and doing things. Abe doesn't really like…you're not a big fan of some of the activities I like to do, like the hay rides and things like that, he thinks they're silly.

Greg mentioned that he is an artist, and works from home, so his thoughts are often with his work and not family activities. He said he was aware of their divergent interests, and how that could hinder their motivation to do things together, but that he tried to negotiate that constraint by finding something simple he could enjoy with Abe.

> I don't always feel like doing it, like, you know if I'm just like wiped out, a long day… it's just like 'doesn't everybody want to go to bed now', and I'll just not be here. But I can always… I love watching *The Simpsons* with Abe because I love to hear him laugh.

Being together. Despite their lack of similar interests, the family did talk about wanting to be together, and compromising on family activities so they could spend time with one another. Emma talked about watching television with Greg and Abe. "I think it's their favorite thing to do together, and I don't particularly like *The Simpsons*, but I do like sitting and being with them." Similarly, before playing a board game during the family interview, Greg made his feelings about the activity very clear, saying dryly, "I

don't like this game, but I will play it enthusiastically." Later, he explained that he did not feel they needed to contrive activities to have family time. He said,

> Just being, like, in the same room together, like that's kind of the activity… just that togetherness. I don't care what we're doing, and I don't like to contrive activities to do, I just want to do whatever I'm doing and have my family around.

Emma responded that she liked to contrive activities to do together, such as board games or group outings, but that not everyone is as interested in the same activities. Greg and Emma also talked about negotiating their differing interests and being together by spending one-on-one time with Abe. This also helped each parent foster a relationship with Abe. Greg and Abe talked about watching *The Simpsons* and going for walks together, while Abe and Emma found movies they liked to watch together. Abe did not speak up much during the interview, but on this topic he said he really enjoyed going out with them one at a time. He said, "I don't know why, I just like time with one of you, only one of you, and both of you on special occasions." After a pause, he added that he enjoyed going out with just one of them because, "it's also pretty cool that since it costs less, we get to get Red Vines and Sprite." Overall, the family seemed to want to spend time together, but all members were aware of their constraints, and worked on ways to compromise on activities and share a little time together.

Activity

For their evening activity, the family decided to play a new version of *Clue*. They had played it together once before and found it confusing, but were ready to try again. Emma and Abe were especially interested in playing, and in using a text message feature

with the game. While the family was trying to create a quality leisure experience, their interactions were characterized by segments of total focus by all members, and segments of fragmented interaction, especially caused by Greg. This was likely due to their differing levels of interest in the game. *Clue* took several minutes to set up, and Emma and Abe focused on rereading the rules while Greg cleared dinner dishes.

Throughout their activity, the family members came together around certain interactions and pieces of the game, and seemed distracted from one another at other times. For example, when they discovered the game had an option to receive text messages about the game, they were all more interested.

> Greg: Is that an app for Clue? Cause that would be so awesome. I would be like, 'I like this game' all of a sudden.
> Emma: Look Abe, check this out. We're going to text SPY and they're going to interact with us.
> Abe: Oh, we've never done it this way.
> Emma: I know we've never done it this way, so we're going to see …see how that goes
> Greg: So now iphones are part of family fun...or technology is part of it.
> Abe: I love technology.

At other times, the family members appeared disconnected and had more fragmented interactions. Each person seemed to be doing his or her own activity within the game. While waiting his turn, Abe played with a black light used in game, while Emma focused on directions or strategies. Greg sat down only when it was his turn to play or he wanted to eat dinner. Their conversation had many pauses as each person tried to figure out his or her strategy for winning the game. Greg also brought up various other topics during these lulls, such as how he won last time they played, how his back hurt, and that he did not have lunch that day. He was mostly engaged in the activity when it was his turn. Greg would also become more engaged when Abe made a joke about the

game. Overall, trying to have a focused leisure experience appeared challenging for this family.

Outcomes

The main desired outcome noted during this interview was that Greg, Emma, and Abe engaged in family leisure in order to bond as a family, and that quality leisure experiences might help them do this. In their conversation after the board game, the family members talked about how quality family leisure experiences created a space for them to learn more about one another, grow into their new family roles, and build memories – all of which would increase overall family bonding. But, as noted in the antecedent section, the family members did not have many similar interests, and sometimes experienced conflict because of this, which also served to further fragment their leisure. The family also had a chaotic structure, which further fragmented their leisure and potentially reduced bonding.

Learning about one another. Greg, Emma, and Abe noted that it could be challenging to find activities they could do together, but that they knew it was important to have leisure experiences together. For the interview, they chose a board game because it was something Abe and Emma were interested in, and Greg said he could tolerate. In talking about the activity afterwards, they indicated their interest in playing the game had more to do with finding a way to be together, learn about one another, and bond, than actually playing *Clue*. Emma explained this idea as;

> One of the things I just love about doing something kind of mindless … and fun like that is just, you pick up on different …different sides of your personality get to come out when you're just sort of sitting

> together, um, over a longer period of time, and just like the little….jokes and stuff that come out, the laughter that always seems to ensue.

Greg also expressed this idea, explaining that he was not totally interested in the activity, but the shared experience together was important to him. He described it as, "the value of the whole thing for me is the … the connection, and the connection I have with Emma, and the connection I have with (Abe)."

Leisure was also important to help this family learn about their roles in a new family structure. Emma said that sharing experiences helped her bond with Abe.

> For me, too, being a stepmom, it's really valuable for me to find things that I can bond with Abe, especially since we don't have similar interests… so I just really appreciate when we find something we both really enjoy. And he and I both really like this game. So, that I really like.

Creating shared memories was also important to increase the family bond. Emma explained it as:

> Well, these are the things, that if you look back on, you know, your family experience, my family experience, then you think about, what are the little memories that really shaped your life and your family, you know. It's like… really special what we did.

Their positive shared family experiences were also coupled with challenging times and conflict. As the family was still learning about one another and how to get along, their family leisure was also characterized by conflict and a chaotic structure.

Conflict. Both Emma and Greg said their family leisure could be challenging both because of their divergent interests, and because of conflicts that arose from Abe's attitudes or behaviors. As an 11-year-old boy, Abe was beginning to assert his ideas and opinions in family activities. He seemed to challenge his father and stepmother on

homework, free time, and family responsibilities. In trying to work with Abe, the family exhibited a chaotic family structure with fluctuating rules and roles. Both parents described their family leisure as very challenging early on in their relationship, but said it had improved over time. Emma said, "It was really hard in the beginning with the three of us kind of going out, and you know, we just seemed to have conflict after conflict, and just bad experience after bad experience." Greg recalled the same early family experiences and said, "I was like 'just be good tonight' and then if we had a conflict, I was just, 'oh man'….it was just overwhelming. I was just like, not able to cope."

Much of the conflict came from the parent's need to learn to work with Abe. Emma explained it as:

> In the past, we have really fought Abe, trying to control him…so it was always like a, you know, battle, so we've kind of learned to do like the parenting aikido, that kind of thing with him, and that's helped a lot.

Emma noted that overall, their relationships and ability to work together improved over time. She said, "It's been getting better, but it seems the more that we do it, um, you know the better it gets, and just the stronger the bond, long term, and the memories build up."

Chaotic adaptability structure. Another element that may hinder the build-up of family bonding through leisure was that of a chaotic adaptability structure. When coding this family's interview, several interactions among the members indicated a chaotic style. However, Greg and Emma talked about these same occurrences as conflicts and negotiations. A chaotic adaptability structure refers to the family's ability to change power structures, role relationships, and rules in response to situational and developmental stress. This type of structure is characterized by erratic and ineffective

leadership, and results in impulsive decisions, inconsistent rules, and role reversals (Olsen, et al., 1983). This structure is not something the family specifically recognized, but was evident when watching the interview on video.

As an example, during the family activity Greg reminded Abe that he had to complete his math homework before bedtime. The family played the board game longer than they had intended, until Greg said they had to stop and look at Abe's homework. Abe had a different memory of an earlier conversation about his homework and thought he had been promised time to play a video game and read instead. The following conversation took place over several minutes, with Greg and Abe debating how much time Abe had to spend doing homework, reading, or playing video games. This final segment illustrates the inconsistent rules and roles in the family structure.

> Abe: You said I could play video games after.
> Greg: Ok, we're done now. We're done now. We're doing this, and you can choose what you do next, it's up to you. It's your responsibility to do that work, or, or not.
> Abe: You said I could play video games afterwards and…. we had an agreement.
> Emma: But…it's your choice buddy.
> Greg: It was after you do your homework.
> Abe: We had an agreement that I could do that one problem and you would let me off just reading.
> Greg: Did I say that?
> Abe: Yes you did!
> Greg: Geez! I think I did say that.
> Emma: What did you say?
> Greg: (sighing) What time is it?
> Emma: But he made an agreement
> Greg: No, he caught me. He's right, he's right.
> Emma: But he made an agreement with me. I bought him the video game and I want him doing his homework, er…that's the agreement we made. I don't want him to just play video games.
> Greg: If he reads for an hour, then I think that's fine. He can play it until he goes to bed.
> Abe: Deal!

Greg: If..if… Emma agrees, if Emma agrees.

Their conversation continued with negotiations and each person tried to take control of the negotiations. Abe ended up happy with an agreement to spend more time reading and playing video games than doing homework. After this debate, Greg and Emma said that conflict over homework or schedules are frequent, especially when trying to organize family activities on a schedule. Family conflict often serves to delay family leisure, or caused the family to change plans altogether.

Greg, Emma, and Abe appeared to make some effort to have quality leisure experiences, and recognized that such experiences were important to help them learn more about one another, move into their family roles, and create shared memories. The family had trouble finding activities they could all enjoy, and often had fragmented interactions, conflict or chaos before, during, or after their family leisure. They worked to negotiate these constraints or conflicts, and said conflict during family leisure was decreasing, but that not every activity was a success.

Greg, Emma, and Abe Model

After completing the vignette for this family, the themes were organized into a model that provided a simplified picture of what went on during this family's leisure and how elements interacted to influence outcomes. The model contained an antecedent, experience, and outcome subsystem, and each subsystem consisted of elements that flowed into or out of the three main stocks. The resulting model for Greg, Emma, and Abe can be seen in Figure 15.

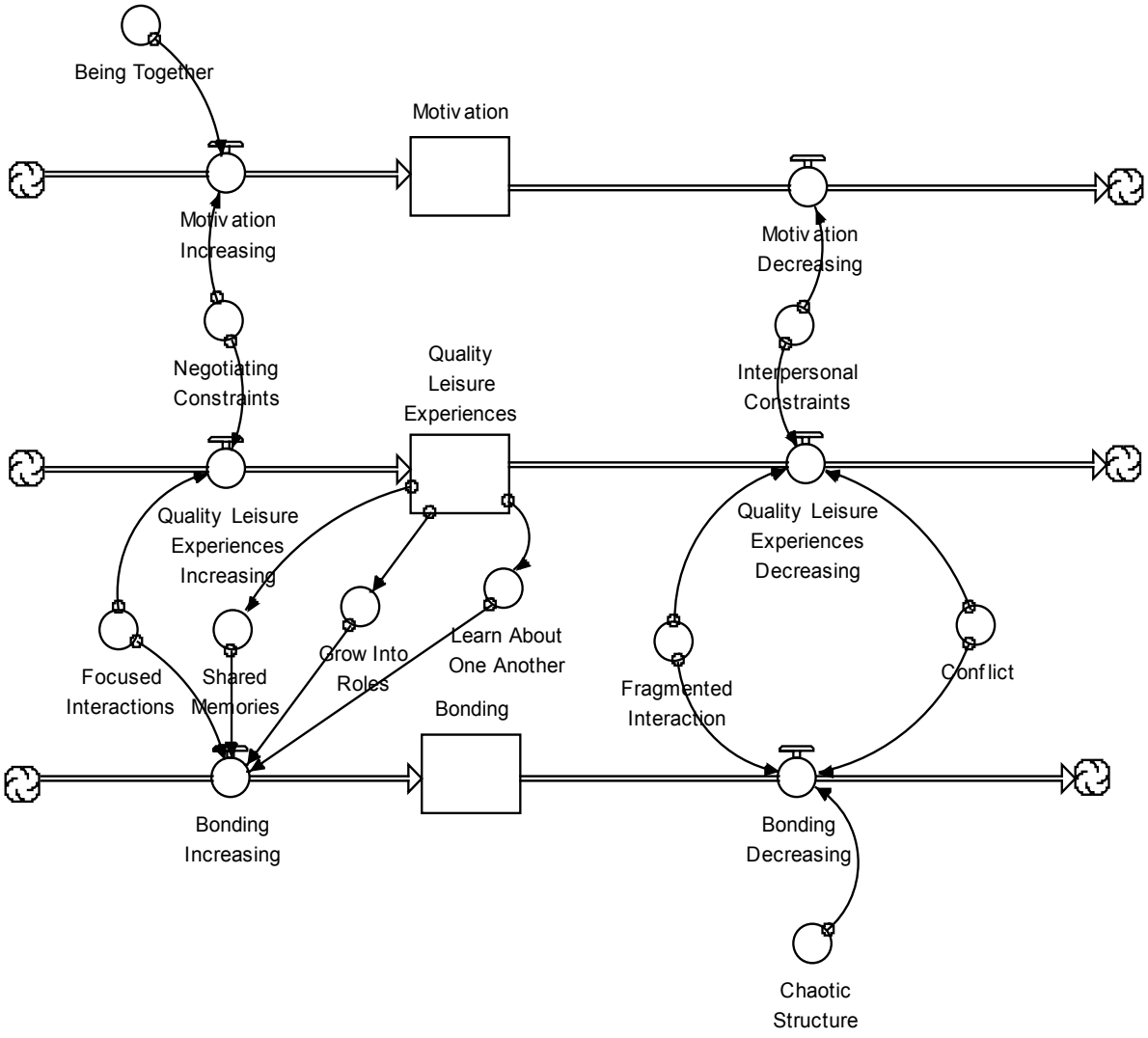

Figure 15. Greg, Emma, and Abe model of family leisure.

Model Explanation

In this model, the first subsystem was motivation to participate in leisure. This family's main reason for participating in leisure was to create a way to spend time together, whether directly interacting or not. Being together for this family often meant being in the same room together but doing separate activities. Wanting to be together increased their motivation to participate in family leisure. However their main interpersonal constraints of not being able to find activities they could do together, took away from their stock of motivation. The family was in the process of learning to negotiate interpersonal constraints by seeking compromises and activities they could all enjoy. In the model, interpersonal constraints are linked to negotiating constraints, which helped to increase their motivation to family leisure.

In the experience subsystem, both interpersonal constraints and negotiating constraints flowed into the stock of quality leisure experiences. As indicated in the interviews, both elements influenced the family's ability to have quality interactions, or those in which the only activity occurring was the leisure activity, and the family was focused on that activity. Interpersonal constraints often prevented quality leisure from occurring at all, while negotiating constraints did the opposite and helped the family find ways to have quality time together. However, these two elements flowed in and out of quality leisure experiences at different rates. In this model, constraints were assigned a higher weight than negotiations. Ultimately, in the behavior over time graphs, this caused the stock of quality leisure experiences to decrease faster than it could fill up.

As all the systems in this model were connected, the experience outcome was also affected by the elements between it and by the outcome subsystem. Focused interactions

contributed to quality leisure increasing, while conflict and fragmented interactions contributed to it decreasing. Further, focused interactions were weighted much lower than conflict and fragmented interactions, so those elements increased the flow out of quality leisure experience at a greater rate than focused interaction flowed in.

Finally, in the outcome subsystem, many elements are present. For this family, when they had a quality leisure experience, it appeared to evoke some level of interest or reflection about their family, personalities, or their ability to work together. These processes seemed to increase their level of bonding, as they perhaps shared a level of emotional closeness through their family leisure activities. For the experience subsystem, the stock of quality leisure experiences flowed through shared memories, growing into roles, and learning about one another to then increase bonding. Keeping in mind that this family came together about 4 years ago, it made sense that these elements were part of the outcome of their family leisure. Focused interactions also helped increase bonding, as well as facilitated quality leisure experiences. On the other side of the outcome subsystem, fragmented interactions, conflict, and a chaotic structure all decreased the level of bonding in the family. Similar to the previous subsystem, these draining elements were placed at higher weights than the elements that increased bonding because they occurred more often.

Overall, the elements that drained stocks in this family leisure model had greater weights than those that filled up the stocks, and there were more elements linking to the outcome subsystem. Set up this way, the elements may not provide enough flow to fill up stocks, and any delays in filling the motivation stock could cause greater delays in subsequent systems. There is also nothing linking the outcome subsystem back to

motivation, or the antecedent subsystem, which could cause further delays in increasing motivation.

Model Simulation Analysis

As in the previous two models, after building the model, weights were added to each element, and scenarios were crafted to observe how changes in elements might influence stocks. Weights were chosen to represent the strength of elements for this family, and are relative to one another rather than absolute. For example, constraint negotiations was weighted a 5 because this family had not figured out how to negotiate their differing interest and abilities for their family leisure. Focused interaction was also weighted low, a 4, because the family did not have many occurrences of everyone focusing on the same activity. Fragmented interaction was weighted high, an 8, because much of their activity time was characterized by interruptions and bits and pieces of interactions. For each simulation, element weights were changed to the extreme end of the scale, either a 10 or a 1. Element weights were changed based on scenarios the researcher wanted to examine and that could reasonably happen for the family. Once weights were changed, a behavior over time graph was run for analysis.

To start, a simulation of the initial model was run and in the behavior over time graph for this model, the stocks of bonding and quality leisure experiences were flat lines, while the stock of motivation started at a slightly higher level and steadily increased (see Figure 16). From this simulation, it appears that, if left alone, this family's motivation to participate in family leisure would continue to increase, but they likely would not have an increase in bonding or quality leisure experiences.

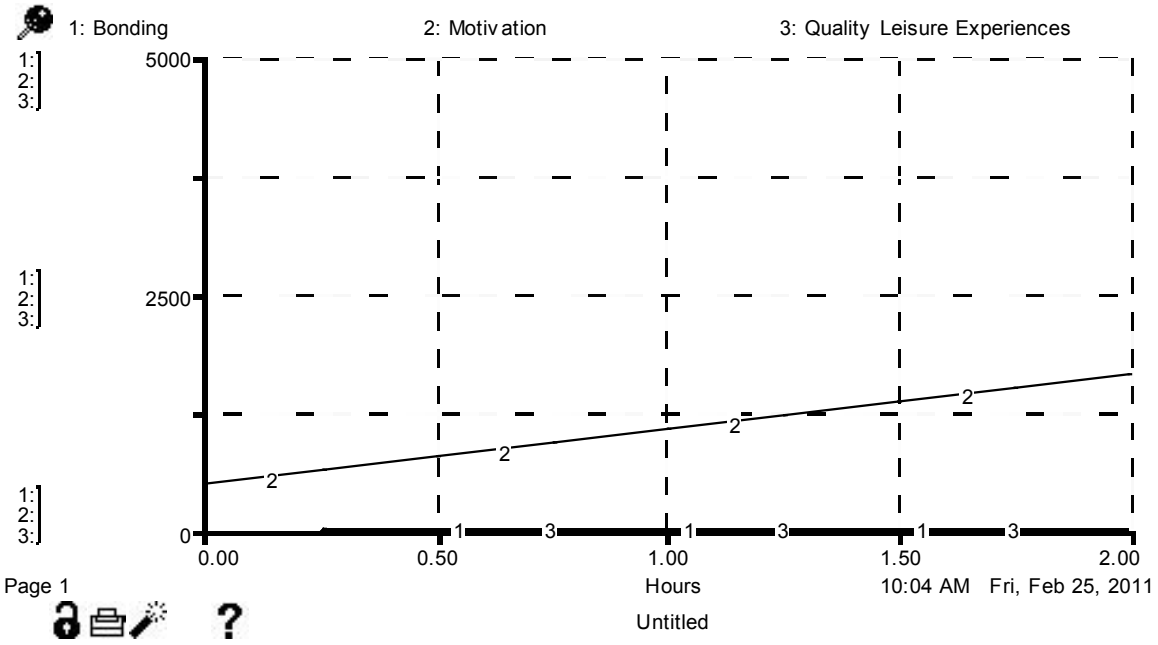

Figure 16. Initial model.

The next simulation considered a best case scenario for this family, and asked what might happen if constraint negotiations and focused interactions increased (see Figure 17). These two elements seemed to be the family's largest hurdle to engaging in leisure together. When simulated, motivation increased much more than the initial model, quality leisure experiences increased almost right away, and bonding increased near the end of the time frame. In the initial family model, there are clearly many elements draining the stock of quality interactions. By increasing the weight of the two elements that flowed directly into it, that stock slowly increased. This stock filling up increased the flow to bonding, which increased just slightly in this graph.

For the third simulation, the researcher asked what might happen if only focused interactions increased (see Figure 18). This considered the fact that the family might never overcome their interpersonal constraints, but could try to focus more during the

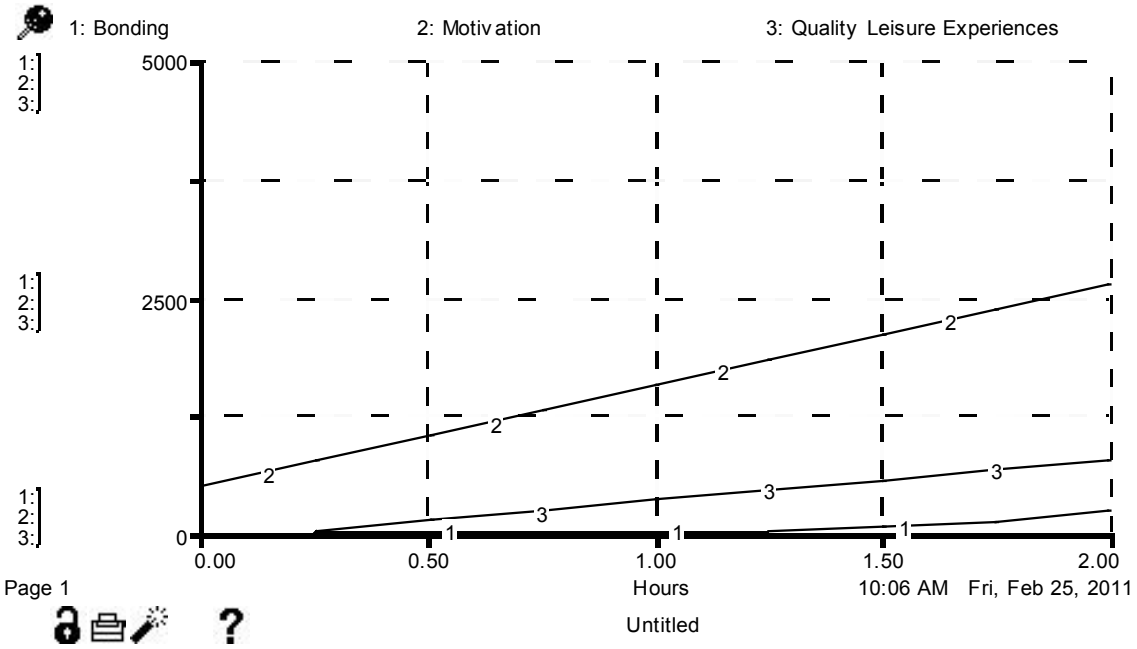

Figure 17. Constraint negotiations and focused interactions increased.

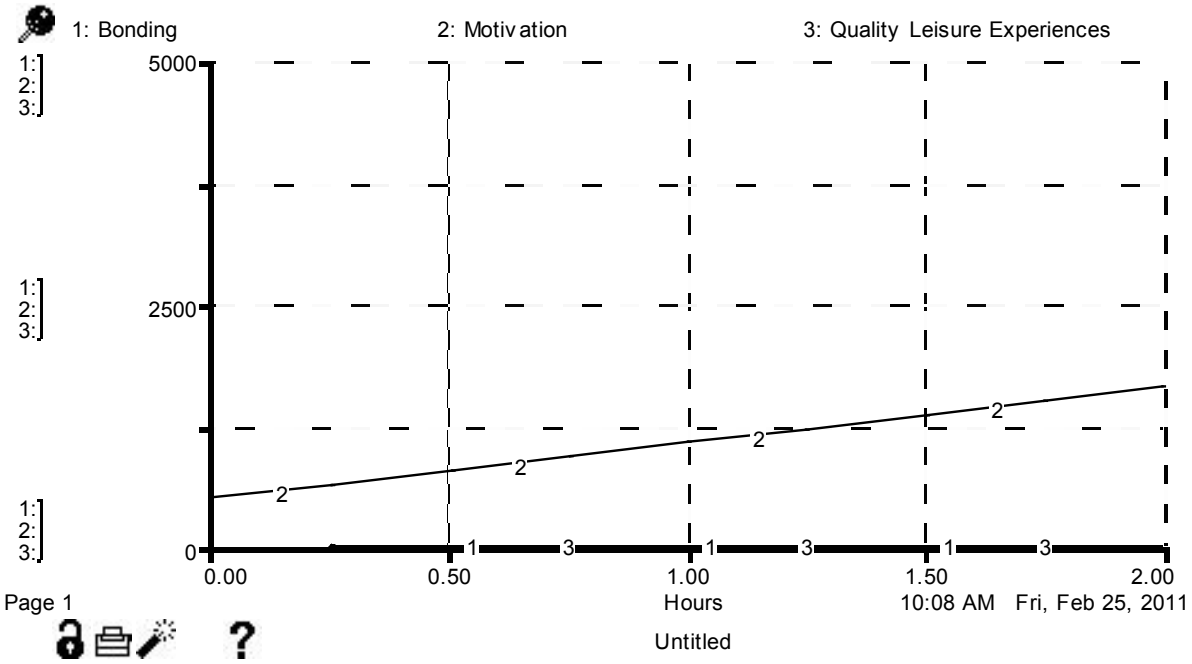

Figure 18. Focused interactions increased.

activities they did participate in together, whether fully interested or not. In this simulation, motivation started at exactly the same level as in the initial model, and climbed at almost the same rate. Bonding and quality leisure experiences were still flat lines. While it might seem that focused interactions would increase quality leisure experiences, this was not the case for this family. There were still enough elements flowing out of stocks that this one change did not influence quality leisure experiences.

Another element that seemed to adversely affect this family's ability to engage in family leisure was their chaotic adaptability structure. The next simulation asked what would happen if their chaotic structure went down, and focused interactions increased (see Figure 19). This seemed feasible if, as the family became more comfortable with one another, their chaotic structure evolved into a flexible structure, flowing out of bonding at a lower rate. As the family grows more comfortable with one another, their focused interactions may become more common, causing their quality leisure experiences to increase. When this scenario was simulated, however, motivation stayed exactly the same as the initial model, and again bonding and quality leisure experiences were flat lines.

This, together with the previous model, may indicate that more than two elements need to change in order to cause change in the stocks, or that just changing focused interactions will not make much of a difference. Focused interaction was weighted at a 4 in this model, and even increasing it to 10 did not generate much change in the stocks.

The next simulation considered what would happen if the family's one motivation for doing family leisure – being together – were to increase (see Figure 20). However,

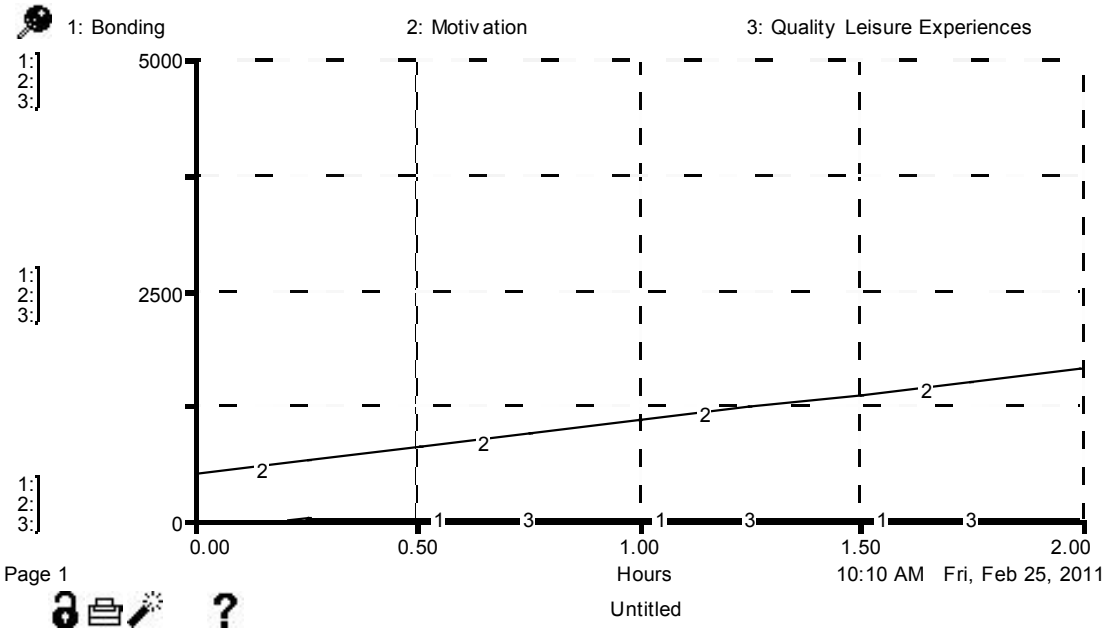

Figure 19. Chaotic structure decreased.

when simulated, motivation was only slightly higher than the initial family model and bonding and quality leisure experiences were still flat lines. Even though the stock of motivation increased, it did not have an impact on other stocks. There are likely too many other elements draining stocks for this one to have an impact.

Similarly, the final simulation asked what would happen if creating shared memories increased (see Figure 21). This was one of four elements going into the stock of bonding. When increased, a graph very similar to the initial model resulted, with motivation increasing at a rate higher than the initial model, and bonding and quality leisure experiences as flat lines. It is interesting to note that by increasing a single element close to the system outcomes, motivation increases, but not the outcome connected to that flow.

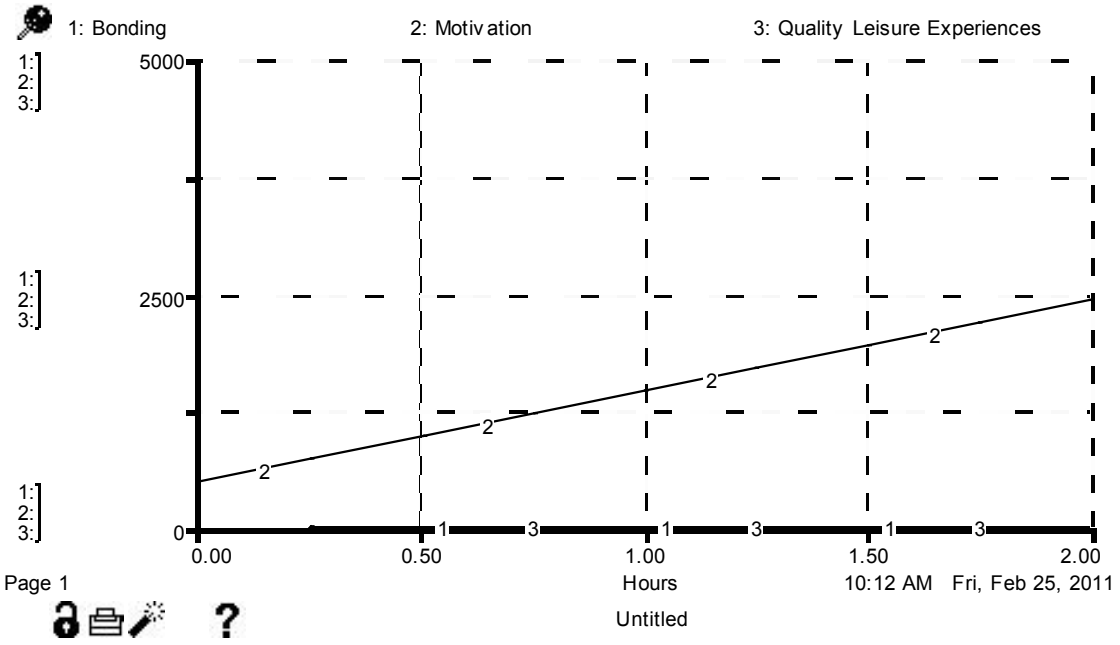

Figure 20. Being together increased.

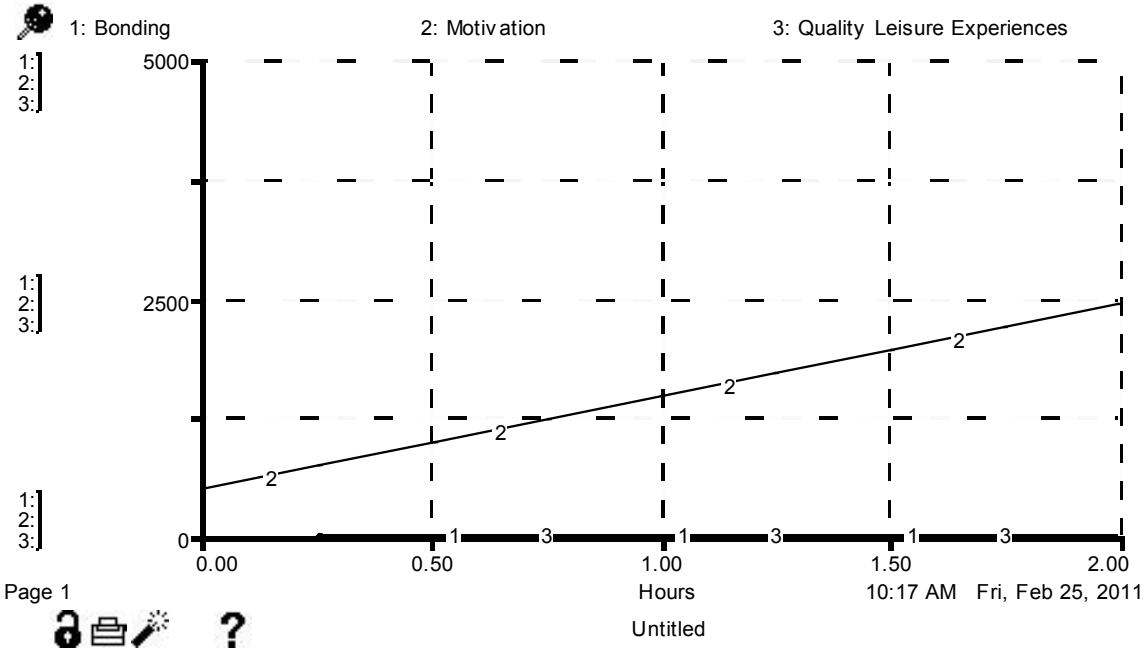

Figure 21. Creating shared memories increased.

Summary

Of the simulations run for this family, there were very few changes to elements that impacted stocks. Only increasing constraint negotiations and focused interactions together had a noticeable impact on the elements, creating a higher level of each stock. Perhaps additional simulations changing other elements between the experience and outcome system would produce greater changes. Or, perhaps the fact that motivation does not connect to the experience subsystem, but rather is connected through constraints and negotiation of constraints caused the next two stocks to be low. Motivational level for this family does not seem to have much influence on their experience or outcomes. Rather, their ability to negotiate constraints has more of an impact. As constraints were a major theme in their narrative, this scenario seems likely.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to use a new method to study and understand what occurs during family leisure. The research sought to study a family as a system, and examine the interactions of important elements as they occur during family leisure, so as to better understand how interactions influence outcomes. To do this, interviews and systems modeling were used as methods. The research began with a proposed model of family leisure based on the family leisure literature. Next, semistructured interviews were used to collect data to inform the literature review based model. Once the data were analyzed, family leisure models were created for each of three participating families. These models turned out to be very different from one another and from the proposed literature-review based model. Simulations of these three models were then run to look at how changes among elements in the models might influence outcomes.

Systems modeling was the method chosen to study family leisure interactions. In looking at a family as a system, all members are included, and cause and effect are not seen as unidirectional. Rather, all elements are considered as possibly influencing one another. Studying family leisure through family interviews, models, and simulations enabled the researcher to think about how multiple elements may interact at various times

throughout a family leisure experience. The results of the interview data and simulations were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter interprets the results in terms of the family leisure literature, explains limitations of the study, and offers recommendations for practice and future research.

The discussion section starts with general conclusions based on overall study findings and offers a fifth and simplified model of family leisure (see Figure 22). Next, the discussion focuses on the content of each family model, and reviews the elements and interactions present in each family leisure model, and how these elements have been discussed in the family leisure literature. Finally, the discussion focuses on conclusions drawn from the family leisure model simulations.

General Conclusions

In this research, systems thinking and modeling were tools used to organize complex family leisure interactions to gain an overview of whole family system functioning, and see how elements might combine in unique ways to influence outcomes in three family leisure models. Becvar and Becvar (1999), in writing about family systems, suggested that all families may arrive at the same place, but will arrive there from very different paths, a concept called equifinality. Further, families live and interact in very specific contexts and settings, which should be considered when thinking about their interactions. The initial literature review model was used to suggest general elements families may experience in family leisure. The model was partially supported in this research, with the individual family models sharing some stocks and elements, and not others. The organization of the many unique elements in each model was very

different for each family, and from the initial model. Because of these major differences, the idea to amend the initial model was discarded, and instead, a simplified model of family leisure is suggested. Then, because this study included an examination of the specific content found in each family model, conclusions from the simulations and interactions among elements within each family are discussed and related to the literature.

Lack of Support for Literature-Review Based Model of Family Leisure

The proposed model of family leisure offered a general view of what the leisure literature suggested were the most important elements in family leisure experiences. Judgment-based models, such as the one presented in this dissertation, are in no way correct, but are a researcher's educated idea about what might be occurring. It is clear that considerable differences exist between what the literature suggested and what was understood from this study.

The proposed model was partially supported by the interview data analyzed for this study. The portions that were supported are illustrated and explained in the simplified model of family leisure in the next section. First, an explanation of why the initial model was not supported is warranted.

The majority of the literature-review based model of family leisure did not align with the models created from data gathered for each individual family interview. There are a few general reasons why this may have occurred. It may simply be too difficult to create explanations or understandings about families as a social unit. Perhaps there are too many varying elements among families to be able to suggest one overarching

framework for family leisure interaction, at the level of detail suggested in the initial model. Or, differences among the family models and the proposed model could exist because of methodological problems. Perhaps because the models created here were of individual families and not larger samples, this limited the level of information used to create the final models. Another reason could be because the coding method or codes used were too detailed and not at an adequate level of abstraction to provide a more general model. Knowing that the proposed model and the family models did not match, and considering that possibly too much detail was offered in all models, the researcher next considered the possibility of a pared down model of family leisure, still based on the information gathered.

Simplified Model of Family Leisure

General Systems Theory suggests that there are models or principles that can be applied to generalized systems to help explain the relationships and interactions among the elements within that system (Bertalanffy, 1968). In this research, perhaps due to the nature of the family interviews, the method for coding, or the codes used, the resulting individual family models meant to offer ideas about a generalized system of family leisure were instead very detailed examinations of each family's leisure experience. But, in General Systems Theory, a model that is too specific will lose its meaning and if too general, will have no content. The challenge is to find an "optimum degree of generality," (Boulding, 1956, p. 197). The models presented in Chapter 4 were too detailed to contribute in a meaningful way to the literature review model, or the problem and more general phenomenon under investigation.

Another main idea in General Systems Theory is that the sum of the parts is greater than the whole, and that what emerges from the whole is something that cannot be understood when only looking at parts in isolation (Richmond, 2001). While the literature review-based model and the individual family models were pictures of the whole experience of family leisure, the models may have delved too deeply into details, and prevented a useable or understandable whole from emerging.

Another problem with the individual models arises when the idea of equifinality is considered in the context of family systems theory. Equifinality is the idea that there may be many different paths for a family to take, but they all reach the same ending or outcome (Becvar & Becvar, 1999). As an example, this could mean that a couple might always end up in a debate about the same topic, but reaches that debate through different ways, or that a family always ends up with the same results in a leisure experience, but reaches it through different paths or courses of action. Usually, there is some underlying pattern that can be identified and targeted for change.

In this study, and from the literature, families appear to have similar stocks they want to achieve. When coupled with the idea of equifinaliity, it could be said that families try to achieve these outcomes through their family leisure, but each family arrives there by different ways. These different paths are the specific content that makes up each individual family model. The content gathered for each family model was not helpful for creating a general model of family leisure, but rather the more general stocks, converters, and flows revealed a set of interactions that may characterize family leisure experiences. Thus, Conclusion 1 from this study is that it may not be possible to create as detailed a system or model of family leisure as was proposed by the literature-review

model. Families may be too unique for such a detailed model that explains leisure for all families, and more likely, have their own content that could fill in a more general model.

However, when the literature review model is compared with the individual family models, and similarities examined, there are parts of the models that are useful for understanding family leisure. Thus, Conclusion 2 is that, from a broader perspective on the themes and information found in the family interviews, there are similarities among the models that can be used to create a simplified model of family leisure. This pared down model may be more useful for understanding a family leisure experience. The stocks, flow, connectors, and converters suggested in this model are also supported in the literature.

Explanation of the Simplified Model of Family Leisure

This simplified model integrates similarities among the four models, as well as important concepts from the simulations, into one model. The model offers only a few stocks and converters, and could be one way to understand the most important elements that are organized in a particular way that occur during family leisure and impact final outcomes. A simplified model such as this offers a possible path that all families might take on their route to leisure outcomes, and provides a skeleton or framework that family therapists, researchers, or recreation practitioners might use when thinking about creating general family leisure experiences or working with families. Finally, when working with individual families, family-specific content could be ‘filled-in’ to create a more specific picture of the challenges or opportunities experienced by a particular family.

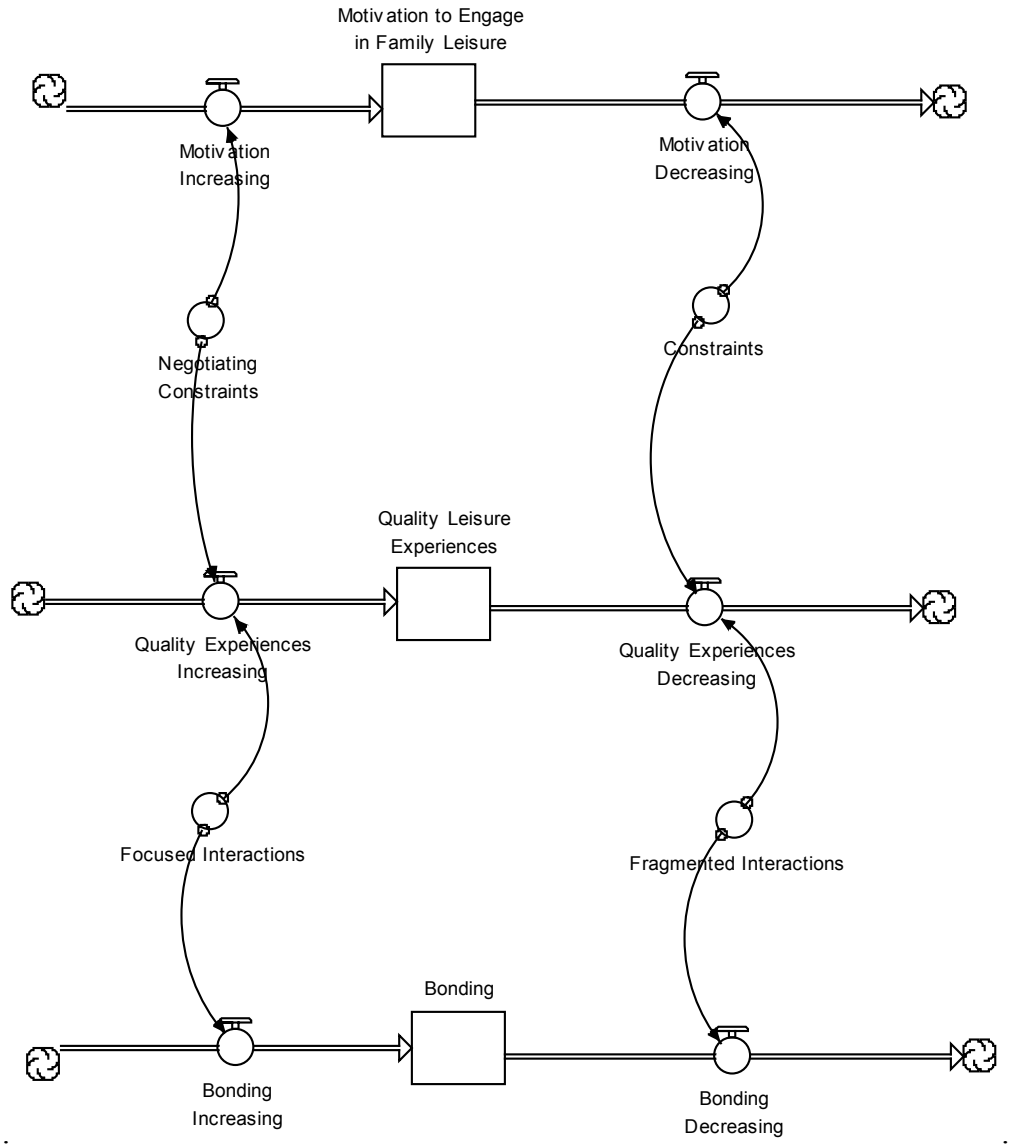

Figure 22. Simplified model of family leisure.

In this simplified model, the antecedent subsystem has motivation as the stock, with constraints depleting it and constraint negotiation filling it. It was evident in all three family models that an ability to negotiate constraints impacted motivation. This is slightly different than in the literature-review based model of family leisure, which included effort as an element that decreased motivation. The term "effort" was taken from family leisure literature, which indicated the effort or work parents often put into planning, organizing, and executing family leisure activities, and that this effort can be draining or de-motivating for parents. However, from information gathered during the family interviews, the effort needed to participate in family leisure became a motivator as family members figured out ways to negotiate constraints so they could participate. As noted in previous literature, the activation of negotiation strategies can be motivating (Hubbard & Manne1l, 2001) and may be more motivating for families than previously thought. Further, negotiating constraints may require family members to compromise and problem-solve, and to listen and consider one another's opinions, interests, strengths, and weaknesses. These efforts, as indicated in the new model, could lead to increased focused interactions and ultimately increased bonding.

One possible reason effort was expressed as demotivating in the leisure literature could be that many studies reported the experiences of mothers in family leisure, as they are often the ones responsible for the work that goes into planning and executing family leisure experiences. The literature indicates that women put a disproportionate amount of time and effort into family leisure, and often at the expense of their own leisure (Shaw, 1992, 2001). Future research might look at whole-family strategies to negotiate constraints and how multiple family members taking part in the negotiations might

impact the mothers, or the whole family's motivation or perception of effort needed for family leisure.

Constraints are also included in the motivation subsystem, as each family talked about personal and structural constraints that influenced their motivation to participate in certain family leisure experience. The leisure literature has many examples of constraints as stalling or changing leisure choices, and the families in this study were no different. Constraints in the initial family literature review model were specifically social role constraints, indicating that constraints were more likely to be of an interpersonal or intrapersonal nature (as related to beliefs about self, role, and others perceptions of parent role). Families in the interviews talked about all types of constraints, so the simplified model contains only the element of constraints, and the specific content of those constraints will be unique to each family.

The experience subsystem contains the stock of quality leisure experience with focused interactions increasing it and fragmented interactions decreasing it. The initial literature review model contained quality leisure experiences as the stock, and information from the families somewhat supported this as being a desired outcome family members sought when engaged in family leisure. A quality leisure experience is still hard to define, but from this study, it appears to be made up of focused leisure interactions, in which only one leisure activity is engaged in and nothing else is going on the background. Such interactions may help family members attain desired goals. For example, in this study, quality interactions supported bonding, sharing memories, learning about one another, and growing into roles. The content of the goals may differ depending on the family, but in the end, a quality leisure experience will be focused and

aid a family in attaining desired leisure outcomes. A fragmented interaction occurs when more than one activity is going on, and the main activity is often interrupted or disrupted by other events or people (Beck & Arnold, 2009). Fragmented leisure often feels more rushed and less satisfying as it is made up of many, short, disconnected leisure moments (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Such leisure may also impede a family from reaching its desired family leisure goals.

It should also be noted that activity choice may play a role in the level of focus or fragmented behavior by each person in the family. In this study, not every family member was interested in the family-chosen leisure activity all the time, and this often contributed to that person being distracted, or distracting others from the main activity. In a family, it can be very difficult to find an activity of interest to everyone, but to the extent that each member can maintain a certain level of focus and remove distractions, the family may have a greater ability to achieve a quality leisure experience, and their desired final outcomes.

The antecedent and experience subsystems are connected through negotiating constraints and constraints. As noted, the presence of constraints can often activate negotiation strategies, which could lead to more focus among family members. In one family model, a direct link was indicated from negotiating constraints to quality leisure experiences increasing. This family had a particularly difficult time finding shared leisure activities, but once they overcame that constraint, they were more focused on completing the activity. The simplified model suggests that perhaps if families have to work together to overcome constraints, they may be more focused on their leisure experience. On the

other side, if constraints persist, the family may be more likely to experience fragmented leisure as they struggle to find a shared activity.

The outcome subsystem of the simplified model contains bonding as the desired outcome. During the family interviews, members provided different terms to express ideas of gaining emotional closeness to one another. Most often, though, they used the term bonding. Each family also had many elements flowing into their final outcome, as well as similar elements flowing into their antecedent stock. Almost all the elements flowing into their antecedent or final outcome stock could be considered desired goals or family leisure. Because of the number and variety of elements indicated during family interviews and in the literature, elements contributing to or decreasing bonding may be too unique and specific to each family to include in a general model. Elements flowing into or out of bonding may vary depending on the family, their values, history together, and place in the family life cycle. In this simplified model, the stock of bonding is filled or depleted by focused or fragmented interactions. If bonding is made up of emotional closeness, and emotional closeness is more likely to occur through focused interactions on whatever leisure goals are important to that family, then focused interactions are necessary to support bonding. Similarly, fragmented interactions will detract from the quality of the experience, and the family's ability to achieve bonding during a family leisure experience.

Finally, the simplified model contains a feedback loop from bonding back up to motivation to engage in family leisure. During the family interviews, after the family leisure experience, each family expressed the idea that a positive leisure experience with increased bonding would motivate them to participate in the activity again. Similarly, a

leisure experience comprised of fragmented interactions and less bonding may decrease motivation to participate again. Overall, the simplified model of family leisure provides a framework from which to fill in individual family elements. This model could be used to better understand the challenges and needs of families as they attempt to achieve various goals in their family leisure experiences.

Utility of General Systems Theory of Studying Family Leisure

In this study, General Systems Theory was suggested as a useful way to think about and gain insights into family leisure. This theory suggests that all interactions, people, and parts must be understood as one cohesive whole in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon at hand. General Systems Theory also suggests that systems are dynamic, and that changes made to one part will reverberate through the entire system. Using this theory as a way of *thinking* about family leisure interactions was helpful in this study as it provided a guiding lens for examining an entire set of interactions and patterns a family might go through during family leisure. It helped move the researcher away from reductionist thinking and instead consider the influences of multiple relationships in the family leisure experience. This holistic perspective has not been used before in leisure research, and provided valuable insight into the potential main stocks and connectors that might characterize family leisure.

A second part of this study was to use a tool, Stella, to simulate family leisure interactions and systems. Stella provides a way to manipulate specific elements within the system and see how those changes influence the rest of the system. While this tool was meant to look at system changes, specifically changes to stocks, it ultimately became

more useful for the insight it provided into relationships among specific elements. The computer program provided a way to hypothesize exactly which changes among elements might impact the entire system, and then simulate these changes. This was somewhat useful. However, with the number of elements in each family system, it was impossible to run scenarios on all of them. Instead, only a limited combination of scenarios was simulated. Another challenge to using Stella in this study was that, because the models were judgment based, weights entered into the simulations were estimated by the researcher. Without actual measures, this tool could only allow for speculation as to how elements might interact in the family leisure experience. The computer-aided modeling program provided some utility as a tool for thinking about possible changes to the family system, but without accurate measures and perhaps more concise family models, its utility in this study is limited.

Addressing the Research Problem

Finally, the original problem this dissertation attempted to address was that of a family's not accruing the hypothesized benefits of family leisure. This study suggested a new way to examine family leisure experiences to then think about places to intervene in a family leisure experience and possibly improve the outcomes. The results of this study, once distilled into a simplified model of family leisure, suggested two important places recreation practitioners, researchers, or family therapists could intervene to help families improve accrual of their desired outcomes of family leisure. First, this study found that both removing constraints and finding ways to negotiate constraints were important to increasing motivation to leisure. Second, results from this study suggest that building up

focused interactions and decreasing fragmented interactions could result in an improved quality of leisure experiences. These two stages of the family leisure experience – constraints and then quality of the interaction - are important for a family to work through as each phase in the experience influences the next, and an inability to increase a stock in one subsystem will influence the stock in the next. If a family cannot increase motivation, they may not recreate, and if they do not have focused interactions, they likely will lessen the accrual of their final benefits, such as bonding. Overall, in addressing the research problem, and looking at the simplified and more general model of family leisure, the most important places for researchers, practitioners, and family members to consider when trying to increase the accrual of benefits of family leisure are that of decreasing constraints, increasing negotiation of constraints, increasing focused interactions, and decreasing fragmented interactions. Each family model and simulations provided support for these elements as crucial to the family leisure experience, and those relationships are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Individual Family Models

What is fist apparent when comparing the three family models and the literature review-based model is that all four are very different from one another. As each model is different, a brief comparison of the similarities and differences for each family may shed light on what was important during their interactions and what impacted desired outcomes for that family. This information may provide new ideas for future research.

Model Comparisons

Comparing the content of the models provides information about the elements featured in the simplified model of family leisure, as well as sheds light on how the unique elements each family brings to their leisure affects their overall leisure experience. Each family model is different with regard to stocks, elements, and the connections among them. This dissimilarity reinforces the idea that all three families experienced leisure in their own way. In this study, families had their own previous experiences, values, and ways of interacting, which impacted the relationships among elements expressed in each model. Members also had varying personalities, parenting styles, interests, and hobbies, as well as differing places in their family life cycle, socio-economic status, employment, and educational levels. These variations could be why each family experienced different elements and connections in their leisure interactions, thus resulting in dissimilar models. This finding is also consistent with family systems theory, which suggests families are unique and have their own sets of relationships (Broderick, 1993). The next section provides a detailed comparison of the differences among family models.

Differences Among Stocks

First, it should be noted that the antecedent stock of motivation was present in all four models. This is not surprising given that the interview questions directed the family to think and talk about their motivation to engage in leisure, and then to plan and complete a leisure activity. Elements that increased or decreased their motivation were of interest in this study, and those flowing into motivation are of more interest than the

presence of the stock of motivation. When looking at the models as they were created during data analysis, the experience subsystem and stock for each family differed slightly. For the initial and third family models, quality leisure experience was the experience stock. In the Perry and Reynolds family models, the stock was focused interactions. When creating the models, and working in details with the family data, the difference between the two (focused interaction and quality leisure experience) was that quality leisure experiences referred to the general or overall experience, whereas focused interaction referred specifically to the quality of one-on-one interactions among parents. However, when thinking more broadly, focused interaction is part of a quality leisure experience, and is represented as such in the simplified model of family leisure.

It should be noted that in the initial model, there is an experience subsystem of identity salience, which was not in any of the individual family models. There could be several reasons for this. This could be because it was not a consideration for members when thinking about family leisure. Or, it could be because family members talked about specific leisure experiences and in a very short time frame, and did not have time to think more deeply about their roles and meanings behind their behaviors. Perhaps the questions, which intended to look at interactions during family leisure, did not elicit thoughts about personal or individual identities. Another possibility is that the family members did not know the researcher well enough to reveal personal topics. In any case, the identity salience subsystem is not in any individual model.

The final stock for each family differed in name from one another, and from the literature review model, but may only have had a subtle difference in meaning. (This has already been addressed in the explanation of the simplified model of family leisure).The

final stocks for each family model included shared values, happiness, and bonding, and the final stocks for the literature review model included educational benefits and family cohesion. Also, many of these same elements feed into the final stocks. While each has a different name, this may be a case of the coders and codes being too specific. In the simplified model of family leisure, bonding is chosen as the name of the final outcome, with individual families having their own unique way of arriving at bonding.

In family leisure literature, research that talks about family leisure as a means for educating children usually also mentions leisure as a way to teach values (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). The two desired outcomes were separated in this study, but may both stem from similar activities or motivations, and may have more in common than was evident in this study. Bonding as a desired outcome was a specific term used by family members, whereas the term cohesion was taken from the literature, and referred to a family's overall style of family functioning. Bonding in this study differed from cohesion in that bonding was meant as specific interactions in which family members felt a shared increase in emotional closeness. Happiness was suggested by a family as a specific goal to be attained by having secure family and friend relationships, an education, and a satisfying career.

That these stocks differed from one another indicates again that all three families are different and may have varying desired outcomes for their family leisure. However, there are commonalities among their stocks and what has been expressed in the literature. For example, studies have suggested that parents engage in leisure to educate their children, teach or share values, or provide social opportunities (Lareau, 2003; Shaw, 2008; Shaw & Dawson, 2001), and that participation in leisure can improve family

cohesion and overall family functioning (Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & Freeman, 2004; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001, 2003). In this study, the final desired outcomes were similar to those expressed in the literature, indicating possible support for previous research and the literature review-based model.

The simplified model of family leisure integrates all of these stocks into one model, and provides a framework that researchers and programmers can use to think about family leisure experiences in general, and then consider the particular elements that might go into that framework, for each family. The simplified model then provides a way to think about places to inject change in the system to overcome any problems or make use of opportunities to help families increase accrual of desired benefits during family leisure experiences. The following section compares the specific elements in each family model, as a way to think about the unique characteristics that might impact achieving desired outcomes.

Elements in Each Family Model

Moving from the general to the particular in each model, it is helpful to look at the influences among individual elements to think about the interactions and relationships present in each family leisure experience. This look at the unique elements provides useful information about each individual system, and the family's ability to accrue the desired benefits of family leisure.

A notable difference among models is that each included many different elements flowing into each stock, and many varied from the proposed literature review model. In comparing the initial model to the family models, none had the stocks of social role

obligations, effort, identity salience, cohesion, or communication. Adaptability was present as a chaotic structure for one family. As noted earlier, this could be because each family was very different from the others and, in many ways, this could simply lead to unique models for each family.

Another reason for the differences among elements could be due to the information used to create each model. The initial model was based largely on family leisure literature, and included themes culled from decades of research. By contrast, the individual family models were created based on brief interviews with real families. The information gathered offered a glimpse into each family's life, and offered more specific details about interactions, whereas the research provided more general ideas. While the data analysis process abstracted general themes from the family interview data, perhaps it was not at the same level of abstraction as previous research, or the criteria for creating new codes was not specific enough, thus resulting in different types of codes, themes, and very different models. The differences among models indicates that it is likely not feasible to create one model that captures the general family leisure experience. The simplified model of family leisure intended to address this problems by finding an appropriate level of abstraction that offered a balance between content and meaning. However, to see what can be learned from each family's model created for this study, and to continue to investigate differences and similarities in family leisure interactions, this chapter now addresses the major differences between each individual model and the initial model, and then discusses the simulations.

Reynolds Family Leisure Model

The Reynolds family is an affluent, educated family with experience in many leisure and recreation activities. Their individual model contains similar and different elements than the initial model. Each subsystem and element interaction is compared to those in the initial model in order to think about meaning, conclusions, limitations, and questions for future research.

Antecedent Subsystem

The main difference to note between this antecedent subsystem and that of the initial model is the number of elements that flow into motivation. This family had five elements, and this could be because they liked and valued recreation. This is discussed in greater detail in the simulation section.

Challenge. Challenge was not initially on the code sheet, or in the initial model, but emerged as an important element to this family's leisure experience. This could be due to their personalities, or because they were already skilled at many recreation activities and enjoyed additional challenge or working to overcome obstacles. The idea of challenge as motivation to do leisure activities is not often discussed in the family leisure literature. Rather, it is thought that families tend to choose easier activities that all members with varying skill levels can do. Finding activities that provide challenge for everyone can be very difficult.

For families who can recreate at similar levels of challenge, there is some support in the literature as to why they might do this. Activities that balance skill and challenge may lead to peak or optimal experiences, often called flow. Perhaps in an effort to seek

flow, the family sought challenge in their leisure activities. The literature indicates that flow in the family has traits such as challenge, clarity, centering, choice, and commitment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Centering is similar to focused interactions, which is also found in this family's model.

Concerted cultivation. Concerted cultivation was found to provide motivation for the family to participate in leisure activities. This could be because the affluent, successful parents had specific physical and social skills they thought would benefit their children in the long term. This supports previous research indicating that parents might engage in concerted cultivation because of a desire to guide their children to certain life outcomes (Lareau, 2003). Some parents in middle and upper classes want to guide their child's growth and development, so they put effort into planning and carrying out activities.

Most research into concerted cultivation has focused on social class and children's educational outcomes. The links among concerted cultivation, family leisure, desired outcomes, or the effects on children and parents of this intensive and intentional way of parenting could be a new area of investigation for leisure researchers.

Shared memories. For this family, shared memories were found to increase motivation. This could be because the family had many positive memories of enjoyable times together and drew on these experiences as motivation to recreate together again.

Bonding. A desire to have bonding experiences was found to motivate this family. This is possibly because the family knew from past experiences that they enjoyed being together, so they were motivated to recreate together. This is related to their shared

memories, as they drew on ideas of previous positive experiences of bonding to know what they could gain from recreating together.

It should also be noted that the antecedent subsystem for this family is made up of elements that could be both motivators and outcomes. For example, this family model linked bonding to motivation, which is unusual. Most literature indicates that recreation can lead to increased bonding or cohesion as an outcome (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001; 2003). This family was motivated to achieve their desired outcomes, and once achieved, provided more motivation in a feedback loop. This could again be because the family had so much experience with family recreation, had thought and talked about it, and the parents worked to instill a love of the outdoors and recreation in their children. This is important to note for its implication for practice. Much like publicizing the benefits of leisure, practitioners could let families know the beneficial outcomes of leisure and try to turn those into motivators. Or, perhaps entire families should be involved in planning leisure activities, and encouraged to express to one another what motivates them or what they find valuable in an activity.

Constraints and negotiating constraints. Final elements in this subsystem that were different from the initial model are those of constraints and constraint negotiations. In the initial model, social role obligations and effort were noted as constraints in the antecedent system, as well as interpersonal constraints were in the experience subsystem. For this family, constraints more often occurred as an antecedent to leisure, and usually interpersonal constraints had to do with skill level or interests. Social role constraints were not evident in any family interview or model.

The reason why social role constraints specifically may not have come up in the Reynolds family model or any model may have been that family members simply did not experience it. Another reason could be that the interview questions were intended to explore family leisure, so perhaps the family members did not think as much about external or social influences. Or, this topic may not have surfaced during one family interview with the researcher, who was a stranger. Exploring social roles may be a more complex idea and may take longer to think and talk about or elicit in interviews.

Effort as a way to negotiate constraints was in the initial model something that would gradually 'wear down' motivation. In this family model, constraints negotiation increased motivation as family members sought to overcome or work around challenges. This supports the idea that constraints can trigger negotiation strategies (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001), and that negotiating constraints can increase motivation. This is important to note because family members can build up negotiation skills, likely more so than removing constraints. When confronted with constraints, a family that has negotiation skills to work around them might have greater motivation to participate in family leisure. These ideas are discussed later in the simulations, and in recommendations for practice.

Experience Subsystem

Shared learning and support. This family's model indicated that shared learning and support could increase focused interactions during leisure. In the initial model, focused interactions flowed to increasing quality leisure experiences, and support led to family cohesion. The findings from this family somewhat supported the initial model, but

provided more specific information. Shared learning could be a type of focused interaction. When engaged in learning activities, parents and children can work closely together to make sense of new information. This type of focused interaction could lead to increased quality leisure experiences. Similarly, when providing support, parents and children offer specific feedback or encouragement that could foster closeness. In the Reynolds family model, support led to focused interactions, whereas in the literature review model, it led to cohesion.

This idea is also somewhat similar to the core and balance model of family functioning, but on a more specific level. The core and balance model suggests that positive family leisure interactions are related to improved family functioning (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001; 2003). The contribution from this family's model is the greater level of detail, specifically that supportive behaviors and shared learning contribute to focused interactions, and then quality leisure. This is also looked at in this family's simulations, discussed later.

Outcome Subsystem

Education, fun, and valuing the outdoors. In this very brief glimpse of the Reynolds's family leisure, focused interactions flowed into education and fun, which increased the desired outcome of shared values. This final outcome is different from the literature review model, which suggested outcomes of family cohesion and education. Education is in both models, indicating that many parents likely do find it important, but whether or not it is desired, final outcomes could differ depending on the family. The Reynolds's family model indicated shared values as a final outcome. The idea that

parents engage in leisure to teach or pass values to children is supported in the literature (Lareau, 2003; Shaw, 2008; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

The problem this research sought to investigate was that of families not accruing the proposed benefits of family leisure. The analysis of the family models provided some insight as to what elements may contribute to outcomes being achieved. The simulations provided a way to examine if certain changes to elements could influence the stocks of family leisure.

Discussion of Selected Simulations

Five scenarios were simulated for the Reynolds family. The initial model was simulated as a baseline for comparison, and then four scenarios were suggested for simulation based on ideas of what could reasonably happen in this family that might influence their family leisure interactions and outcomes.

The first simulation was of the initial family model. Based on this, the elements in this family's leisure model caused their stocks to rise quickly and steeply during the simulated time period. As it turned out, after running all the models, the initial model provided the greatest increase in stocks, indicating that this combination of elements and weights were the best of the suggested scenarios at increasing stocks for this family. As noted, this family was experienced at family leisure, and this is supported by their original element weights creating the highest stock levels. But, because their element levels started so high, any changes to elements would likely cause a decrease in stocks. This is evident in the following simulations.

The first scenario found that when concerted cultivation decreased, motivation and focused interactions went down greatly, and shared values declined slightly. This could be because concerted cultivation was something of a driving force behind their family leisure. When it declined, that force was lessened, and the family's motivation declined. When motivation decreased, the family may have chosen to participate in fewer activities together, thus a decline in the stock of focused interactions.

Constraints and constraint negotiations were in all the family models and seemed to consistently impact motivation. For this family, when constraints and constraint negotiations increased, all stocks went down indicating that even if both elements increase equally, constraints may outweigh negotiation strategies. When constraints increased and support decreased, stocks declined from levels of the initial model. This is not surprising, as the literature suggests that constraints can inhibit action, but constraints can also trigger negotiation strategies (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001).

Comparing these two simulations, it appears that in the face of increased constraints, losing family support will also greatly deplete stocks. This could be because decreased support could result in a decline in shared values in the face of constraints, perhaps because constraints may cause more stress, more stress may cause less familial support, and less support along with constraints may reduce motivation, thus reducing activities, resulting in fewer family leisure interactions and opportunities to share values.

In the family leisure literature, research suggests that families are often able to find strategies to work around leisure constraints. Shaw (2008) suggested that families with limited money or resources found ways to negotiate around constraints, such as by finding low-cost or nearby activities. In a study on nonresident fathers, Swinton et al.

(2008) suggested that professionals could work with nonresident fathers on constraint negotiation skills so they could spend additional leisure time with their children. However, the authors also suggested that removing constraints altogether might allow nonresident fathers to spend more time with their children in leisure participation, rather than taking time to negotiate constraints.

In sum, the simulations indicated that constraints could have a large impact on shared values, focused interaction, and motivation. It may be useful in future research to look at the interactions among constraints, negotiations strategies, and support in achieving family leisure outcomes.

Perry Family Leisure Model

The Perry's model of family leisure had fewer elements than the literature review-based model of family leisure or the Reynolds family model. This could be because the family had a simpler life, or thought about their leisure or activities in terms of very basic needs and desires. The family had several elements similar to the initial model, such as role obligations, constraints, fragmented interactions, and quality interactions or leisure, but also had different elements, including education as a motivator, and variety, transmitting values, communication, bonding, and happiness in the outcomes subsystem. These unique elements are discussed here, followed by a discussion of the simulations.

Antecedent Subsystem

Education. Education was found to be a motivator for this family. This is different from the initial model, in which education was a desired outcome. Similar to the

Reynolds family model, some elements expressed as motivators could also be part of the final outcome system, with the family motivated to do the activity to achieve the outcome. For this family, education may have been a motivator because the parents thought that with a better education, their daughter, and perhaps they as well, were more likely to reach their desired outcome of life happiness. The finding that education could be a motivator is supported in the family leisure literature with the same studies noted previously that indicated that parents choose leisure for purposive reasons, such as to provide education, skill building, or teach values to their children (Lareau, 2003; Shaw & Dawson, 2001).

Constraints and negotiations. Similar to the Reynolds family model, constraints and constraint negotiations both flowed into the Perry antecedent subsystem. This is also similar to the initial model, but constraint negotiation was labeled effort. In the initial model, constraint negotiations were expressed as 'effort,' meaning the effort that went into negotiation strategies. As noted before, and supported in the literature, facing constraints can be motivating because it may trigger additional effort to find and use negotiation strategies (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001). The literature tells us that low-income families may face constraints, but often find ways around them, such as seeking low or no cost activities (Shaw, 2008). These ideas were supported in this family model.

Experience Subsystem

Role obligation. Similar to the initial family model, this family's sense of role obligation flowed into their antecedent subsystem, as well as their experience subsystem. In the initial model, this social role obligation was included because being part of a

family created a role with social or institutional pressures that could motivate people to action. This idea was supported in the Perry family model, as their roles as parents and daughter motivated them to engage in certain leisure behaviors. This may have been because the parents did not have careers, so their only identity or role to work toward or fulfill was that of being a parent, or role obligation could have motivated them to engage in family leisure because they did not want to raise their child as they had grown up, which was without positive parental role models. This idea is also supported in the literature. Kelly (1983) noted that in the family traditional leisure constructs of motivation and obligation become relational to other people in the system, and roles bring with them responsibilities to other people.

Role obligation also flowed into quality interactions, as this family's sense of roles seemed to help increase their focus – barely – during their leisure activity. While the family was also characterized as having quality leisure, it was very low, and fragmented interactions were high. The only reason role obligation flowed into quality leisure was because the members continued to exhibit their roles and responsibilities while playing, such as teacher, guardian, leader, participant, or student, and that somewhat improved the quality of their interaction.

In the initial model, focused interactions helped increase quality experiences, but this family did not have adequate focused interactions to include them it in the model. Focus would have looked like one activity occurring at a time. The Perry family model included role obligation as increasing quality leisure because it was only through playing out their roles that they paid attention, briefly, to their leisure experience. This could be

because they were each trying to fulfill as many aspects of their roles as they could, or because they became bored easily, so continually changed their activity.

Overall, the Perry family elements of education as a motivator and sense of role obligation to try to have quality leisure experiences are slightly unusual for their demographic. Some literature indicates that low-income parents do not engage in active parenting or teaching strategies. For example, in Lareau's (2003) study, she noted that many low-income parents engaged in what she termed the accomplishment of natural growth, which is when parents are less involved in organizing or planning their children's leisure or educational activities, instead leaving children to their own explorations and free play. Perhaps the Perry family, with their final desired outcome of happiness and what that meant to them, tried to engage in and enjoy many educational family activities.

Fragmented interactions. The Perry family's leisure experience was characterized mostly by fragmented interactions, which included the quality of their leisure. These fragments could be explained several ways. As noted in role obligations, the family members may have been trying to fulfill as many aspects of their roles as possible, so they changed actions frequently and quickly, or, perhaps they became bored easily and changed activities to seek novelty. Their leisure also could have been fragmented because, even though they talked about having a stable set of home-based activities, perhaps they really were not that comfortable recreating together. Whatever the reason, their leisure was fragmented, and as fragmented interactions lead directly to quality interactions in their model (and in the initial model), the high level of fragments kept their leisure quality low. This is discussed again in the simulations section.

Outcome Subsystem

Variety. Variety was found to be important to this family's outcome subsystem, and as flowing into their final desired stock of happiness. It was not included in the initial model, as it not often referred to as something that 'goes on' during family leisure, but rather is a way to structure leisure. For this family, it was also an outcome flowing into their goal of a happy life. This need for variety could be because the family sought out change in an otherwise monotonous life. The leisure literature indicates that, generally, people need both stability and change in their leisure, thus they seek out variety (Iso-Ahola, 1989).

In the family leisure literature, the core and balance model of family functioning offers ideas about stability and variety, and their relation to family functioning. Zabriskie and McCormick's (2001) core and balance model of family functioning suggests that families need both types of activities to meet needs for variety and change. His model also suggests that families with both types of activities are likely to have increased cohesion and adaptability, which can lead to healthy family functioning, and may in turn provide a greater perception of quality and satisfaction with their family life (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). The Perry family model lends some support to the core and balance model as the family sought to balance their core daily activities with some type of variety, although limited and still home-based due to their structural constraints, and the element of variety led directly to increasing happiness.

Finally, this model indicated that transmitting values, communication, and bonding, all together, were related to happiness. Transmitting values in the Perry family model is similar to educational benefits in the initial model, as something parents hope

their children learn or pick up during family leisure, although here it is an element and not a stock. The difference is that education motivated the family to achieve their unique final outcome of happiness. Transmitting values also created a feedback loop to motivation because sharing values and morals was so important to this family, it provided motivation for future leisure experiences. The impact of various elements on happiness is discussed in the simulations section.

Happiness. Finally, it is interesting to note that this family's outcome stock was happiness, which was not in the initial model or suggested in the literature. This stock could be a desired outcome because the parents had negative life experiences when they were younger, and wanted a better life for their family. The parents also had little formal education and perhaps wanted to learn more, and make sure their daughter had a good education. As their daily life was made up almost entirely of free or leisure time, they engaged in family activities and experiences to increase overall life outcomes, and happiness.

The term happiness is not often discussed in the family leisure literature, but rather is usually called satisfaction. In Zabriskie's core and balance model, family satisfaction is increased by healthy family functioning, which can be increased by increased cohesion and adaptability, which can be increased by adequate core and balance activities. The Perry family somewhat exhibited these traits, mostly in their outcome subsystem. The effect of these elements and others on happiness is discussed in the simulations section.

Discussion of Selected Simulations

When looking at all the simulations for this family, it is very clear that no matter what elements are changed, quality interactions remain low. As noted, this is likely because fragmented interactions were so high. Also, overall, motivation and happiness remain on about the same trajectory for the duration of each simulation. This could be because the subsystems were not well connected, or because this family has stable patterns of behavior that are not likely to change without major impact to their family system.

Of note in these simulations are the roles constraints and negotiations played in changing motivation. One simulation of interest is that when constraints negotiations went up, motivation was slightly higher than when constraints increased. This could indicate that it is slightly more important for a family to be able to negotiate their own constraints to keep motivation high, rather than for constraints to be removed. This has implication for practitioners, in that providing constraint negotiation skills might be more valuable for motivation in family leisure.

Also of note is that when fragmented interactions went down, all stocks improved the most of any simulation. For focused interactions, this was clearly because this was the only element going into quality interactions. This also indicated that focused interactions have an impact on overall quality of family leisure, and was also demonstrated in the opposite simulation when fragmented interactions decreased; quality interactions remained at zero.

Summary

While this model maintained high motivation throughout the simulations, the improvement of motivation, quality interactions, and happiness when fragmented interactions decreased indicated that the family knew what they wanted to achieve from their leisure and were motivated to do so, but did not quite know how to go about it. One way to inject change into this family system might be to try to change their fragmented interactions through leisure education or parent-child interaction classes.

Greg, Emma, Abe Family Leisure Model

This family model presented both similarities and differences from the initial model and from the previous family models. One of the main differences from the other two models was that this family had more elements linking to outcomes. Similarities between this model and others include the antecedent of motivation and the experience stock of quality leisure experiences. The third stock for this family, bonding, is different from the other models. Specific elements that were the same for this family as in the initial model included interpersonal constraints, negotiating constraints, and focused and fragmented interactions. Elements of being together, shared memories, growing into roles, learning about one another, conflict, and chaotic structure were all variables not seen in the initial model. Only shared memories was a variable in another family model.

One reason for the differences between this model and others could be due to this being a step-family that was still learning about shared interests and how to interact with one another. This lack of shared interests likely impacted motivation, and looking at the model, they had only one element linking increasing motivation to recreate.

Examining how this family's elements cluster around the outcome subsystem may indicate that once they were engaged in a positive experience together, they realized what they could gain from participating. This is different from the other two families in that elements were more likely to connect to motivation, or there was a strong feedback loop from outcomes to motivation. Another difference in this model is the lack of a feedback loop connecting outcomes to motivations. Perhaps the family did not make the connection between outcomes and motivation, or, once they completed an activity, they stopped thinking about their desired benefits. On the other hand, perhaps their busy life, filled with other pressing problems such as conflict and constraints, was more present in their minds than the positive experiences of family leisure.

Another difference in this model is that three themes were created during coding and were gerunds, or words that expressed process. The themes of being together, growing into roles, and learning about one another are somewhat vague compared to other elements, but are accurate as far as indicating how the family described their experience. Bonding and negotiating constraints are also gerunds and were in several models, including this model. The most likely reason why this family's actions were described as a process, more so than the other models, is because they are a step-family and still developing as a system. Family systems are always growing and changing, and a step-family may be more aware of that process than nuclear families. Research into step-families supports this idea, noting that in the early stages of a step-family, members are in the process of forming and reorganizing as they adapt to new roles, and it can take several years for members to adjust into a new family system (Baxter, Braithwaite, & Nicholson, 1999).

A general conclusion of this study is that all three families are different, and the comparison of a step-family to nuclear families provides a look into the unique elements that might influence desired outcomes for a step-family. These elements and relationships could be places for further study into increasing family bonding.

Antecedent Subsystem

Being together. In this family model, being together was found to be the only element that increased motivation for the family to participate in leisure together. The element of being together was not in any other model; rather, other family models and the initial model had more specific elements that led to motivation. For this family, the broad idea of being together could exist because they did not often recreate together, and struggled in the interview to come up with a reason why they would, or because they had not thought much about their motivation to engage in leisure, or did not think family leisure was important. Or, perhaps the family spent more time in activities that they did not consider family leisure, so answering this question during the interview was challenging.

Interpersonal constraints. This family, like others, was found to have interpersonal constraints that both decreased motivation to engage in leisure and impacted the quality of their leisure experiences. Their interpersonal constraints were strong, likely because of their differing personalities, and greatly influenced their overall system. This is evident in the simulations. Interpersonal constraints may or may not have been related to this family being a step-family. They may have simply had varying interests that made it difficult to find leisure activities they could all enjoy.

Negotiating constraints. This element is present in all families, yet the other two families were better able to successfully negotiate constraints than this family. Facing constraints for this family sometimes triggered negotiation tactics, but could also lead to additional conflict or avoidance of leisure all together. In the constraints literature, studies note that families can often negotiate interpersonal or structural constraints by making minor changes to their chosen activity, timeframe, setting, or partner (Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). This was not the case for this family, perhaps because they encountered even more conflict when they tried to negotiate. This inability to negotiate could be why their stock of quality leisure experiences was so low. This family could possibly benefit from strategies on how to compromise and negotiate free time use and activity choices.

Experience Subsystem

Conflict. As noted, conflict often occurred before or during family leisure experiences. Conflict was also present in the initial model as flowing into the experience subsystems. It could be in this family model because, as stated, this family had trouble finding activities they all enjoyed, because their personalities clashed at times, or because of their chaotic adaptability style. Conflict in leisure reduced the quality of this family's experience.

Family systems theory suggests that systems will try to reach homeostasis by organizing, reorganizing, conflict, change, and stability (Broderick, 1993). In a family trying to reach a new state of homeostasis, conflict is an expected part of the process. If

dealt with well and used as a point for growth and change, conflict can be very productive for families.

Focused and fragmented interactions. For this family, focused and fragmented interactions were found to influence the quality of their leisure experiences and their bonding. This is similar to the other families, as well as in the initial model. One main difference for this family was that they had many more fragmented interactions and few focused interactions, again likely because of their lack of similar interests and increased conflict. Also of note is that the father created many more fragmented interactions than the other members, and his behavior influenced the entire family system's functioning as he caused the others to experience fragmentation as well.

Outcome Subsystem

In this model, elements that could increase their stocks did not occur until after they engaged in an experience. Three elements in their outcome subsystem, shared memories, growing into roles, and learning about one another, all were new themes created during coding for this family, and are somewhat broad terms, but describe the process the family went through as they became a family.

Shared memories. Shared memories were found to flow from quality leisure experiences into bonding. This is because the family was in the process of building relationships and a shared family narrative, and doing something to create those memories, as well as talking about memories likely helped to increase bonding. In the family literature, sharing experiences, telling stories, and creating memories can help build a sense of family, communicate a family identity, and help members build a sense

of their uniqueness. Talking about experiences can also help provide interpretation or give meaning to family events (Kellas, 2005). One study of families indicated that creating shared memories helped members increase their bonding, or family deepening (Palmer, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2007)

Growing into roles. In this family, it was found that growing into roles flowed from quality leisure interactions into bonding. This was again a unique element for this family, and likely stemmed from them being a step-family. Growing into roles had to do with members becoming comfortable and functional in their relational roles. This process takes time, but is a common and important part of becoming a cohesive family as familiarization with one's own and others' roles helps members to somewhat predict what others in the family are going to do and how each person might respond (Speer & Trees, 2007).

Learning about one another. In the model created for this family, learning about one another flowed from quality leisure experiences into bonding. This was again different from other models and could be more likely to occur in a step-family, although as family members in any family are always growing and changing, learning about one another could occur in any family. It was especially pronounced in this family because of their blended nature. Research on step-families notes that the processes of learning about one another and growing into new roles takes time, but eventually, the family will usually begin to function in its own unique culture (Baxter, Braithwaite, & Nicholson, 1999).

Chaotic structure. This family's narrative and model indicated a chaotic structure, which was found to reduce their stock of bonding. A chaotic structure means the family has ineffective leadership, inconsistent rules, and frequent role reversals. As noted, the

family was still growing into roles and learning about one another, so it makes sense they would have a chaotic structure. The step-family literature suggests that, in the early stages of coming together, family life can often be disorganized and unpredictable, and it can take years before members come together as a new family system (Speer & Trees, 2007).

Selected Simulations

Changes to elements in the model did not have a large effect when run as simulations. The only two simulations that resulted in noticeable change to stocks included increasing constraint negotiations and focused interactions together, or increasing ability to negotiate constraints by itself.

When both constraint negotiations and focused interactions were increased, quality leisure experiences also increased, but not by much, and not until later in the simulation. These changes make logical sense, as the ability to work around problems can lead to more enjoyable activities for everyone. Bonding also increased in this simulation, but barely, and not until the end. An increase in bonding could be because when engaged in focused interactions, the leisure experience might be more relaxing and of a higher quality than leisure time that is interrupted or has multiple activities occurring (Bittman & Wajcman, 2004.)

Another reason for the change in bonding could be all the processes that happened in between the family's leisure experience and bonding. For some parents, many leisure activities are stressful, time-consuming, fragmented, and unenjoyable. But, as possibly experienced by this family, satisfaction may come not from the activity, but from being

with one another, sharing time, and fulfilling role obligations (Bittman & Wajcman, 2004).

Summary

Overall, the stocks barely changed during the simulations for this family, and this could indicate that the model is poorly built, or that the family needs to work on changing levels of its constraints, conflicts, and focused or fragmented interactions before stocks may fill. Depending on how the family approaches leisure, family activities could be a way to work through their conflicts and chaotic style, or family leisure activities could further exacerbate their problem elements. As researchers have noted when looking at family satisfaction, more time together is not necessarily better when trying to improve family relationships. Rather, it is the quality of the interaction and the subjective feelings that can increase satisfaction (Segrin & Flora, 2005). Finally, while these conclusions are for a step-family, the ideas could apply to other family types, such as those trying to increase bonding, or after undergoing a restructuring, such as a death in the family or birth of a child.

Limitations

While this study presents an interesting and unique method for studying family leisure, some limitations exist that limit the generalizability of the results. Limitations for this research stem from sample size, interviews as the selected method, the researcher-as-instrument, and the use of judgment-based models.

First, interviews with family members can create challenges and limitations when conducting research. Interviews for this study were conducted with three families, who were each White, two-parent families, two with one child and one with two children. Families were interviewed once, which provided adequate information for model-building, but the interviews were not conducted to the point of saturation and may not have been in depth enough to hear, uncover, or parse out all themes underlying their family leisure. This is evident in the specific elements used to build each family model, as compared to the more general elements in the literature-review based model. Further, the families may have wanted to offer the 'right' answers, or may not have felt fully comfortable with the researcher, and not offered their honest thoughts about each topic discussed. The interviews also asked family members to discuss at length a topic they may not normally spend such time on, and, in many families, one parent often has greater influence over family decisions, and may make decisions for everyone. For this research, each member was asked to talk about his or her thoughts about the family decisions, and the family was encouraged to reach a compromise on an activity. While this may not be entirely realistic, it was useful to reveal feelings and attitudes present among all members.

Second, the researcher-as-instrument for the qualitative portion of this research is a limitation to the study. While the data analysis adhered to the methods outlined in that section, any time the researcher is the instrument, bias and subjectivity can influence the outcomes. For this study, the researcher used notes in the memoing process to keep track of any biases or opinions that came up regarding the family interview data. Another limitation is that analysis and conclusions are limited to the insights and creativity the

researcher brings to a study (Patton, 2002). Coders helped analyze the data, but the final narratives, models, findings, and conclusions were the work of the primary researcher.

Third, there are limits to building and using judgment-based models. Model building is an on-going process. Models are never complete or correct, but rather the best representation of information available at that time. As data were limited by the interviews, model accuracy and utility is also limited. The models presented here were the result of many iterations of model building, but cannot be completely verified or validated. They are, however, useful for inquiring into the potential nature of relationships in a very specific social setting and context.

Similarly, as these were judgment-based models, the weights assigned to elements and used in the simulations are a limitation of the study. The weights were assigned by the researcher as relative strengths, and did not represent an exact measure. As such, changes among elements in the scenarios were only estimates regarding what might happen.

Recommendations

This study found that each family had its own model of family leisure, and that a systems view was helpful for looking at and thinking about how various interactions occurred during family leisure experiences. The research provided details into how three families interacted, and helped point to places to create change in the family system to increase accrual of desired outcomes. While there were some similarities among stocks in each family system, the three families arrived at their outcomes by very different paths. Perhaps no matter the subject of future family leisure investigations, researchers should

consider the possibility that all families might be different, and have unique sets of elements and interactions that constitute their leisure experiences, as well as unique physical settings and life circumstances that influence their leisure experiences.

The final, simplified model of family leisure offers a distilled view of the findings from this study and areas for practitioners and researchers to consider. This model provides a basic framework for thinking about family leisure experiences, and suggests that the most important elements influencing family leisure outcomes include constraints, negotiating constraints, and focused or fragmented interactions. These should be areas for future study. For example, the results of this research suggest that an ability to negotiate constraints may be helpful in increasing motivation to engage in family leisure. There is already a body of leisure research that examines constraints, both at theoretical and practical levels (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997), but not much research looks at how constraints are negotiated within the family.

Constraints in family leisure warrant further research for several reasons. First, and most simply, understanding constraints can help practitioners and policy makers work toward ways to remove those barriers to participation. Second, in this study and as noted in the literature, constraints can activate a desire to negotiate them. For the family, if done well, negotiating constraints may require problem-solving and compromising skills, which could help the family members learn valuable life skills, learn about one another, and perhaps bond as a family. Future research could consider the unique constraints experienced by families, how these impact their leisure experiences, and the effects of negotiating constraints on family members and overall family bonding.

The current study also found support for the idea that quality leisure experiences can be adversely influenced by fragmented interactions. This finding suggests two ideas for future research. First, what defines a quality leisure experience is still open to debate. It has been defined as uninterrupted time, unobligated time, or time in which only one activity occurs (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Or, a quality leisure interaction might not relate to quantifiable elements such as time or number of activities, but rather the nature or satisfaction in the experience. What is or what creates a quality leisure experience could be a question for future research, as well as clarifying the questions of what quality family leisure impacts. Research has suggested that family leisure satisfaction can correlate to satisfaction with family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009) but why this occurs, and how quality leisure or leisure satisfaction can be improved, have not been addressed. Future research could also consider how fragmented interactions may impact family leisure, or overall family functioning.

Finally, the new simplified model of family leisure could be tested for its validity and application across families. This study looked at only three families, all of whom were White, lived in an urban area, and had one or two children. Future research could test this model on a variety of family types, settings, income levels, educational backgrounds, stage in the family life cycle, and family size. Such research could provide a check into the model's validity, as well as reveal elements and paths to desired outcomes unique to each family.

For practitioners, this study provides several suggestions or areas for consideration. Recommendations for practice include awareness that all families may have different ways of interacting, may have different desired outcomes from their

leisure, and these outcomes may serve as motivators for family leisure. Further, practitioners should consider ways to remove constraints to leisure, or facilitate constraints negotiations in families, and help families increase focus and decreased fragmented interactions during leisure experiences.

When working with families, it might be useful for practitioners or teachers to consider that each family has its own system of elements and interactions, and brings with it a variety of previous experiences, rules and roles. Further, findings from this study suggest that families may have different desired outcomes from their leisure. This should also be considered when planning leisure activities. To the extent that families can be assessed for their individual desired final outcomes, practitioners should do so, and then tailor leisure activities to help the family achieve those goals. Also, families may be motivated to achieve their desired outcomes, and if so, general outcomes could be publicized as something the family could gain from participating in family leisure.

As indicated previously, another finding was that an ability to negotiate constraints may be important to increasing motivation to engage in leisure. Depending on the constraints, practitioners could help families develop negotiation strategies. For example, if structural constraints exist, practitioners could address them by offering low or no cost activities, activities in neighborhood locations for families without transportation, or provide supplies or equipment at low or no cost. If constraints are interpersonal, such as each person having differing strengths or interests, practitioners could provide a variety of roles within the same activity, allowing each person to individualize his or her participation. Thinking of ways to keep family members together

during activities might help them negotiate this constraint and recreate together to work toward accruing their desire benefits.

Finally, helping families think about ways to increase focus and decrease fragmentation during leisure activities should help families achieve desired outcomes. Focus could be increased by providing activities that offer a variety of challenge levels to match the variety of skill sets and strengths among members. Or, practitioners could offer activities that provide opportunities for mentoring or coaching one another, as caretaking or teaching roles may increase focus among family members. These can be roles in which parents or children guide or teach other family members. Fragmented leisure could be decreased by removing distractions, or by coaching families through shorter, focused interactions and building up their ability to focus and ignore distractions. Education as to the benefits of paying attention to the activity and people at hand during family leisure may also help decrease fragmented leisure.

Final Conclusions

The findings from this study resulted in a potential general model of family leisure that may be used as a guiding framework for understanding challenges and opportunities to families accruing desired benefits of family leisure. The research problem indicated that many families engage in leisure but are often not successful at accruing desired benefits. This study found that it may not be possible to create a detailed model of family leisure for individual families, but that a more general model may work better as a guiding framework in which to fill in specific elements unique to each family. This simplified model suggests that an ability to negotiate constraints and increase

focused interactions during family leisure may increase accrual of bonding during family leisure. While each family takes a unique path during their family leisure, these are the main elements that make up a general system of family leisure. Practitioners and future researchers should focus efforts on ways to increase constraint negotiation and focused interactions, while also decreasing constraints and fragmented interactions. Together, these acts might help families increase problem-solving skills, learn compromise, increase attention, learn about one another, and then increase bonding, a common desired outcome of family leisure. As family leisure is suggested to have many benefits, yet is often a challenge for families to engage in, finding ways to improve the quality and quantity of leisure experiences is an important step to improving overall family well-being and functioning.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Opening direction

1. Please think about your most common family leisure activities. Describe several activities your family likes to do together.
2. Describe the one activity you did most recently, why you chose that activity and what you got out of it.
3. Your family needs to come up with a leisure activity you can all do together. Please discuss what activity you might want to do and make the necessary plans to do it.

Once the family decided upon an activity, they were asked to respond to the following questions.

Antecedents

4. Why did you all choose this activity?
5. What about it interests you?
6. What do you expect the overall results of this experience to be for your family?
7. What will your family need in order to do this activity and how will you get those things?

Next, each family was filmed doing their chosen activity. After completing the activity, the researcher asked the family to discuss it. Questions to guide the family conversation as related to the experience and outcomes included:

Experience

8. Generally, describe what went on during this activity.
9. Did you enjoy this activity? Why or why not?
10. Describe two interactions you had with someone else during this activity.
11. Describe positive and negative experiences you had during this activity.
12. Was this family experience important to you? Why or why not?
13. Overall, what contributed to this experience 'working' or 'not working' for your family?

Outcomes

14. Earlier, you said you expected _____ to result from this experience. How did this experience meet or not meet your expectations?
15. How did anyone else's behavior influence your experience?
16. What were the most positive outcomes of this experience? Most negative?
17. What else was important before, during, or after this experience that I have not asked about?

The researcher provided clarification on questions as needed, and at times asked for additional information. The researcher would also ask probing questions such as, "You mentioned ____, can you explain what you mean?" Each interview lasted about three hours.

APPENDIX B

DEFINITIONS OF ELEMENTS

Code	Title	Definition
RO	Role Obligation (social/family)	Sense of responsibility to do something because of family role
GU	Guilt	Sense one should be doing something other than what one is doing
FREE	Freedom of Choice	Free to choose activities without constraints, or lack of freedom
INTS PAR	Intensive Parenting *relabeled as concerted cultivation*	Totally child centered, labor-intensive, expert-guided parenting
SOC SUP	Social Support	Help from nonfamily networks
EXP	Expectations (peer/family)	What person thinks peers or family members expect of them
CON	Constraints	Anything that impedes progress toward desired outcomes
MOT	Motivation	Extrinsic or intrinsic (rewards or internal desires)

Code	Title	Definition
	- Structural	Time, money, resources
	- Interpersonal	Constraints that arise out of interactions with others
	- Intrapersonal	Constraints b/c of oneself, e.g., social anxiety, fear
NEG COC	Negotiating Constraints	Strategies or actions to reduce constraints to participation
EFT	Effort *relabeled as constraint negotiations*	Work put into family leisure in order for it to happen
ENGAG	Level of Engagement	In general, when notable or when influencing family interaction
CONFT	Conflict	Disagreements
COMP	Compromise	Two or more parties sacrificing or mutually agreeing
COMM	Communication	Notable communication strategies used in family to send message
FOC INT	Focused Interaction	Interactions in which only one activity occurs
FRG INT	Fragmented Interaction	Multiple activities at once, or primary activity is interrupted often
ID SAL	Identity Salience	Reaffirming ones role in family through interactions with others
AOR	Acts of Resistance	Acting different than expected social norms

Code	Title	Definition
EOC	Ethic of Care	Female specific moral concern for others, value in caring for others
SUP	Support	Helping behaviors that lead to learning or emotional closeness
TCH VAL	Teaching Values	Teaching/sharing family values
ADAPT	Adaptability	Ability to change power structures, role relationships and rules in response to situational and developmental stress
	- Rigid	Limited negotiation, strictly defined roles and rules
	- Structured	Mix authoritarian with equalitarian leadership resulting in very stable roles and rules
	- Flexible	Equalitarian leadership, negotiate agreements making for easily changed rules and roles
	- Chaotic	Erratic and ineffective leadership, impulsive decisions, inconsistent rules, and role reversals
COH		
	- Disengaged	Distance selves from one another, maintain separateness, little loyalty
	- Separated	Mix emotional independence with some involvement and joint effort and occasional family loyalty

Code	Title	Definition
	- Connected	Emphasize emotional closeness, loyalty and joint efforts while allowing for some individuality
	- Enmeshed	Families demand extreme closeness/loyalty, allow for little individuality
EDSET	Educational Setting	Opportunities/safe environment for learning or stressful situation not conducive to learning
EDU	Education	Family members learn knowledge, skills, or about one another. *Divided into education, shared learning and learn about one another*
VAL	Teaching Values	Families use leisure time to teach morals, ethics, standards

Codes added included:

Bonding: General interactions in which family members have a shared sense of emotional closeness

Shared memories: Family narrative about previous experiences and interactions.

Challenge: Seeking difficult skill-based or physically demanding activities

Value the outdoors: Similar to teaching values, but specific to the outdoors and spending time in nature.

Fun: Positive emotions (characterized by laughter) stemming from or related to family leisure

Happiness: as a life outcome, included secure family and friend relationships, an education, and a satisfying career.

Variety: Seeking change in daily activities, need for novel experiences.

Being together: Family's term indicating time spent in same physical area together, and used to explain motivation for family participating in activities together.

Learning about one another: Family members increasing their knowledge and understanding of one another.

Growing into roles: Learning about place in family system, and becoming more comfortable with those responsibilities, over time.

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